

Sponge-Print Fall Trees

To reinforce the color-changing process of leaves, invite children to create these beautiful fall trees.

Art Concepts

warm colors
texture
sponge print



Let's Begin

Show children the pictures of fall trees. Explain that during autumn in many areas, the leaves change color and fall off the trees. Do children see red, yellow, and orange leaves on the pictured trees? Explain that these colors are called warm colors because they suggest

warmth. Then, have children examine the tree and leaves on the completed project. Tell them that the darker lines on the trunk give the appearance of bark. The uneven coloring of the sponge prints make the tree look like it's filled with colorful leaves. Techniques that create an appearance of texture, like the bark and leaves, help make a picture look more realistic.

Inform children that they will create a fall tree using warm colors and texture to help make it look more real. Pass out the materials and demonstrate the procedures as children follow along.



Materials

To display:

- pictures of trees with colorful leaves
- completed project

For each child:

- 12- by 18-inch manila construction paper
- pencil

To share:

- oil pastels (one box for every two children)

For sponge-printing stations:

- twelve 1-inch square sponges
- shallow trays of red, yellow, and orange tempera paint

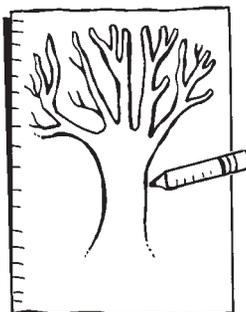


Timesaving Tip!

Set up three sponge-printing stations ahead of time. Cover each table with newspaper and place a paint tray and four sponges on it. Add a half-inch layer of moist paper towels to each paint tray. Just before beginning the activity, spread a different color paint onto the towels in each tray.

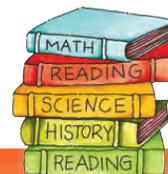
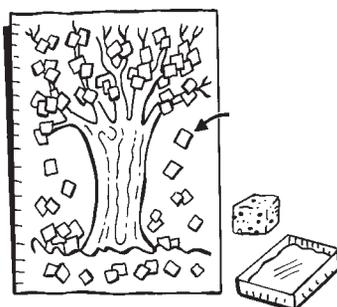
Step by Step

1. Place the manila paper in a vertical (tall) position on the table. Using a pencil, draw a small dot about four fingers distance from the bottom of the page. Then, draw a tree trunk from this point upward. About halfway up the page, draw branches that extend from the trunk to the sides and top of the paper. Add smaller branches as well.



2. Draw a zigzag line across the bottom of the tree to represent the base of the trunk. Then, pencil in other objects of interest, such as a bird in the tree, a squirrel near the trunk, or a swing hanging from a branch.
3. Working from the top of the page to the bottom (to prevent smearing), trace and color the trunk and tree branches with a light brown oil pastel. Next, color the other objects in the picture. You might also add grass across the bottom of the page.

4. To make leaves, take the tree to the red, yellow, and orange sponge-printing stations. Use the sponges and paint to print "leaves" on the branches of the tree, falling from the tree, and in piles on the ground. Press the sponges lightly onto the picture, overlapping colors to achieve a colorful, realistic effect, but avoid covering the branches and other objects completely with prints.



Language Arts Link

Tell children that *tree* begins with the blend *tr*. Ask them to brainstorm other words that begin with *tr*, such as *trail*, *trip*, *train*, *trouble*, and *trap*. List their responses on chart paper. Then, have children use words from the list to make up a class story. Instruct them to take turns adding to the story so that every child has a chance to contribute. Later, you might challenge more advanced children to write the words from the list in alphabetical order.

One Step More

Display the projects on a wall or bulletin board, staggering and overlapping them to give the appearance of the woods. Invite children to border the fantastic fall display with their fall-inspired creative writings.

Related Reading



Why Do Leaves Change Color?
by Betsy Maestro (HarperTrophy, 1994)