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2021-2022

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Stitch in Time: Sashiko At Home

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"Stitch in Time Sashiko At Home" is a curriculum on the ancient art of SASHIKO. Sashiko is a type of needlework developed in Japan many centuries ago. Each region in Japan developed different Sashiko techniques. Learning the art of mending takes patience and increases mindfulness. It introduces students to the economy of upcycling and builds interest in our environment and community. The lessons primarily promote Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), the use of the three R's Reuse, Recycle, Repurpose, community involvement, and an appreciation of the fiber arts method of SASHIKO. The hands-on lessons offer a bridge to the history of the craft into present concerns in the evolving path of textiles. Music https://youtu.be/zSkcW5w_L1o

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **History of Sashiko**
- **Sashiko and upcycling (a short introduction to Boro)**
- **Materials used in the creation of Sashiko**
- **Glossary**
- **Patterns used in Sashiko**
- **Simple Sashiko- The straight stitch**
- **Sashiko and Geometry**

FLORIDA STATE STANDARDS

VISUAL ARTS

VA.5.S.1.3

Create artworks to depict personal, cultural, and/or historical themes.

VA.5.S.3.2

Use craftsmanship and technical ability in personal works to show the refinement of skills over time.

VA.5.C.3.1

Use the structural elements of art and organizational principles of design when engaged in art criticism.

MATHEMATICS

MAFS.5.G.1.1

DOMAIN-GEOMETRY

Use a pair of perpendicular number lines, called axes, to define a coordinate system, with the intersection of the lines (the origin) arranged to coincide with the 0 on each line and a given point in the plane located by using an ordered pair of numbers, called its coordinates. Understand that the first number indicates how far to travel from the origin in the direction of one axis, and the second number indicates how far to travel in the direction of the second axis, with the convention that the names of the two axes and the coordinates correspond (e.g., x-axis and x-coordinate, y-axis and y-coordinate).

SS.5.G.1.1

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The "*Stitch in Time Sashiko At Home*", engages students in an exploration of a very old stitching technique. The hands-on activities are based on collaboration, relationship building, community building, and socializing. Students will learn about ancient Sashiko mending techniques, experiential geometry, and the importance of upcycling. The lessons are infused with Social Emotional Learning (SEL). "Circle sharing" is an SEL technique that gives every child a chance to express themselves. It encourages active listening in a face-to-face or virtual classroom. In a cyber environment, it means remembering that relationships are at the heart of teaching and that every voice is important.

- Demonstrate an understanding of Sashiko. Describe, identify and compare decorative and functional textiles. Analyze the connection between stitching and mindfulness.
- Create an original textile piece using the sashiko technique.
- Evaluate the importance of upcycling and the practice of sustainability.
- Analyze, investigate, and present findings on Sashiko using the Internet and written resources.
- Recognize elements of design used in Sashiko and Boro.
- Examine the connection between textile and math.
- Produce Sashiko and Boro fabrics using a simple straight stitch technique.

COURSE OUTLINE/ CURRICULUM MAP OVERVIEW

Unit I **THE ART OF SASHIKO AND ITS HISTORY**

Students will:

- Understand the art of Sashiko and its importance in Japanese culture.
- Analyze the connection between stitching and mindfulness.
- Express their view of how Sashiko and other textile arts shape traditions and cultures.
- Practice transferring Sashiko patterns to fabric using various techniques.
- Practice using needles to make Sashiko mending on cloth.
- Understand and be able to describe cultural appropriation.

Unit 2 **UPCYCLING AND SASHIKO**

Students will:

- Research websites, books, and online resources related to Sashiko, sustainability, and Boro.
- Group report through presentations about the importance of upcycling and sustainability in Japanese culture.
- Create a small Boro piece using the technique of Sashiko.

Unit 3 **MATH AND SASHIKO**

Students will:

- Recall basic vocabulary of geometry.
- Describe the link between math and Sashiko.
- Compare the various geometric patterns found in Japanese art.
- Design a geometric pattern by incorporating asymmetry to create a sashiko embroidery.

LESSON PLAN- UPCYCLING & SASHIKO

Big Idea:

VA.5.C– Critical Thinking and Reflection

VA.5.S – Skills, techniques, and Processes

VA.5.O – Organizational Structure

Essential Question (s):

What is Sashiko?

