

The Great Wave

The Great Wave off Kanagawa, 1829 - 1833, is by the famous Japanese printmaker Katsushika Hokusai. Hokusai was known for his many printed views of Mount Fuji.

The Great Wave was created by a type of art called woodblock printmaking, where you carve a picture out of a block of wood. After you carve your picture on the surface of the wood - you paint it with ink and print it. Printmaking is similar to making a stamp that you can stamp or print, many times. Hokusai printed multiple copies by hand for the masses during the Edo period, you could not just click the print button in 1833!

Mount Fuji is the tallest mountain in Japan, so if you compare the size of the mountain to the size of the wave, the wave looks even bigger! Does the wave have fingers?



Lesson Goals: Draw your own big wave!

Activity:

- Start by drawing the curving line to divide the sky from the water. Everything above this line will be sky, everything below will be water.
- Next, divide the water area into two or three individual waves, they will be smaller than the tallest wave.
- Using small lines, add in the white caps to your waves. This can be done with different types of lines - zig zag, wavy, dotted and dashed are some good options! The more small details you add to your water the better!
- You can outline your pencil with a black marker, and color in your ocean with whatever supplies you have! Colored pencils, markers, crayons, etc.
- For your sky, think about what time of day you want to make it and plan your colors accordingly! For example, use black for night time, bright orange and red for a sunset, or soft pastel colors for early morning.

