



Hokusai

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Biography

Katsushika Hokusai was a Japanese artist and print maker, whose works have become well known outside Japan.

His best-known work is The Great Wave off Kanagawa.

He was born in Tokyo, around October 1760 and began painting at the age of 6.

Between the ages of 14 and 18, he worked as an apprentice wood carver.

In 1811 he created the Hokusai Manga, a series of thousands of cartoons carved on wooden blocks. The art form helped to influence the modern Japanese manga comics.

Katsushika Hokusai also influenced several famous artists collected his work, including Vincent van Gogh.



Hokusai changed his name more than other artists and was known by around 30 different names during his lifetime. Other names that Hokusai was known as include Tawaraya Sōri, Taito and Hokusai Tomisa.

Significant Works

The Great Wave off Kanagawa



He is best known for his woodblock print series 'Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji', which includes famous print 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa'.

Lake Suwa in Shinano Province



Lake Suwa in Shinano Province (Shinshū Suwako), from the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (Fugaku sanjūrokkei) This was created between 1830 and 1832. It is a woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Tsutaya book and print shop, 1799



This is one of many illustrations depicting Japanese scenes in a book created by Hokusai.

Key Vocabulary

Hokusai

Block print

Manga

Mount Fuji

Japan

Stamp

Ukiyo-e

Wooden

blocks

Colour

Outline

Sketch

Layers

carve

Styles and Techniques

Ukiyo-e

Ukiyo-e is a Japanese style of art that involves making prints and paintings on blocks of wood. Ukiyo-e means 'pictures of the floating world'. The stages of ukiyo-e are:

- A design is drawn on paper.
- The paper is then placed on cherry wood. A carver cuts through the lines of the drawing so that the design appears on the wood beneath. The carving is done so that the lines of the design stick out. This makes the woodblock into a kind of stamp.
- Paint in one colour is applied to the woodblock. Paper is then smoothed over the block.
- The block is cleaned and then the process is repeated for different colours.



Hokusai Manga

Hokusai was the first artist to use the term 'manga' which means random drawings. It is now used as a term to describe a Japanese comic style that conforms to a style created in the late 19th century. In 1811, aged 51, Hokusai created the 'Hokusai Manga' which contained amusing images to inspire his students.



How do I create art like Hokusai

Step 2: Cut out the shape using your drawing on the printing block.

Step 3: Add paint using a roller to the printing block.

Step 4: Print your first image on to the paper to create your block print.

Step 1: Using pencil draw an outline of the Great Wave.



An example of a wood block print by a KS2 pupil.

Step 5: Paint over and between the print lines- just like Hokusai.