Why was reusing, recycling, and repurposing so important to the Japanese from the 1600s to the 1800s?

What is cultural appropriation?

Benchmark (s):

VA.5.3.C.1

VA.5.S.2.1

V.5.O.1.3

Art History & Art Appreciation Connections:

Sashiko History

Vocabulary:

Sashiko, sustainability, cultural appropriation, slow stitching, reusing, recycling, repurposing

Discuss: Sashiko, its history, and original utilitarian purpose.

Connect: Students will research websites, books, and online resources related to sashiko, sustainability, and Boro. Students collaborate on a presentation on the history of sashiko

Studio Experience:

Students will collect old jeans and old white cotton shirts to be used for a sashiko artwork. Students will practice slow stitching using the straight stitch.

Assess/Connect: Checklists, Oral critique

SEL: 21st-century skills focus on communication, critical thinking, collaboration.

Apps, Documents, Videos, Virtual Museum, VA SharePoint)

https://youtu.be/DSfIzxr8rys

Materials:

Paper, pencil, ruler, internet, books, needle, thread, scissors

STEAM Connections:

The science behind sustainability teaches students their connection to the environment and how they can positively impact it.

HISTORY OF ***Sashiko*** (刺し子, *lit., "little stabs"*)

Sashiko (刺し子, *lit., "little stabs"*) as a rural craft developed in Japan around the 1600s as a practical activity for repairing used and worn-out garments. All fibers during this era were hand-spun, hand-woven, and dyed by hand into linen, hemp, ramie, and other natural materials. The labor-intensive processes of making fiber led people to recycle the clothing from winterwear outfits to workwear, to aprons, to cleaning cloths, all with the help of sashiko mending. The traditional Sashiko used a plain running stitch technique to piece together repurposed clothing and for patching broken pieces. This type of hand sewing became vital to farming communities and the economy. White cotton and Indigo dyes were inexpensive and became the main materials used for Sashiko. During the 1800s northern Japanese communities, established Sashiko as winter work when it was too cold outdoors to work.

*12 - Sashiko was started in the Edo period of Japan (1603-1868) when women would mend tattered garments and bedding to make them last longer. The form of Sashiko mending became known as **boro**. The very decorative art of Sashiko was born out of necessity to preserve textiles and extend their life. Learning the skill of Sashiko became essential for young girls and the technique was passed down mother to daughter.*

*13 - **Sashiko** is a form of stitching or needlework. **Boro** is the result of continuous Sashiko on fabric. Sashiko in Japan is a mindful activity in which you enjoy a dialogue with the fabric.*

Figure 1. Furoshiki detail.

Figure 2 (left). Farmhouse-exterior.
Figure 3 (right). Farmhouse-interior.

A Northern Farmer's Japanese home and the interior

The winters in northern Japan are long, cold and snowy. Clothing made with sashiko included three or more quilted layers of reused fabric.

Learning the skill of Sashiko became essential for young girls and the technique was passed down mother to daughter.

Sashiko- The Three Rs-Reusing, Recycle, Repurpose

Reusing, recycling, and repurposing textiles and other goods have been a practice in Japan for centuries. Cotton was a commodity in Northern Japan because it was impossible for the plant to grow there in cold weather. In the 1600s West Japanese traders sold used and discarded indigo cloth to poorer Northern rural communities. The farm women reused these fabrics and repurposed them into clothing, futon covers, and household textiles. The discarded fabrics were patched together using sashiko stitches and sometimes boro patching. The newly assembled pieces became soft, warm clothing with beautiful and decorative designs. The art of sashiko was spread through different regions of Japan. By the 1950s the popularity of sashiko declined with the introduction of mass produced fabrics.

Today old sashiko garments and remnants are prized possessions found in modern museums around the world. In the 21st century, sashiko is sought after as a therapeutic and mindful practice.

