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Beyond the Battle

Techniques manual and materials guide

ART EXPLORA

English Heritage

Techniques manual and materials guide

Here you will find ideas for materials and equipment that could be used within your textile panel, along with step-by-step guides to a number of creative textiles techniques you can try with your students.

We suggest that trying these techniques in the order they are listed in this guide will represent the most logical skills progression, with each technique building on the last, but this is a flexible approach which can be adjusted to suit your class.

The ideas within this guide are intended as suggestions which can hopefully inspire your class and get them thinking about the creative possibilities that textiles offer. We hope you find them helpful, and we would love to see some of them in what you create, but it's not compulsory to use them. You are also welcome to use other techniques not included in the guide, of course!

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Materials and equipment

Beyond the Battle is designed to be flexible and budget friendly, encouraging creative use of what you have available to you, sourcing new materials in a cost effective way, and utilising what is best suited to your class and students.

This Basic Materials and Equipment list covers the essentials needed for most techniques, with ideas for additional and recycled materials included to expand the possibilities.

Basic Materials & Equipment List (to cover all techniques)

- **Base Material (fabric)**: This can be anything you have available. Natural fabrics like calico or cotton, or a specialist embroidery material like binca are easiest for students to stitch through.
- **Base Material (paper / card)**: Poster paper / printer paper / recycled magazines / newspapers / packaging.
- **Scissors**
- **Sewing needles**: Various options are available, to suit different ages and requirements. These include plastic sewing needles which are not sharp, self-threading needles and tapestry needles that have a large eye and blunt end.
- **Adhesives**: Glue sticks, wet PVA glue and Bondaweb (iron-on glue sheets). These offer alternatives to sewing needles for younger students or students with SEN/D who might struggle with stitching.
- **Embroidery thread**: Any sort of thread, including wool, ribbon or string - it doesn't need to be fancy embroidery thread!
- **Mark-making tools**: Pens / pencils / crayons / brushes / pastels / paint / stamps. Any medium that is available in the classroom.
- **Scraps**: Fabric / paper / recycled plastics

Additional materials (optional): Great for tactile or sensory work

- Beads and sequins
- Buttons
- Pom-poms
- Stickers
- Straws / wooden sticks
- Found materials - pressed leaves or flowers

Materials and equipment

Recycled materials

Recycled materials are perfect for embellishment, appliqué, collage and mark-making.

Health and safety reminder: If you're using recycled food packaging, be aware of any allergies and possible contaminants, ensure packaging is thoroughly washed or use the outer packaging only to prevent issues.

Textiles

- Bed linen - duvet covers, sheets and pillow cases are perfect as they are often cotton and provide lots of fabric to play with. They can often be found in charity shops.
- Old clothing
- Printed school banners
- Tablecloths - large fabric pieces can be torn into strips to make alternative thread ideas.

Paper

- Cereal boxes and other cardboard packaging
- Seed packets
- Old classroom displays and artwork no longer needed
- Old envelopes
- Old magazines, newspapers or catalogues

Metal

- Tinfoil
- Washed foil sweet wrappers or pie tins
- Foil lids (from dessert pots, milk bottles, etc)

Recycled Plastic

- Washed hard plastic packaging - such as fruit and veg containers and milk bottles
- Washed soft plastic packing outer wrapping from biscuits, crisps and sweets
- Fruit and vegetable netting

Creating on a budget

1. **Utilise your local scrap store** for low cost and sustainable craft materials - most scrap stores will have a special membership for schools to join.
2. **Ask for donations of simple things from home** - cardboard cereal boxes, washed out packaging, old clothes that could be cut up for fabric.
3. **Repurpose what you already have in school** - if you don't have lots of fabric available in school, use paper or card instead and stitch into that as a base. Cut up old classroom displays into sequins or paint over old work.
4. **Think outside the box** - if you don't have a particular item, there are plenty of ways to change to something similar or pivot. Don't have sewing needles? Could students weave threads through bases with large holes?

Useful links

Below is a list of organisations and websites which offer inspiration, practical guidance and affordable resources for textile and embroidery projects. They include artist case studies, stitch ideas, professional textile networks, sustainable materials suppliers and specialist services that can support both classroom teaching and creative textile practice.

