Mosaic Masters

What is a mosaic?

Mosaics are pictures or patterns made using many small pieces of coloured stone or glass called tesserae. Other materials can also be used including paper, foil, pebbles or recycled materials. Mosaics are used to decorate floors, walls, ceilings and objects.

The history of mosaic

Mosaics have been used since c3000 BC and are still used today.

Columns decorated with clay cone mosaics, c3000 BC

Mosaic at Tottenham Court Road Underground station in London, 1986

Roman mosaics

Mosaics were a common sight in Roman homes and public buildings across the Roman Empire. They were highly decorative. Popular themes were everyday life, gods, gladiators, nature, animals and geometric patterns.

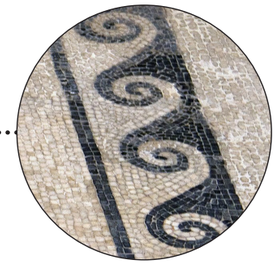
Roman mosaic borders

Many Roman mosaics have borders made of repeating patterns.

crowstep pattern

guilloché pattern

meander pattern



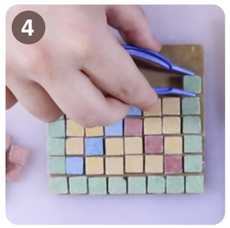
wave pattern

Making a mosaic tile

Create a design on a grid template.

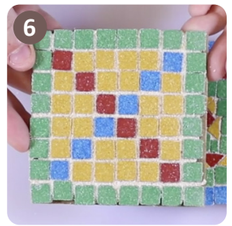
Sort tesserae by colour.

Apply a small amount of glue to a backing board.



Stick tesserae to the board, leaving interstices. Leave to dry.

Use a glue spreader to to press grout into the interstices.



Leave the grout to dry.

Glossary

border	A strip that goes around the edge of something.
grout	A paste used to fill gaps.
interstice	Small gap, crack or space.
mosaic	A pattern or picture made using many small pieces of coloured stone or glass.
pattern	A regularly repeated arrangement or design made from lines, shapes or colours.
tesserae	Small blocks of stone, tile or glass used to make a mosaic.

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