

TIE DYE

TEACHER NOTE: After trying many different dyes from a variety of companies, the writers of this curriculum recommend purchasing supplies from CACHE JUNCTION, 1-800-333-3279. Their dyes work well and do not wash out.

Tie dyeing is a craft that dates back to ancient times in China, Japan, and India. It became popular in America among the "hippie" generation during the 60s. The 90s, somewhat a repeat of the 60s, has made tie dyeing popular again. The intent of tie dyeing in interior design is not necessarily to be a "flower child", but rather to see colors combine and experience a method of dyeing fabric.

Dye may come from a natural source such as onion skins, beets, roots, etc. These give a muted, natural color. Contemporary commercial dyes, like RIT dye will give more vibrant colors and offer a wider selection, but still are less vibrant than spray dyes that can be purchased in many craft stores.

Natural fabrics generally dye best. Cotton is the most readily available, but silk is best for a more delicate, intricate design. Nylon also dyes well. Light-weight fabrics tend to produce better results. You can experiment with techniques, but every design is unique and considered a work of art.

It might be fun first dye a pair of socks, then move on to a T-shirt or a broomstick skirt or matching outfit. A T-shirt, men's cotton boxers, and a pair of socks are other favorites.

TECHNIQUES

Designs are created by "tying off" an area of fabric. The idea is to dye part of the fabric while protecting other areas to create a design. The most common method is simply scrunching a handful of fabric together and wrapping it with an elastic. Wherever the elastic is placed, the fabric will remain the original color, creating a burst of color surrounded by a line the original color of the article. This design can be altered by placing a coin or stone inside the fabric before wrapping with the elastic.

There are many, many ways to tie the fabric. Try using tape on both sides of the garment to create lettering or stripes. Designs may also be hand stitched into the fabric, gathered together tightly and covered with plastic before dyeing to create specific designs such as hearts, stars, etc.

BATH DYEING

Prepare dye according to package directions. Place fabric in bath. Immerse all areas you desire to be dyed completely at least 10-15 minutes. Do not leave in longer than one hour. For more intense colors use hot water, allow the article to remain in the dye long periods of time, or add salt (1-2 cups per package). Natural dyes work best when heated in a pot on top of the stove and stirred. Agitation will give uniform results. Too little agitation results in splotchy spots, desirable if you want a marble or acid-wash effect.

Remove the fabric from the dye bath. DO NOT remove the elastics. Allow the project to dry on a well-protected surface for several hours, turning every hour for the first 4-5 hours and every 6 hours for the next 24 hours to avoid dark ridges from forming where the dye evaporates.

USING MORE THAN ONE COLOR

If a second color is desired, remove the article from the first dye bath, rinse in cool water until the water runs clear. Remove the ties and tie again in a new design. Place in the second color. Remove and rinse again. Remove the ties and dry on a hanger. The dye will continue to migrate until the cloth is dry. For a more distinct design, remove ties only after the garment is completely dry.

SETTING THE DYE

Heat set the dye by pressing with a hot iron, or by drying in a clothes dryer for about 20 minutes.

CARE OF THE FINISHED ARTICLE

To clean the garment after use, wash separately in cool water and mild detergent.

SPRAY DYEING

Most craft stores stock dye in spray bottles ready for immediate application. Any dye may be placed in a bottle and used as a spray, but the colors will not be as vibrant as commercial spray dyes. When spray dyeing, wear old clothing and cover an 8-10 foot area with plastic. Tie off the article and wet it for a muted, blended look. Spray thoroughly, spread open the folds (wear plastic gloves) and spray inside without

removing the elastics, to insure uniform dyeing. Turn and spray the other side of the article. If using more than one color, be careful to clean work areas before and after spraying the wet article.

Some designs can be created with spray dye that won't work using the bath method. A favorite is to twist the article starting at the center into a tight ball, then securing with three large elastics crisscrossing to create six areas. Spray each area a different color or alternate 2 or 3 colors. Spray the back of the article with corresponding colors.

Another popular design is to create the illusion of a sunflower. Simply tie a small portion of the fabric for the flower center, followed by a larger section for the petals, followed by an even larger section for the leaves. Spray each section separately, being careful of the over spray.

Spray dyeing may also be done on a dry garment. Simply place the article on a 3-5 foot plastic covered area. Twist or fold a design into the article you desire to dye and spray with the dye in the designated areas. When using more than one color, straighten the article and fold or twist into a new design, then spray. Continue this process until all the desired colors have been applied to the fabric. Hang in a protected area for 1-2 hours. Colors sprayed onto dry fabric will be more vibrant and will not migrate into other colors.

Allow the project to dry on a well-protected surface for several hours, turning every hour for the first 4-5 hours and every 6 hours for the next 24 hours to avoid dark ridges from forming where the dye evaporates.