MATERIALS

SASHIKO Requires few materials that are basic to your sewing kit:

Materials for Sashiko:

1. **long or short embroidery needle**- Traditional **Sashiko needles** come in three **sizes**: 66.7mm in **length** x 1.02mm. 44.5mm in **length** x 0.97mm. 51.5mm in **length** x 0.84mm. Contemporary embroidery uses whatever needle you have available.
2. **yarn or thread**- Sashiko thread is traditionally a tightly twisted heavy-weight **cotton** thread. Contemporary Sashiko uses common **cotton embroidery floss**, size 8 or 12 **pearl cotton**, or fine **crochet cotton**
3. **ruler-** optional regular ruler or quilter's ruler
4. **scissors-** fabric scissors
5. **fine line marker-** optional marking pen to draw patterns
6. **fabric-** cotton, hemp, jean, burlap or any available fabric
7. thimble

GLOSSARY

- **SASHIKO-Sashiko** is a traditional form of Japanese hand embroidery or sewing technique that uses running stitches to create repeating over-all patterns.

- **BACK STITCH-** An embroidery stitch where stitches are sewn backwards to the direction of the sewing.
- **BORO**
- **CARBON PAPER-** A paper coated on one side with carbon or another pigmented substance. Used for transfering patterns to fabric.
- **COTTON EMBROIDERY FLOSS-**Made of six individual mercerized strands, this is the most common type of embroidery thread.
- **LONG AND SHORT STITCH-**A series of embroidery stitches that result in a brick-like pattern. A good stitch for filling larger areas and to use in projects.
- **moyōzashi** -Long stitch in Japanese
- **naminui** (Running Stitching)
- **PERLE COTTON-**Very high quality, non-divisible thread. It is highly mercerized quite strong, and comes in a range of thicknesses
- **RECYCLE**- converting waste into reusable materials.
- **REPURPOSE**- adapting and reusing for a different purpose.
- **REUSE**- using something more than once.
- **STRAIGHT STITCH-**The most basic or embroidery stitches, this long, straight stitch can be left on its own or stitched in groups to form shapes and patterns.
- SUSTAINABILITY- avoiding the depletion of natural resources.
- **WATER SOLUBLE MARKER-**used to draw an embroidery pattern onto fabric. The marks are easily removed when rinsed under cold water.

RESOURCES: The Ultimate Sashiko Sourcebook, (2016) David & Charles

Sashiko Mending

LESSON PLAN-SASHIKO AND MATH

Big Idea:

VA.5.C– Critical Thinking and Reflection

VA.5.S – Skills, techniques, and Processes

VA.5.O – Organizational Structure

MAFS.5.G.1.1

Essential Question (s):

What is the connection between sashiko and math?

What is imperial and metric measurements? How are they used to create sashiko?

Benchmark (s):

VA.5.3.C.1

VA.5.S.2.1

V.5.O.1.3

Art History &

Art Appreciation Connections:

Sashiko and Geometric Patterns in Japanese art.

Vocabulary:

Sashiko, geometry, grids, carbon paper, metric measurements, imperial, metric measurement, symmetrical, asymmetrical, compass

Discuss: There is a great connection between the art of Sashiko and math. In order to create Sashiko textiles, you must also understand the underlying concept behind geometry and polygon pattern creation. The math in sashiko starts with the basic geometry of an underlying grid of parallel lines. The grid determines how the patterns are sewn. The longest, most continuous parallel lines are sewn before shorter, connecting lines.

Connect: View and discuss videos on Sashiko.

Studio Experience:

Students will draw a geometric sashiko patterns on paper using a grid and metric or imperial measurements. Students will tranfer the design to fabric to begin sashiko.

Assess/Connect: Students will write a short essay about their sashiko pattern and meaning.

SEL: Circle sharing is an SEL technique that gives each child a chance to express themselves. It encourages active listening.

Apps, Documents, Videos, Virtual Museum, VA SharePoint) https://youtu.be/DSfIzxr8rys

Materials: Paper, pencil, ruler, optional: curved templates, shape circles, protractor, coins, carbon paper

Accessibility Notes: To modify the lesson, use larger shape templates and grid paper, providing one on one assistance.

LESSON PLAN- SASHIKO- STRAIGHT STITCH

Big Idea:

VA.5.C–Critical Thinking and Reflection

VA.5.S – Skills, techniques, and Processes

VA.5.O – Organizational Structure

Essential Question (s):

What is a running stitch/ straight stitch?

