

# Speedball®



**GRADES: 3-4**

## NATURE GEL PRINTING

A Tree is Growing: Identifying Leaf Patterns and Repetition in Nature as Artist and Nature Printer

### MATERIALS

- Speedball® 5" x 7" Gel Plates
- Speedball® Soft Rubber Brayers
- Speedball® Akua Intaglio™ Inks or Speedball® Water-Soluble Block Printing Inks
- Wooden coffee stir sticks for distributing Akua™ ink
- Speedball® Baren
- Assorted Papers: Bienfang® Smooth Bristol, Arnhem™ Printmaking Paper, Speedball® Mulberry Paper, or Colored Card Stock. Paper should be a minimum of 5" x 7"
- Newsprint for cleaning Gel Printing Plate and Brayers
- A variety of natural tree leaves from neighborhood trees

### LESSON

Using the text "A Tree is Growing" by Arthur Dorros and illustrated by S. D. Schindler from Scholastic, Incorporated and Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will document trees in their geographic area by creating multiple prints to be used as 5" x 7" Artist/Arborist trading cards.

### OPTIONAL MATERIALS FOR HANDMADE PRINTER'S CHOP

- Speedball® Speedy Cut™ Easy Blocks cut to 1" x 1" (one for each student)
- 1" squares of Tracing paper
- Red ink
- Speedball® Linoleum Cutter and U gouge

### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR LEARNING:

- How can we analyze, observe and determine the qualities and characteristics of trees by examining and recording leaf impressions.
- How and why do artists and scientists document and represent nature?
- Why is it important for artists and scientists to sign and date their work?
- Why is craftsmanship important in art?

## LEARNING TARGETS:

- The learner will recognize and record leaves from specific trees located within their geography.
- The learner will know what tools and process are necessary for recording and creating their imagery.
- The learner will produce multiples through the printmaking process to be used as Art/Arborist trading cards. (An optional pocket accordion book can be made for keeping and displaying the trading cards.

## COMMON CORE READING AND LITERATURE STANDARDS FOR GRADES 3 AND 4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.2  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.3  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.3  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7

## NATIONAL VISUAL ART STANDARDS FOR GRADES 3 AND 4

VA:Cr1.2.3a      VA:Cr2.3.3a  
VA:Cr1.2.4a      VA:Cr2.3.4a  
VA:Cr2.1.3a      VA:Re.7.1.3a  
VA:Cr2.1.4a      VA:Re.7.1.4a  
VA:Cr2.2.3a      VA:Re9.1.3a  
VA:Cr2.2.4a      VA:Re9.1.4a



## VOCABULARY

Pollen  
Store  
Clumps  
Passages  
Spines  
Dissolve  
Tropical  
Coverings  
Absorb  
Printmaking  
Brayer  
Plate  
Impression  
Negative Space  
Positive Space  
Warm Colors  
Cool Colors

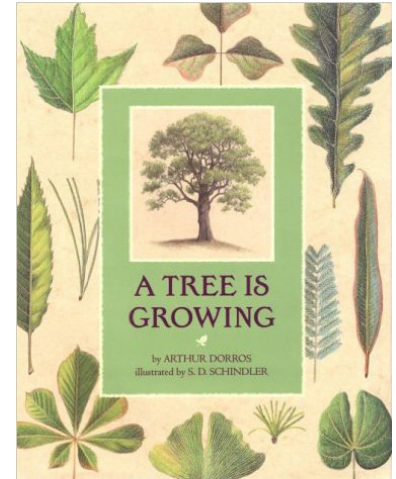
# Visual Art/Printmaking Process

## SESSION 1

After completing the book “A Tree is Growing” and the Robert Frost poem, introduce students to the origins of nature printing used in the early to mid Renaissance to produce illustrations of plants and herbs used for medicinal purposes and today as an art form.

## SESSION 2

Students will collect a variety of fresh leaf specimens from trees in the schoolyard and/or neighborhood and press them between the pages in a phone book.



## SESSION 3 & 4

### Setting Up the Work Station

1. Remove plate from packaging and set Mylar sheets aside.
2. Tape a piece of paper slightly larger than your plate to the tabletop. This will prevent the plate from sliding.
3. Center the Gel Plate on the piece of paper.