Textileartist.org
Textile art website with interviews and imagery from different artists who use textiles in varied ways:
https://www.textileartist.org/category/all-stories/

Embroiderers Guild
UK charity building awareness of textile art, they have affiliated groups across the UK who may be able to provide information on material resources local to you:
https://embroiderersguild.com/

RSN Stitch Bank
Free resource showing hundreds of embroidery stitch ideas:
https://rsnstitchbank.org/wall

Scrapstore Directory
Locate your closest scrapstore to look for eco-friendly craft materials that are all good for limited budgets:
https://www.reusefuluk.org/directory

Online Scrapstores
There are also some Scrapstores that sell online if you can't get to a physical location such as:
https://shop.childrensscrapstore.co.uk/
https://reneematerials.co.uk/



Technique 1 – Mark-making

Mark-making is the creation of marks, patterns and shapes on paper or fabric using different tools and mediums such as pens or paints. It helps support dexterity, pattern spotting and idea development, and links easily with other textile techniques and skills to build and combine approaches. Mark-making is highly accessible, and is suitable for all learners.

Click here to watch the mark-making tutorial film

Technique 1 – Mark-making

Materials needed:

- Base (fabric or paper)
- Medium of choice - paint/pens/pencils or a combination
- Tools for making marks and patterns, e.g. brushes/stamps/fingers

Thinking about mark-making - tips and ideas...

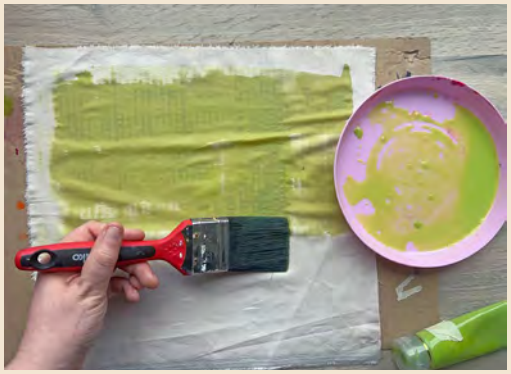
- Anything can be used as a mark-making tool - students could collect natural materials such as **leaves, flowers or grasses** to make marks with paints.
- Try using bumpy **surfaces and pressing wax crayons on the top with paper** to create textured impressions.
- Anything can be used as a stamp if dipped into paint - a milk bottle lid, piece of lace, buttons or the edge of a piece of cardboard.
- Starting with patterns and shapes is a fun way to **loosen up and help get creativity flowing**.
- Finished bases can be cut up into sequins or used as collage or appliqué materials.
- **Painted fabric bases** can also be embroidered into with hand stitching.
- For a collaborative effort, after each layer of mark-making is complete, swap around pieces between students so they are each **working on each other's artworks and creating community pieces**.
- **Draw hand embroidery stitches as practice** - dotted lines for straight stitch, crosses for cross-stitch and loops for chain stitch. This is useful practice for the physical dexterity of the shaping of those stitches on fabric.
- You can use mark-making to build up **background ideas which represent different environments** - printing or painting **forests, waves, cityscapes, space scenes and more** can provide the canvas for other techniques.

Accessibility

- Mark-making's flexibility means it is **highly accessible** and allows all students to get involved.
- **It does not have to be created with wet media**, such as paint, if that causes any sensory issues. Pencils, wax crayon or chalk rubbings are an excellent dry media alternative.
- For students with visual differences, the tactility of mark-making materials can be a benefit - feeling the different "brush" ideas and their textures and surfaces.
- For students with mobility or dexterity differences, **enlarging the scale of either mark making tools or bases** can be helpful. Instead of small brushes that need grip, use large shapes as stampers, paint with fingers or hands or roll materials as opposed to precise small scale marks.
- It can be important to mention to students that mark-making and being creative is not about making an image or drawing that looks like a photograph - it is about them **trying something new and having a go with a new technique**.



Technique 1 – Mark Making



Mark-making: Step-by-step

1. If working on fabric, it's a good idea to layer some paper behind to catch any paint or ink that may transfer through, this can also create a second artwork that could be used for another technique.



2. Start with your background - sometimes fabric is quite bright and difficult to work with. If that is the case, cover the base with broad brushstrokes of paint to give you a starting point. This does not have to be neat, as the brushstroke marks add texture! Wait for the paint to dry before the next step. **Tip: Slightly water down the paint if painting onto fabric to allow it to spread better, and also save paint wastage**.