How many patterns can we create using the straight stitch?

What is sashiko? What are different types of sashiko?

Benchmark (s):

VA.5.3.C.1

VA.5.S.2.1

V.5.O.1.3

Art History &

Art Appreciation Connections:

Sashiko and Contemporary Art

Vocabulary:

Sashiko, backstitch, carbon paper, cotton embroidery floss, long and short stitch, slow stitching

Discuss: Discuss the art of Sashiko using visuals.

Connect: View and discuss videos on Sashiko.

Studio Experience: Students will draw a geometric sashiko pattern on paper and learn how to trace images to fabric.

Assess/Connect: Assess completion and craftsmanship of student artwork that shows an understanding of Sashiko patterns.

SEL: Sequential lessons; Active lessons where youth have opportunities to practice skills, Focused where time is set aside for skill development; Explicit where programs target specific skills.

Apps, Documents, Videos, Virtual Museum

https://youtu.be/DSfIzxr8rys

Materials:

Paper, pencil, ruler, fabric, needle, thread, transfer paper, scissors

STEAM Connections:

Chemistray in Art: Student learn about indigo and natural dyes

DIFFERENT TYPES OF SASHIKO- STRAIGHT STITCHES

There are 5 main kinds of sashiko and they are *Moyozashi, hitomezshi*, *Shonai* sashiko, and *shone sashiko*. If indigo is used to dye the fabric then it is called kakurezachi.

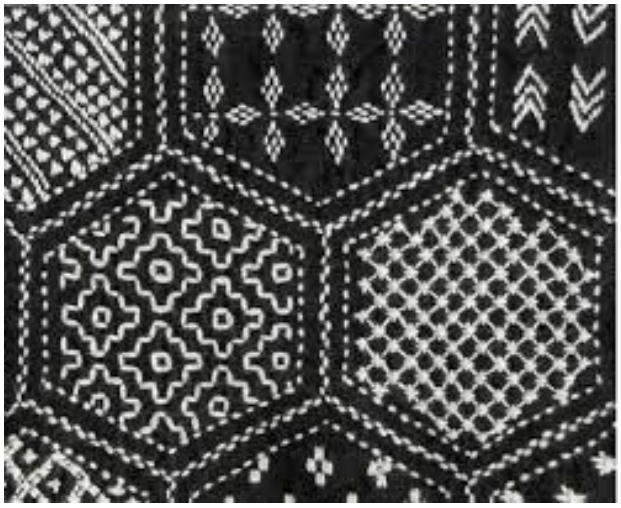
Resources: https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/using-joomla/extensions/components/search-component/smart-search?q=sashiko

1 - Moyozashi *uses a running stitch to create reapeating linear designs.*

2 - Hitomezshi is made up of many small straight stitches that look more like a weaving pattern. The placement of stitches in relation to one another has the potential for innumerable pattern variations. In Hitomaezashi each stitch is a segment of a design motif repeated across the fabric. It is sewn in horizontal parallel lines, then in vertical parallel lines. The outcome when completed is a visual patchwork of different patterns.

How to stitch sashiko: https://www.athreadedneedle.com/blogs/with-a-threaded-needle/kogin-sashiko-stitching

Figure 16. Hitomaezashi (one-stitch sashiko).

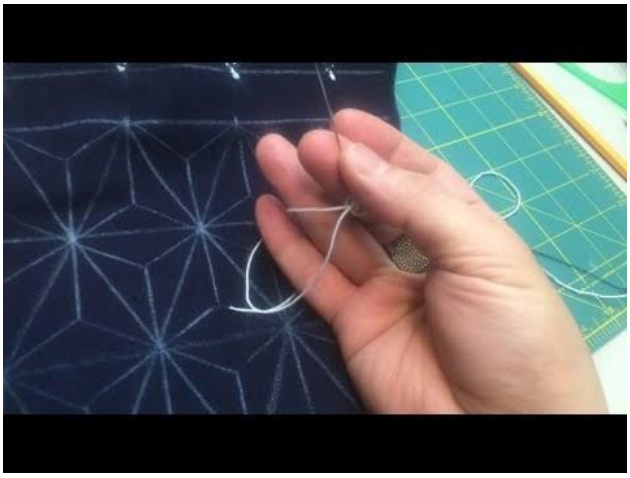


3 - Shonai Sashiko is a traditional stitching technique from northwestern Japan. It uses the straight stitch

