



# Ultimate Paisley Patterns

**(art + history; art + social studies)**

Fabric patterns are always fascinating sources of design. One of the most interesting is the paisley print. The original motif was first seen in Persia (now Iran) between 1501 and 1736. “Buta” and “Boteh” are both terms for the signature floral kidney and tear shapes.

The textiles originally combined fine hand-dyed yarn and metallic fibers for use by royalty. Eventually all fabric used the Buta design for regular clothing and household goods such as tablecloths. Many of these patterns were repeated on a plain cloth with a hand-carved wooden stamp. The term “paisley” was introduced when soldiers returned from Persia to the town of Paisley, Scotland. The Kashmir shawls they brought home as gifts were reproduced in Paisley’s cotton and woolen mills.

The design has waxed and waned in popularity in the fashion world. The 1960s saw a resurgence in the demand for paisley as it was identified with psychedelic style and Indian spirituality, cultures brought to the spotlight by the pilgrimage of The Beatles to the United States in 1968.

The wooden stamps carved to create paisley designs are easily found through antique dealers. Quilters are known to call the kidney and tear shapes “Persian Pickles.”

For students to create the colorful patterns in this lesson, French curves and colored pencils are used. Very simple but lovely patterns develop.

**Grade Levels K-12**

*Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.*

## Materials

**Blick® Construction Paper**, White (11409-1026), 50-sheet package, need one 12" x 18" sheet per student

**Blick® Construction Paper**, Assorted Colors (11409-1006), 50-sheet package, need one-half 12" x 18" sheet per student

**C-Thru® French Curves**, (55452-1009), share three 8-piece sets across class

**Blick® Economy Graphite Pencils**, box of 12 (20302-2009), need one per student

**Blick® Studio Artist’s Colored Pencils**, 24- set (22063-0249, or assorted colors, need at least six pencils per student

**Snippy Scissors**, pointed (57040-2009) set of 12, need one per student

## Optional

**X-Acto® “Powerhouse” Electric Pencil Sharpener** (21412-2050)

## Process

1. Each student starts with one sheet of 12" x 18" white construction paper. Use the French curves to draw outlines of three or more shapes onto the paper. Do not overlap shapes, let them float. Fill white space with a French curve shape that runs off the paper.
2. Choose two or three pieces of colored construction paper. Use the French curves to draw outlines of shapes onto paper and cut out. Set aside for Step 4.
3. Make the pattern designs using the colored pencils. Follow the inside of the curved shape. Start the colored pencil on the white paper shapes already drawn. The white paper should not show when the artwork is finished.
4. Design the colored paper paisley shapes when done, place these in the blank white areas where needed. Some may now overlap, or cut to make them look overlapped. Glue them in place. Use a small piece of cardboard to spread glue on the cut shape.
5. Negative space between the paisley shapes may now be filled with colored pencil designs. Follow the outer contours of the shapes until the entire page is filled.

## Options

- Use paint instead of pencil.
- Select only three colors always using black and white and adding another color.
- Trace shapes using the architectural curves, from patterned papers on the colored construction paper.

## National Standards

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

- K-4** Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places
- 5-8** Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts
- 9-12** Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

- K-4** Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks
- 5-8** Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures
- 9-12** Students reflect analytically on various interpretations as a means for understanding and evaluating works of visual art

Content Standard #6 — Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

- K-4** Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum
- 5-8** Students compare the characteristics of works in two or more art forms that share similar subject matter, historical periods, or cultural context
- 9-12** Students compare characteristics of visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues, or themes in the humanities or sciences