3. Choose another tool for adding the next marks, such as a smaller brush, stamp or pen/pencil. Choose a mark - simplicity is best for exploring and playing with new techniques, so this could be something like a straight line, a cross or the pattern the tool makes when pressed onto fabric. Repeat your mark across the base.

4. Explore making your marks bigger or smaller, this could be through changing your tool, or drawing bigger or smaller shapes.



5. Explore layering possibilities - adding marks on top of each other.

6. Play with the thickness of the line - creating thicker and thinner marks by changing the tool you are using.

7. Play with the direction of the line - going backwards or forwards, criss-crossing, and creating curving or straight lines.

The more mark-making that is added to the fabric, the more your patterns and shapes will start to develop and emerge.

Repeat the steps with as many bases as you like, fabric and paper, to build up a collection of colourful mark-making sheets.

Tip: As mark-making creates an abstract outcome, it can remove the pressure to make something "perfect" as you can't do it wrong!



Technique 2 – Hand Embroidery

Hand embroidery is a traditional textile technique involving pulling thread through fabric with a sewing needle, to create patterns on the fabric surface. It can develop fine motor skills and dexterity, enhance focus and improve hand-eye coordination. It is an incredibly creative and mindful technique with lots of possible variations and flexibility.

Technique 2 – Hand Embroidery

Materials needed:

- Base (any fabric or thin card you have available)
- Embroidery hoop (optional - it helps keep the fabric tight but you can stitch without one, especially if using stiffer fabric)
- Scissors
- Thread - thicker threads are always easier for stitching and threading as they are more visible and less likely to tangle
- Sewing needles
- Sticky tape - paper tape or clear tape (optional for younger KS2 instead of tying knots)

Thinking about embroidery - tips and tricks...

- A good rule is to tell students that the sewing **thread in the needle should not be longer than wrist to elbow** to prevent tangling.
- Doubling the thread and then tying the ends together **will prevent students from pulling the sewing needle off the thread**, this can make it easier to try stitching in the classroom with lots of students!
- **Drawing dashed lines on paper or fabric** then stitching over the drawn lines can help students practice their straight stitching.
- Make sure to tell students to **always leave a tail on the back** of their work, to tie a knot and finish it off. You can use a dab of glue or tape on the thread if the tail is too short or knots are tricky.
- If students are struggling with knot tying, they can also start stitching without a knot by sewing 3 or 4 small straight stitches very close together, making sure to leave a tail.
- Natural fibre content fabric such as **calico, cotton or linen will be easier to stitch through than synthetic fabric**.
- Thin cardboard is also a great stitching base that can be pre-poked with holes for easier stitching.
- **Anything can be used as a thread** - ribbon, wool, strips of fabric, elastic bands and twisted paper, and if it's too thick to pull through the fabric it can be couched on the surface (see Step-by-Step: Couching Stitch on page 12).

Accessibility

- Hand embroidery can be made more accessible by changing elements to suit your class and students.
- You can purchase plastic needles that are not sharp at all, and have a very large eye for threading thicker materials. These could be used with mesh fabric or card with hole punched holes to stitch through.
- Metal needles can also come in a range of sizes and sharpness. Tapestry needles tend to be blunt and are a good option. You can also buy self threading needles that are easier for smaller fingers to thread.
- Mark-making is good practice before learning hand embroidery so students can try drawing stitches first.
- Students can also **draw their image on to the base and then stitch over it**, using the lines as a guide.



Technique 2 – Hand Embroidery

Step-by-step: Straight Stitch / Running Stitch

Straight stitch is the simplest embroidery stitch to try, and is a fundamental technique for attaching materials together, which can lead on to learning other embroidery stitches, and creating appliqué and embellishment work. As it looks like a straight line on the surface of the fabric, there is lots of potential to change the line to create patterns, shapes and figurative ideas.