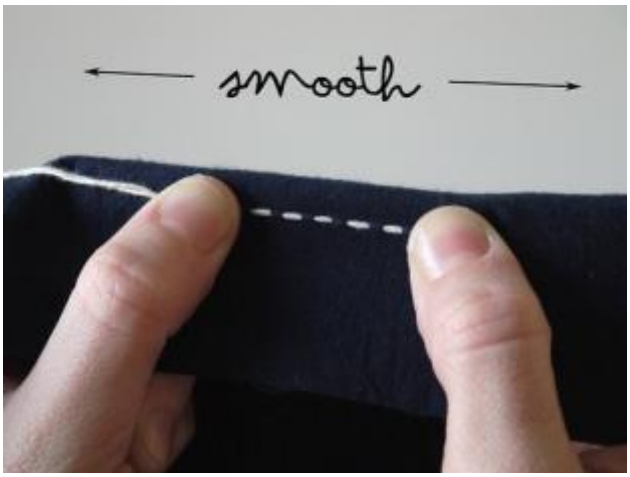
RESOURCES AND EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS

A history of Japanese Textiles

Getting Started with Straight Stitch



STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS



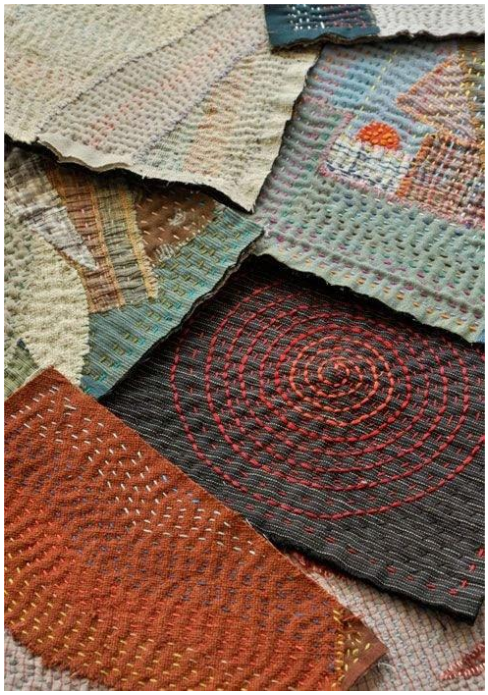
9 -

1. *Cut a contrasting thread 20-24" long (optional-run your Sashiko thread through beeswax to make it glide easier*
2. *thread it through the large eye of a sharp needle, and make a single knot at the end (traditional Sashiko does not use a knot). (optional-you can use a threader if you need support)*

What is na mi nui method*? It is the running or straight stitch in Japanese.*

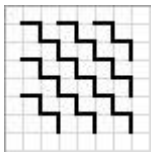
1. *Bring the needle in from the bottom an up and through down again. Make sure all your stitches are the same width.*

UPCYCLING SHEETS & BORO



Akiko Ike of Niigata, embroidering in Sashiko style. She incorporates the principles of Boro using the running stitch. She uses bold, huge stitches using thick yarns on her fabrics.

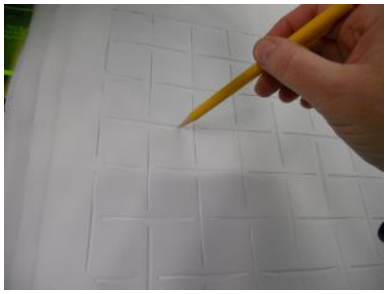
1. *Gather various yarns, embroidery floss, scissors and wide eye needles.*
2. *Use an old sheet, blanket, or any cotton fabric to upcycle using the technique of Sashiko.*
3. *Practice the running or straight stitch by making a hem all around the blanket or fabric.*
4. *Use rhythmic long lines being mindful to make them all the same width.*



