

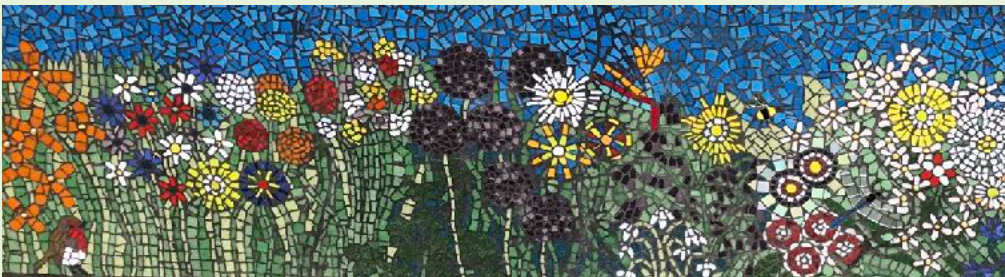
# Mosaics

Mosaics are the creation of patterns or pictures using small pieces of materials such as tiles, marble, glass or stones. The pieces are glued or cemented to a surface such as a wall or floor. Mosaics have been used to decorate buildings for thousands of years.



These mosaics were created in 2021 during the pandemic for the exterior wall of a medical practice in Birmingham by a local mosaic artist, Jackie Nash. The designs include the rainbow interpreted as a heart symbolising love. The rainbow is an iconic image which is a symbol of hope. After the rain, the sun will shine again.

On the same building is a large mosaic. Members of the community were invited to create a flower in memory of a loved one.



## Roman mosaics from the 1st century

Some of the earliest mosaics were created by the Ancient Greeks, but it was the Romans who developed the art of mosaics in Britain over 2000 years ago. Pictures of Roman life and patterns to cover pavements and floors, walls and ceilings both indoors and outdoors were created to decorate buildings. Mosaics are hardwearing and functional.



## 19th century mosaic step in a Birmingham synagogue



Photo: Piers Wolf

## Classroom Activity: Making a Mosaic Coaster

This is a fun activity for children and adults. It is relatively cheap. You need patience to create a mosaic but everyone can join in.

The following pages provide more information and guidance on making mosaics using tiles. There is also a link to show how to make mosaics from paper

[www.jackienashart.com](http://www.jackienashart.com)





# Making a mosaic coaster

an activity created by Jackie Nash

## Teachers' notes for tile mosaic activity

This introductory activity does not involve cutting. It is designed to help children to learn how to correctly place the mosaic tiles (tesserae) in order to create patterns.

There are several different methods for producing mosaics. The easiest method is the **Direct Method**. For this project you will be using 10 mm vitreous glass tiles as they are easy to source and easy for children to use.



Examples of mosaic coasters made by children

### For each child you will need:

PVA Glue in small pot eg  
yogurt pot

About 90 10mm vitreous glass tiles in a  
range of colours

Applicator

eg wooden coffee stick

Plastic sheet to work on



Coaster cut from 10mm  
or 20mm MDF (Pre-cut  
available on line)

OR small terracotta plant  
pot saucer

*Write name of child on  
reverse for ease of  
identification.*

Baby wipes to clean hands while working

Additionally for the class mosaics you will need: 2kg bag of grey or brown grout ( suggest Mapeii or Tilemaster) from a DIY/ tile merchant. **GROUTING IS AN ADULT ONLY ACTIVITY.**

# Instructions

It is a good idea for the teacher to make a sample coaster to show the children. These instructions are relevant for an individual or group activity.

The day before, prime the MDF coaster with watered-down PVA glue and allow to dry. When ready to start, choose your colour combination.

1. Set out tiles on the dry primed surface to make decisions about the design.
2. You are now going to glue the tiles for the border.

## Applying the glue

Glue is applied to the back of the tile which is usually bumpy and the top is smooth. Only a small dot of glue is needed. When you are ready, stick the tiles carefully around the border, leaving a gap between each tile. The gaps will be filled with grout. *(See notes below)*

2. Check the tiles are straight.
3. Create a simple pattern within the border and stick the tiles.
4. Check all tiles are level.
5. Leave the coaster to dry for 24 hours on a flat surface.



## Grouting THIS IS A JOB FOR ADULTS ONLY

Grout is needed to help to bring the whole design together and to fill the gaps between the tiles to protect the tiles and adhesive.

Purchase a good quality grout such as: Mapeii or tile-master. White grout draws the eye to the gaps rather than the coloured tiles. Greys and browns are much softer, with darker grouts making the colours appear more vivid.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and wear gloves when grouting. Prior to grouting, run a brush over the mosaic coasters to check all the tiles have adhered. Ideally do this the day before.

Use an empty plastic tub or mix the grout on a wooden board. When mixing the grout, first make a 'pyramid' shape with the powder and then make a 'well' in the middle. Slowly add the water mixing in-between. You want to achieve a thick cream consistency. If it is too wet, it will wash out of the joints between the tiles, but if too dry it won't go into the joints. You can clean the coaster with baby wipes or a soft damp cloth. Allow the grout to dry slowly and never place in direct sunshine as this can cause cracking.

When the grout is completely dry, you can then polish the coaster with a lint free cloth.

**How to make a paper mosaic. Instructions may be found at:**

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Paper-Mosaic>





# Two Thousand Years of Mosaics in England

Romans occupied Britain from the 1st to 4th centuries. During that time, some people built lavish villas and paid artists to decorate the walls, floors, pavements and ceilings with mosaics. Some of these mosaics can be seen today. They have been discovered and restored.

You can see Roman mosaics in museums and visit sites . Two of the best for school visits are:

## Fishbourne Palace and Gardens



Discovered in 1960  
Chichester Sussex. PO19 3QR  
01243 735859  
Further details:  
<https://sussexpast.co.uk/attraction/fishbourne-roman-palace/>

## Chedworth Roman Villa



Discovered in 1864. This site has been looked after by the National Trust since 1924.  
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 3LJ  
Further details: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chedworth-roman-villa](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chedworth-roman-villa)

## Look out for mosaics on public buildings

Tottenham Court Road Underground Station.  
London completed 1986



Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Redditch, Worcs 1981

These are all by sculptor, Eduardo Paolozzi (1924 - 2005)



# Some examples of Jackie Nash's work in schools

An exterior or interior mosaic can be a fine addition to a school building. It may be created by a professional artist or be done collaboratively with children, parents and teachers involved. Here are some examples from projects led by Birmingham artist Jackie Nash.



Jackie Nash is a mosaic artist who has been producing mosaics for private clients, schools and the community for over sixteen years.

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Teachers' workshops available.