1. Always tie a knot on the end of the thread to prevent it coming out of the fabric.
2. Always start your stitching on the back of the fabric and come up through to the top.
3. Once on the top, plunge your needle back into the fabric a short distance from where you came out, to create your first stitch.
4. Then repeat - sometimes the thread might tangle or you might stitch the wrong way. A good tip is that if you are not sure which way to go with the needle, look at where the thread is coming out of the fabric. If it's the top, you go back down from the top. If it's the back, you go back up through the back.
5. As with mark-making, think of all the ways you can change a line to create patterns - long stitches/short stitches/cross-stitches/layering threads/using different thickness of thread.
6. Straight stitch can be used to create pictures (of people, plants, animals, objects, etc), by drawing your image onto your base material, and then stitching on top of it, following the lines. This is what the makers of the Bayeux Tapestry did! Check out the Drawing with stitch tutorial film to see how.

Watch the Drawing with stitch tutorial film here





Technique 2 – Hand Embroidery

Step-by-step: Couching stitch

Couching stitch is a way of attaching threads that are too thick to pull through the fabric with a needle. Instead, the thicker threads sit on the surface and are couched (trapped) in place with a thinner thread and small stitch. One of the main stitches used in the Bayeux Tapestry is a form of couching - the Bayeux stitch. It is an excellent technique to help students recreate textures and patterns that they can see in the Bayeux Tapestry. Couching can also be used to create "drawings" with stitch - students can create an outline through mark-making and then couch over the top of this with a needle and thread.

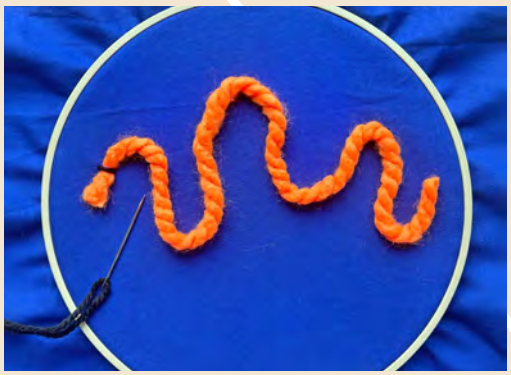
Watch the couching stitch tutorial film here



1. Have your fabric base either drum tight in an embroidery hoop (if you have one) or lay it flat on a table or surface ready to begin.



2. Lay your thicker thread on the surface of your fabric. You could follow a line or pattern you have drawn on the fabric or go freestyle. You can use pins or glue if you need to keep your thicker thread from moving.



3. Thread your sewing needle with a thin thread that will pull through the fabric (always knot the end of your thinner thread). Starting from the underneath of the fabric, come through the fabric at the end of your thicker thread with the sewing needle and trap your thicker thread using a small straight line stitch over the top. Tip: never go through your thicker thread - always go over it.



4. I find it most helpful to add small trapping stitches on the important sections, such as bends or at regular points on your couched thread - so that your thicker thread doesn't move.

Technique 2 – Hand Embroidery

5. When your thicker thread is couched in position, you can then go back to the beginning and add more trapping stitches along the thicker thread to secure it down, they will look like little stripes across your thicker thread.
6. When you stitch over the end sections, put a couple of extra stitches to ensure your couching thread doesn't slip out (if couching a straight line this step is important).
7. Flip over your fabric to the back and tie the thin thread in a knot to secure it. If this is difficult, you can also leave a tail of thread, and this can be taped down to secure the thread.







Tips:

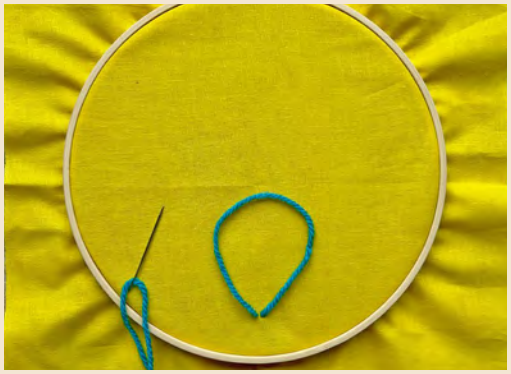
- **Pipe cleaners are great for couching** as students can twist them into different shapes and they will stay in the shape as you stitch them in place!
- **Try changing the colour of your trapping stitch** to create added patterns on your couching, or use the same colour to create an invisible stitched line.
- For trying this technique with younger students, I would recommend getting them to **couch in a straight line, trapping something chunky such as a strip of paper, ribbon or thick wool**. See the Couching tutorial film for a demonstration of this.