### Nature Printing

#### DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING PROCESS TO THE STUDENTS

1. Apply 1/2" of Speedball® Water Based ink or 1/4 tsp. of Akua Intaglio Ink™ directly to the Speedball® Gel Plate.
2. Using the Speedball® soft brayer, roll and lift the brayer over the ink until ink is evenly distributed on the plate. (Avoid too much ink. If necessary, remove excess ink using the brayer and discharge the ink on newsprint).
3. Arrange leaf on the plate placing vein-side-down directly on the plate.
4. Place printing paper on plate over ink and leaf.
5. Using a bar, rub the entire surface of the paper. Be sure to include all four corners and the center area of the plate.
6. Lift the paper from the plate. You will have a negative/positive print of the leaf.
7. Use newsprint for removing excess ink before creating a crisp detailed impression.
8. Remove the leaf from the plate and place ink side up on a sheet of newsprint.
9. Using a bar, rub the entire surface of the paper including all four corners and the center area of the plate.
10. Lift the paper from the plate. You will have a detailed impression of the leaf.

## PRINTING TIPS

- Consider pulling a “ghost print” with the remaining ink on the plate.
- Repeat steps 1-10 until you have the desired number of prints. No need to clean the plate or brayer until a new color is introduced

## INK & PAPER TIPS

Students are encouraged to mix their own ink color from the primary colors. If desired, have students print using a variety of inks and colored paper for a class collaborative project of all the leaves.

## Cleanup

Cleanup is an essential component of craftsmanship and critical for maintaining tools.

1. Remove any excess ink with newsprint or scrap paper.
2. Wipe plates with baby wipes or a solution of soapy water.
3. Allow plates to dry before returning to their packaging.
4. Discharge excess ink on the brayer by rolling off the ink on newsprint or scrap paper.
5. After the excess ink is removed, use a baby wipe or paper towel sprayed with soapy water to clean the brayer.
6. Store brayer roller side up and resting on the frame to avoid flattening the rubber cylinder.

## SESSION 5 & 6

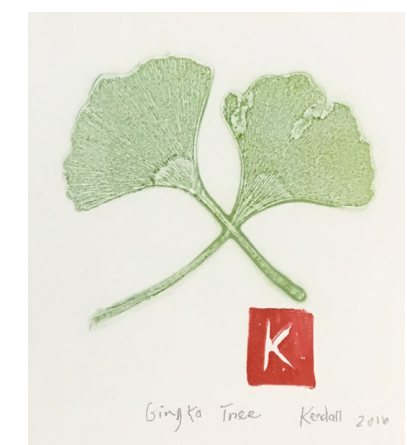
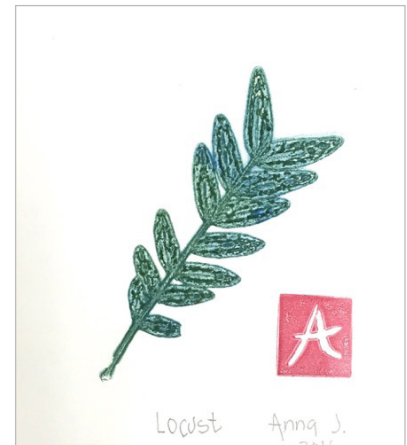
### Review of Prints and Recording Data on the Prints

- Review prints with students.
- Student records facts and data corresponding to the leaf and tree on the back of each print for trading cards.
- Student signs their name on the bottom left each print on the image side of the paper using pencil.
- Students receive a variety of 7 prints.

### Optional Project

Traditional nature prints often include a “chop” mark printed in red on the completed print. The chop is specific to each artist and identifies the artist who created the print. As an optional project, students carve a small relief block using their initial to serve as an artist’s chop.

1. Student practices writing their initial on 1” square tracing paper, filling the entire space.



2. Students flip over tracing paper to see their initials written in reverse.
3. Students draw their initials in reverse on the 1" square of Speedy-Cut Easy Blocks™. (An inked stamp will always print in reverse when printed directly on to paper).
4. Using the small U gouge in the block cutter, students carve their initial (backwards) on the 1" square of Speedy-Cut Easy Blocks™.
5. Students roll out red ink on the Speedball® Gel Printing Plate and push the Speedy-Cut™ initial “stamp” in the ink. Alternatively, a brayer can be used to apply the ink to the stamp/chop.
6. Student prints their “initial stamp/chop” on their prints.
7. Repeat steps 1-6 until all prints have a stamp/chop.



## TEACHING RESOURCES:

- “A Tree is Growing” by Arthur Dorros and illustrated by S. D. Schindler from Scholastic, Incorporated
- Robert Frost poem, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”
- Vintage botanical print images
- Piet Mondrian’s abstract trees art painting
- Vincent Van Gogh, The Mulberry Tree painting
- Rembrandt, The Omval, etching
- “The Art of Printing from Nature: A Guidebook from the Nature Printing Society, [www.natureprintingsociety.org](http://www.natureprintingsociety.org)