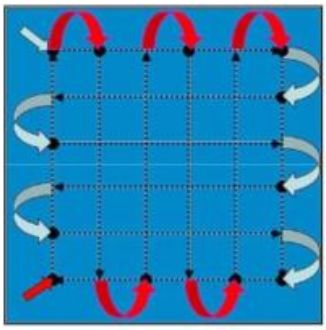
HOW TO DRAW A GEOMETRIC SASHIKO PATTERN

Materials: Pencil or marker, ruler, paper

You can download [free downloadable patterns]() from the Internet but the fun is in creating your own. Get inspiration from traditional Japanese patterns



- *STEPS: Draw a grid of 2 inch squares using a ruler*
- *Study Japanese patterns or create your own pattern.*
- *Choose a simple geometric shape and repeat into a pattern.*
- *Trace to blue fabric using white transfer paper or draw the grid directly on fabric any color.*



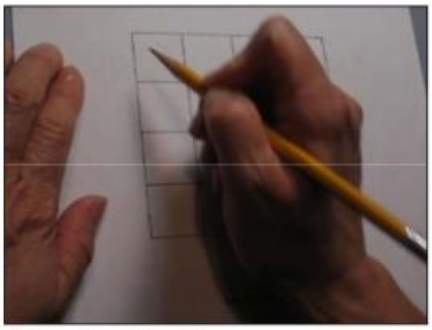
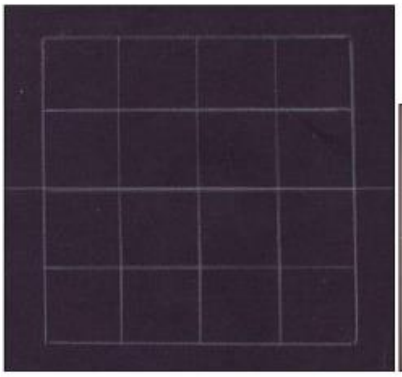


Figure 8 (left). Working through the grid.
Figure 9 (right). Drawing the dashes



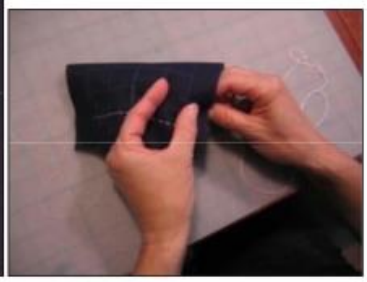
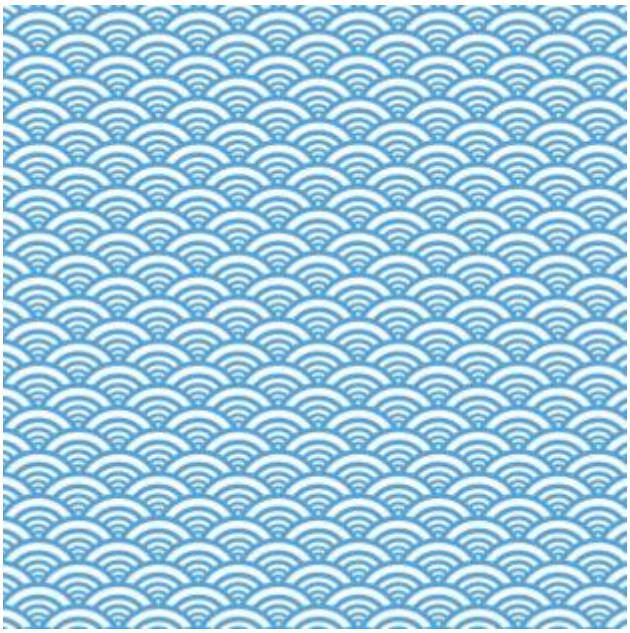
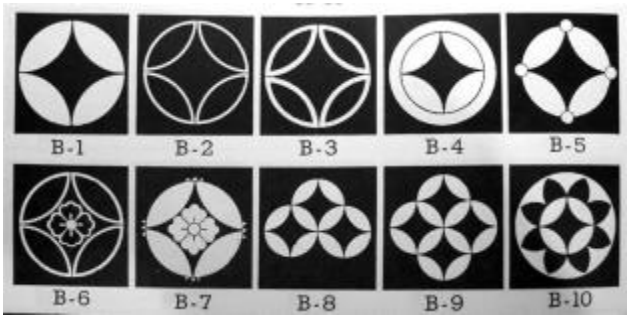


Figure 11 (left). Blue fabric with chalk grid.
Figure 12 (right). Sewing lines of stitches.