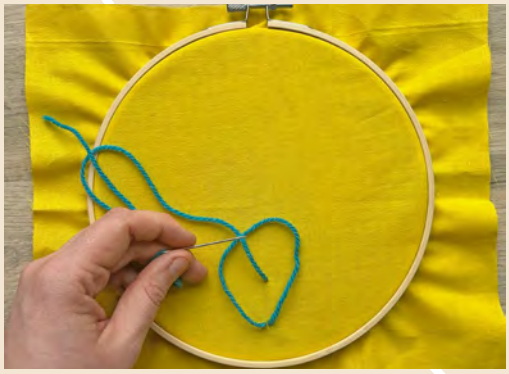
Technique 2 – Hand Embroidery

Step-by-step: Chain stitch

Chain stitch is a decorative stitch that creates a looped or chain effect on the fabric surface, it is created with one thread. It is another stitch that was used in the creation of the Bayeux Tapestry. *This is a more advanced stitch option - most suitable for more experienced sewers or higher end of KS2.*

Watch the chain stitch tutorial film here









1. Have your fabric base either drum tight in an embroidery hoop (if you have one) or lay it flat on a table or surface ready to begin. Thread your needle with a medium - thick thread that will easily pull through the fabric and knot the end to secure it.
2. Starting on the underneath of the fabric, come up with your needle to the front, at the bottom of your fabric, and then plunge the needle back into the fabric very close to where you first came out - this creates a loop on the surface.
3. Leave the loop loose on the surface, and then come up again with your needle to the front - this time coming up inside your loop of thread.
4. The trick with a chain stitch is not to pull the thread super tight - this gives you a loose, more rounded, loop shape. Pull gently until you are happy with the loop - then plunge back down next to where you came up again (the same as step 2).
5. This will again create a loop on the surface of the fabric. Keep repeating steps 2 – 4 to continue your chain stitch.
6. Your chain can grow as long as you'd like it to - every loop will be going up the fabric.
7. When you get to the end of your chain and you want to finish, plunge your needle on the outside of the loop to finish it off, and tie off on the reverse of the fabric to secure it.



Technique 3 – Collage + Appliqué

Collage is a mixed media technique that involves layering different materials and shapes together and attaching them with glue or hand embroidery to create patterns and artwork. Papers, fabrics, recycled plastics and found materials can all be used within collage ideas. Appliqué is a specific term for a fabric collage that is stitched together with hand embroidery. Collage and appliqué ideas can be used to create more complex visual imagery, enhance hand embroidery skills and improve student understanding of colour palettes and shape cutting skills. Using glue as well as thread as a joining medium means it is highly accessible for all learners.

Technique 3 – Collage + Appliqué

Materials needed:

- Base (fabric or paper/card)
- Scissors - could use scissors with different shaped blades if you have them for patterned cuts
- Thread - thinner thread such as stranded embroidery thread or Perle cotton
- Sewing needles
- Glue sticks/PVA glue/ Bondaweb (fusible iron-on glue sheets)
- Mixed materials for collage creation such as magazines/fabric scraps/papers/recycled plastics - you can find ideas for sustainable materials earlier in the resource (pg. 3)

Thinking about collage and appliqué - tips and tricks

- Collage shapes can be cut with scissors, strips cut on guillotines, and recycled metals punched with shaped hole punches.
- A budget friendly way of creating coloured papers or fabrics is to **add mark-making to white or neutral coloured bases** and then cut these into coloured sections when dry.
- **Negative shapes can also create interesting outlines** and make sure that no materials are wasted!
- Encourage students to **cut shapes from the edges of papers/fabrics** rather than the middle to reduce waste.
- Any tiny leftover scraps can be collected and stored inside laminating pouches or document wallets to be used again.

Accessibility

- Collage and appliqué can be made more accessible by **switching the joining medium from hand embroidery to glue**. Appliqué using thicker materials may require fusible glue sheets to stick shapes into place before hand embroidery is added on top.
- Using less messy glue such as glue sticks is great for collage ideas with papers and some thin fabrics.
- **Tearing, instead of using scissors, can be used to create different shapes** without using sharp tools.
- Pre-poking small holes around a drawn shape with either a large eyed sewing needle or a hole punch creates a perforated outline which makes it easier to tear out.
- **Layering small scraps and offcuts of fabric to create a shape** - such as filling in an outline of a tree, circle or face - is another way to collage without scissor use.

