

# Hokusai: Red Fuji

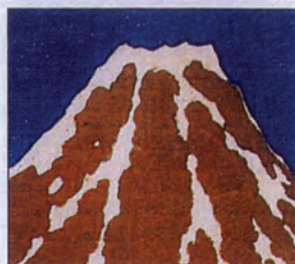
One of the artist's 36 depictions of a famous Japanese mountain.



**« SIGNATURE STAMP**  
The rectangle in the top left corner contains Hokusai's signature stamp, made by carving into a wooden block. Ask students: How does Hokusai's signature differ from those we usually see on art? Does its top left position make you notice it more or less? Does it feel like a part of the picture or something separate?



**« A HILL MADE OF WOOD?**  
Look closely together at the texture of the mountain. Can you tell what makes the surface look so rough? (It is the grain from the woodblock that made the mountain.) Encourage students to find other places where the wood shows through. (The white streaks at the base are markers of flaws in the wood.)



**« VOLCANIC WONDER**  
Mount Fuji is a dormant volcano that last erupted in 1707. It is an important symbol, deeply loved by the Japanese people. Ask students: How can you tell Fuji is a volcano? (Its top has a flat opening and carved white cracks.) Do these marks help draw attention to Fuji's opening? Why?

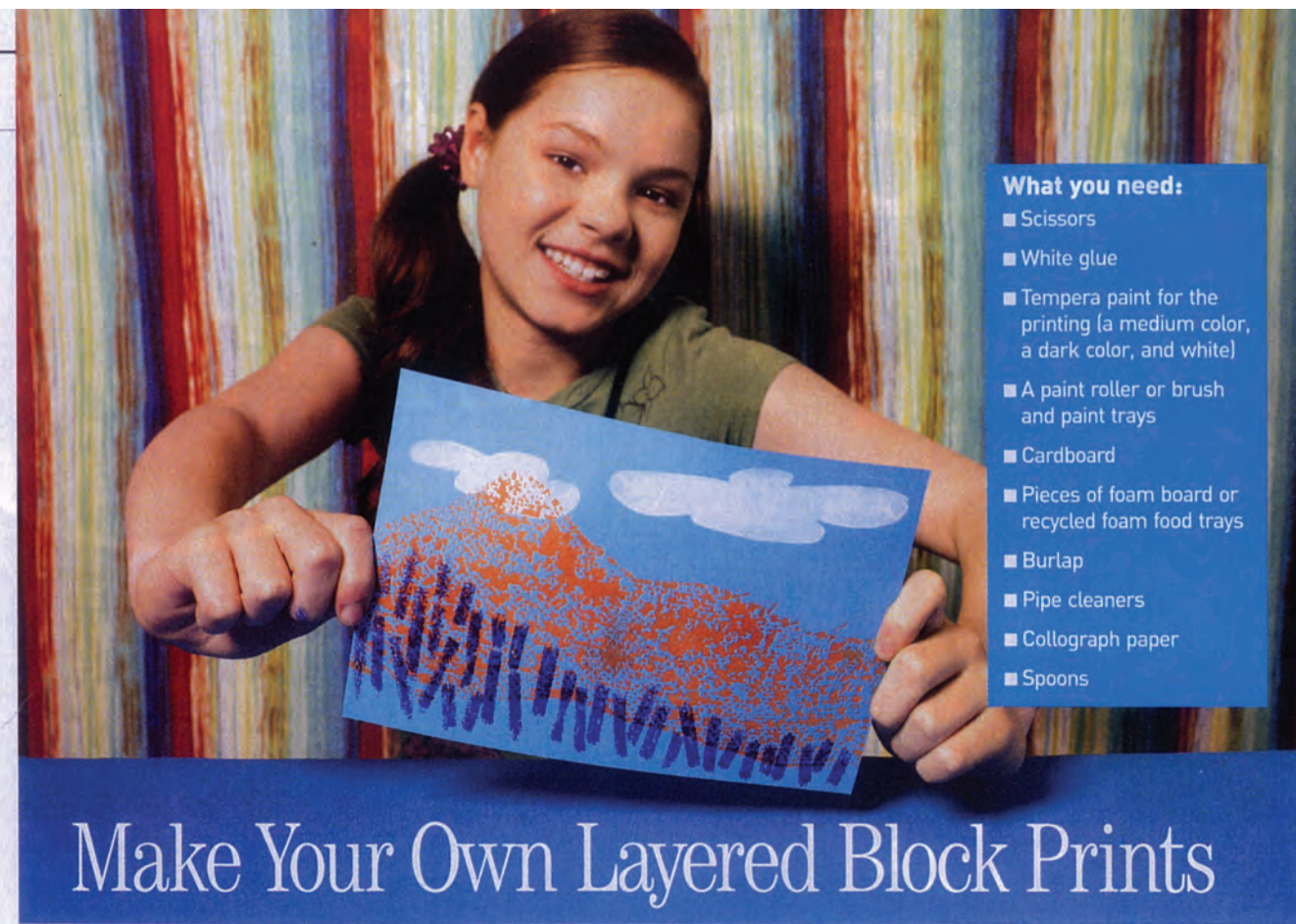


**« AM I BLUE?**  
Hokusai was the first Japanese artist to use Prussian Blue, a color loved by Western artists. Ask students to describe the mood that this intense blue creates. Is Mount Fuji a happy or a sad place? Peaceful or frantic?

## MEET THE ARTIST

Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai was born in Edo (now Tokyo) in 1760. He is known for the thousands of woodblock prints he made in a style called *ukiyo-e*. Ukiyo-e is a delicate and painstaking method of printmaking in which each color is applied with a single block of carved wood that is painted and pressed onto paper. Hokusai printed many city scenes, but his landscape prints are most famous, especially his images of Mount Fuji (or Fujiyama). Over Hokusai's lifetime he depicted Mount Fuji from many different angles and perspectives. His *36 Views of Mount Fuji* is one of the most renowned print series in the world. Hokusai's work was as influential in the West as it was in Japan. At 73, he wrote that although he started painting when he was five, it wasn't until after he was 70 that he did his best work!

HOKUSAI "MOUNT FUJI," THE NEWARK MUSEUM/ART RESOURCE, NY



### What you need:

- Scissors
- White glue
- Tempera paint for the printing (a medium color, a dark color, and white)
- A paint roller or brush and paint trays
- Cardboard
- Pieces of foam board or recycled foam food trays
- Burlap
- Pipe cleaners
- Collograph paper
- Spoons

## Make Your Own Layered Block Prints



**1.** Have students start with the clouds. Cut cloud shapes out of foam board and glue them to a piece of cardboard.



**2.** When the glue has dried and the clouds are firmly in place, prepare your paper, paint, and roller. Roll the paint onto the clouds.



**3.** Invert clouds onto collograph paper and rub with a spoon to apply color. Pull back the cloud "block" to see the image.



**4.** Next, using a new piece of cardboard, make a block with a mountain cut out of burlap. Paint it and repeat the printing process.



**5.** Lastly, glue pipe cleaners to the final block; they'll become the trees at the base of Mount Fuji. Repeat the inversion and rubbing.



**6.** Note: Once painted, the plates tend to warp as the cardboard dries. Place them under a heavy stack of books until they dry fully.