



Summary:

In this topic, students explore how to create art using materials found in UK woodlands. They will investigate methods of extracting natural dyes from plants, learn how to craft their own drawing and painting tools, and engage with Japanese Hapa Zome techniques, a traditional method of creating patterns using leaves and flowers. This unit encourages sustainable art-making practices and a deeper connection with nature.

Natural Dyes from UK Woodlands

- Natural dyes can be made from plants such as berries, leaves, bark, and roots.
- Common UK sources include: elderberries (purple), nettles (green), oak bark (brown), and turmeric (yellow, though not native).
- Dyes are extracted by boiling the plant materials in water.
- Adding substances like vinegar or salt can help fix the colour to fabric or paper.
- Colour results can vary depending on the material, water type, and mordant used.

Creating Natural Pens and Brushes

- Simple tools can be made from sticks, feathers, or grass stems.
- Pen nibs can be carved from twigs or reeds for drawing.
- Brushes can be made by tying leaves, pine needles, or flower heads to a stick.
- Tool effectiveness depends on shape, stiffness, and material absorption.
- Using natural tools encourages experimentation and texture variety in artwork.

Japanese Hapa Zome Techniques

- Hapa Zome means “leaf dye” in Japanese and involves printing plant pigments onto fabric or paper.
- Fresh leaves and flowers are arranged on fabric and hammered to release natural pigments.
- This technique creates symmetrical patterns and captures the fine details of plant structures.
- Hapa Zome is both artistic and mindful, reflecting a respect for nature and traditional craft.
- Works best with freshly picked, moist plant matter.