Collage with glue - Basics

- Drawing or planning out the collage first can be helpful, particularly if the ideas are more complex, such as creating people, landscapes, buildings etc.
- Always begin with cutting or tearing all the shapes needed for the collage before glue is brought out, to save on mess.
- Shapes do not need to be stuck down flat - students can think about scrunching, pleating, rolling or twisting materials to create 3D shapes and textures before gluing into place.
- Layering is key, and a collage can have multiple layers built up together, adding the biggest shapes on the background first and the smallest shapes last.
- Once the collage has dried, students can go back and add other details such as hand embroidery stitches and mark-making with pens/pencils or embellishment ideas.
- Areas with thick glue will be harder to stitch through afterwards so glue sticks will be easier than wet glue for this purpose, or add mark-making instead if using PVA wet glue.



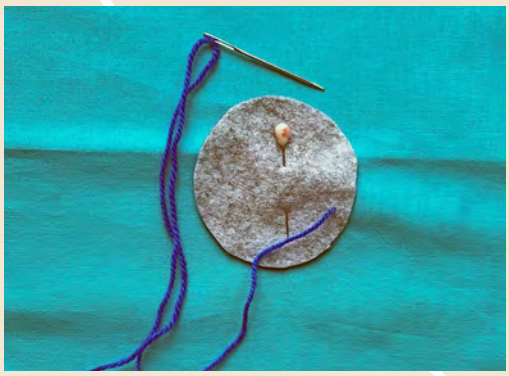
Technique 3 – Collage + Appliqué

Step-by-step: Appliqué with hand stitch

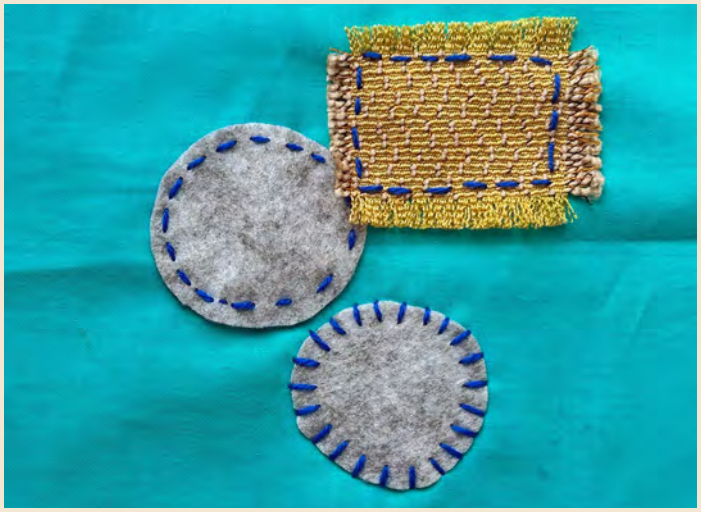
Traditional hand appliqué is created with hand embroidery as the joining technique to attach fabric pieces together. It is a great opportunity for students to practice the hand embroidery stitches they have looked at earlier in the learning resource. *This is a more advanced technique and may be more suitable for more experienced sewers or the higher end of KS2*

Watch the hand stitched appliqué tutorial film here









1. Draw your simple shape on the back of some scrap fabric/thin card/paper and carefully cut out with scissors. Materials such as felt, wallpaper or funky foam are easiest to start with because they don't fray.
2. Lay your cut shape onto your fabric base. You can stick it with a tiny dab of glue in the centre, use pins, or hold the shape with your thumb/fingers.
3. Thread a sewing needle with thin embroidery thread, tie a knot on the end of the thread and come up through the base at the edge of your cut shape.
4. You can then start to add a straight stitch around the edge of your shape. Leaving a small gap from the cut edge, keep your stitches small and fairly close together, following the edge of the shape.
5. Continue with your straight stitches, carefully following the lines of the shape. Once you have stitched all the way around your shape, pull your thread to the back of the base and tie a knot to secure it.
6. You could try turning your stitch around so that rather than following the edge, the stitch creates a straight line that goes **over the edge**. This will make a different pattern.
7. Once you have tried with materials that don't fray, you can have a go with materials and fabrics that do fray, such as hessian, cotton or denim, which will give your appliqué shapes more texture and pattern.