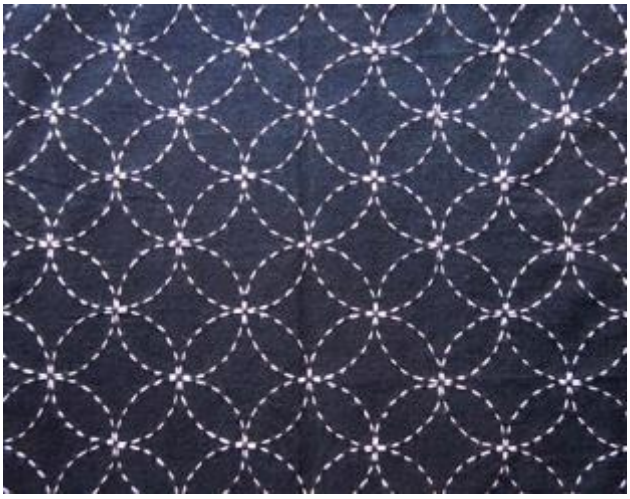
TRADITIONAL JAPANESE PATTERNS



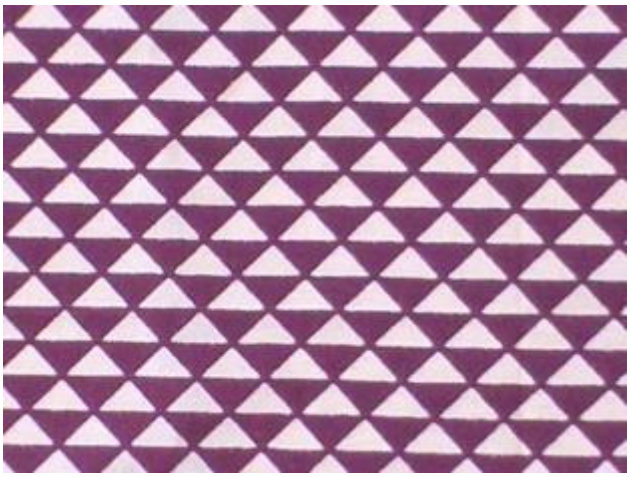
18 - Seigaiha (blue ocean waves). It is considered the symbol of peace, good luck, and good fortune.



19 - Shippo (Seven Treasures in Japanese) - its meaning is the unending chain of expansion of harmony and peace.

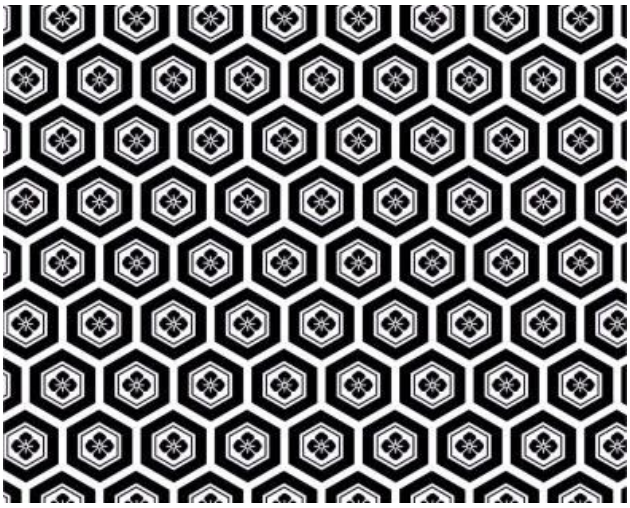


20 - Choose one of the Shippo designs and repeat on the gridded square.



21 - Uroko pattern is used a a talisman to ward off evil.

22 - Kagome pattern resembles a bamboo basket. Another meaning given to this patttern is to enclose the spirit of man or child and keep them from wandering.



23 - Kikko (Tortoiseshell) is a hexagonal pattern and a symbol of a long life.