Technique 3 – Collage + Appliqué

Step by Step: Appliqué with iron-on glue sheets

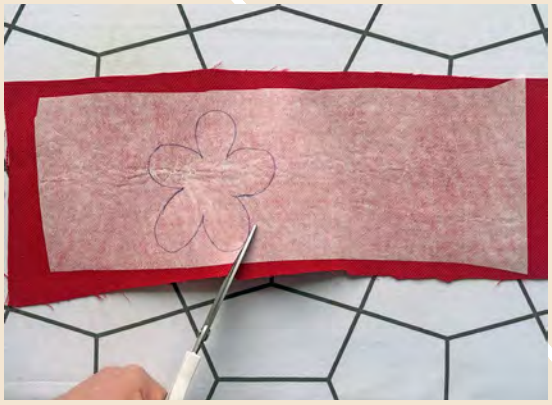
Iron-on glue sheets (such as Bondaweb) are useful for ensuring fabric edges don't fray when cut, leaving clean lines.

Health and Safety note for iron-on glue sheets: These sheets require melting in order to stick to the fabric surface, so you need to use a hot iron when adding them to fabric. This may be a step that is easier to do beforehand so that students receive fabric that has the sheets already applied. Note that after students have cut out their shapes it will need re-ironing in order to stick to their backgrounds.





1. Choose your materials for adding the glue sheets onto - any fabric that is suitable for use with an iron. Then cut your glue sheet to fit the size of the fabric and lie it glue side down (paper side facing you) on the reverse of the fabric.



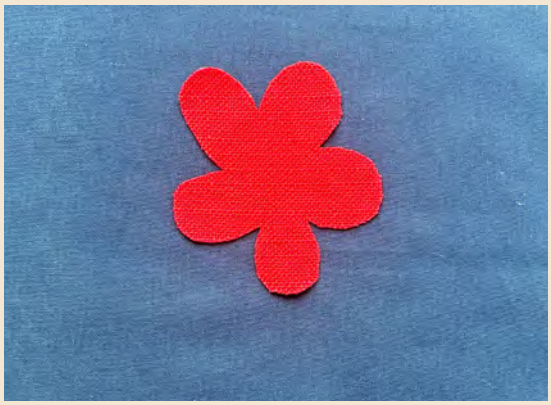
2. Lightly iron the glue sheet using the heat settings recommended by the glue sheet supplier - I would recommend using additional baking parchment/ non-stick paper on the top to protect your iron. Iron the sheet until you can bend back a corner of the paper backing and it feels smooth to the touch, but do not remove the backing paper fully yet!
3. Draw your shape of choice onto the paper backing of the glue sheet and carefully cut out with scissors.



4. Peel the paper backing off the glue sheet, you should be able to see the glue on the fabric, and the peeled off paper backing should be smooth to the touch with no glue residue leftover. **Tip: if you are finding the backing paper difficult to peel off, you can also peel it off first in a big sheet and draw your shape onto the glue itself.**

Technique 3 – Collage + Appliqué

5. Lay your shape on your chosen fabric base with the glue side down.
6. Re-iron over the top of your shape, again using the heat setting recommended by the glue sheet supplier, and with additional heat proof protection over the shape to prevent any small bits of glue melting onto the iron.
7. Once the fabric is completely cooled you can check to see if your shape has adhered to the background, if any areas feel loose, just re-iron again. Repeat with other shapes and fabrics on your base, to build up your patterns.
8. Optional - you can add hand embroidery stitches such as straight stitch or chain stitch through the glue sheet as it is nice and thin!











Technique 4 – Hand Embellishments

Hand embellishment is a technique for decorating fabric with both 2D and 3D ideas to add detail, texture and colour to an artwork. Traditional embellishments like sequins, buttons and beads can be used in new, exciting and contemporary ways by choosing sustainable materials, repurposing unconventional materials and combining them with other textile techniques. Creative hand embellishments encourage thinking outside the box, particularly in terms of material usage and the structural properties of different mixed media materials. The detailed nature of the technique also supports dexterity and fine motor skills, and builds upon basic hand embroidery skills.

Technique 4 – Hand Embellishments

Materials needed:

- Base (fabric or paper/card)
- Scissors
- Thread - thicker threads are always easier for stitching and threading as they are more visible and less likely to tangle
- Sewing needles
- Punched paper or round items to draw around for sequin shapes
- Buttons/beads/sequins/pom-poms (optional as extra details)
- Mixed materials for embellishment creation such as fabric scraps/papers/recycled plastics/found objects (sustainable material ideas can be found in the Materials list)

Thinking about Embellishments - Tips and Tricks

- **Embellishments can be layered together** to add lots of detail and pattern to a singular sequin or bead.
- Large paper punches can be used to cut out different shapes from firm materials such as paper, card or metal to use as sequins.
- You can also **draw around lids, and cut out with scissors for circular sequins**.
- Recycled materials such as plastic lids can be easily poked through with a large eyed sewing needle so they can be stitched onto fabrics.
- Paper sequins are easy to make, and **paper can fold, pleat or scrunch into lovely 3D textures** for embellishments that are not flat!
- Standard buttons can be layered and stacked together by matching the holes up and stitching through both buttons together.
- Some embellishments that can't be stitched through can be added to fabric by using a couching stitch and trapping them in place instead.
- Found natural materials such as **sticks, dried grass, flowers and seed pods also all make beautiful embellishment ideas**, and can be stuck or stitched into position.

Accessibility

- **Enlarging the scale of the embellishments** to create giant sequins and beads **reduces the need for the very fine motor skills** that are normally required for smaller embellishment ideas.
- **Sequins can be any size, shape or material**. Instead of traditional small beads, paper straws and tubing can also be used and cut to larger bugle style beads and are easier to thread.
- **Glue can be used instead of hand embroidery** to attach embellishments to a base.
- Threading beads onto stiffer materials such as pipecleaners or shoelaces can help with threading skills without needing a needle.



Technique 4 – Hand Embellishments

Step by Step: Sequin and Embellishment Stacks

Sequin stacks are a great technique to quickly layer up multiple materials, shapes and embellishments on a singular thread. They allow students to build ideas and can be adapted in many ways to create exciting results.

1. Cut out your sequins and embellishments for the stack. These could all be made from the same material or shapes, or different materials and shapes together. You can cut shapes with scissors or use paper punches. It's a good idea to have some different sizes in the stack. **Tip: If you are using thick materials such as recycled plastic lids or cardboard, put a hole in the centre of each shape first with a large sewing needle.**
2. Thread a sewing needle with thin thread and tie a knot in the end. Come up through your base material with your needle and thread, wherever you want to add your first stack.
3. Starting with the largest shape first, pull the sequin down the thread until it sits on the base material. Repeat as many times as you want with your smaller shapes, adding each one to the same thread, and sliding down so they stack on top of each other on the base.
4. As you add each sequin to the stack, you can also try folding them in half or quarters or stitching through the edge instead of the centre.
5. The last sequin in the stack should be the smallest shape. This can be a button or a large sequin folded into quarters. Move this last sequin back up the thread and push the sewing needle back through all the other sequins in the stack (in the same hole, or just next to the hole where you came up).

Watch the Hand Embellishments tutorial film here









Technique 4 – Hand Embellishments

6 The last sequin in the stack will act as your stopper, and prevent the rest of the stack from coming loose. You can then add more stacks tucked underneath, or add hand embroidery around the edges for more details. Repeat your sequin stacks across your base material.

7 If you want to create sequin stacks that are 3D, you can use materials like foam circles in-between flat sequins to raise the height of the stack.

8 Repeat with as many sequins as you'd like to add to your fabric. When finished, tie off or tape your thread on the back of the fabric.





Adding bead embellishments

- **To stitch one bead at a time onto fabric**, come up through the fabric base with a sewing needle, thread the bead onto the needle, and then go back through the fabric base very close to where you came out. Repeat for each bead you want to add.
- **To stitch a chain of beads on the fabric**, come up through the fabric base with a sewing needle, thread as many beads as you want in your chain onto the needle, slide them onto the thread, then go back into the fabric base at the end of your bead chain.
- Use paper straws as beads by cutting them into small tubes. **Tip: don't cut your straw beads longer than your sewing needle.** Attach them to the fabric base like you are stitching on a chain, so your straw bead sits flat on the fabric base - you can also add a couching stitch over the top for extra pattern.



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