

Contents



How to Use This Book v

Subject Area Correlation vi



Clues to the Region 1

The Shape of the Mekong River 7



Money and Trade in Southeast Asia 11

There's a Proverb That Says 16



Vietnamese Folktales 20

Buddhism: Jataka Tales 23



Music in Indonesia 27

 Music in Indonesia: The Gender 31

 Music in Indonesia: The Gambang 33



Shadow Theater 35



Batik 41

Cooking of Southeast Asia 46



 Clear Soup 48

 Cabbage Salad with Cucumbers and Peanuts 49



 Lemongrass Chicken 50

 Stir Fry Pork with Garlic 51



Building a House 52

A Conversation in 54



 A Conversation in Thai 55

 A Conversation in Tagalog 56



 A Conversation in Bahasa Indonesia 57

Hmong Story Cloths 59



Myanmar: What's in a Name? 64

The Game of Congklak 67



Resources 70

Glossary 73

How to Use This Book

This book, like the others in the *Hands-On Culture* series by J. Weston Walch, Publisher, has been designed to help middle school teachers integrate the study of a culture into the curriculum. Textbooks can teach students about the history and geography of an area, but to gain any real understanding, students must also be exposed to the art and traditions of a culture. *Hands-on Culture of Southeast Asia* provides 15 ready-to-use activities to help you do just that. Through the projects in this book, students will be exposed to Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese cooking, Indonesian shadow puppets, and more.

Most of the projects in this book work well either as individual projects or as group activities. You should read both the teacher notes and student pages completely before presenting the activity to students. When a project requires setting up of a workstation, as in the fresco and cooking projects, you may find it best to divide the class into groups and set up several work areas. You may also find a group approach helpful for some of the other projects. As students deal with such unfamiliar material as the Indonesian language, they may find it less intimidating to work together to find solutions.

By their nature, all these projects are interdisciplinary. All are appropriate for a social studies class. Most are appropriate for an art class. Some activities are also appropriate for other subject areas; the correlation chart on page *vi* presents these links. Some activities could be done in several different classes.

All the projects have been structured so that the teacher presenting the activity does not need to know either the historical context for an activity or the procedure for doing the project. Full background details are provided where needed. You can share some or all of this information with students if you wish, but it is not necessary for student completion of the project. The step-by-step student instructions for the activities should need no other explanation. All activities have been tested with middle and high school students.

To help demonstrate the process, you may find it helpful to keep one or two examples of student work for each activity. The next time you present the activity, show the student work as models. When dealing with unfamiliar material, it can help students to have a general idea of what is expected of them. I hope that you and your students enjoy this book, and that it helps deepen your students' understanding and appreciation of the cultures of Southeast Asia.

Subject Area Correlation

	SOCIAL STUDIES	ENGLISH	ART	MUSIC	MATH
Clues to the Region	x				
The Shape of the Mekong River	x		x		x
Money and Trade in Southeast Asia	x		x		x
There's a Proverb That Says . . .	x	x			
Vietnamese Folktales	x	x			
Buddhism: Jataka Tales	x	x	x		
Music in Indonesia	x			x	
Shadow Theater	x		x		
Batik	x		x		
Cooking of Southeast Asia	x				
Building a House	x		x		
A Conversation in . . .	x	x			
Hmong Story Cloths	x		x		
Myanmar: What's in a Name?	x	x			
The Game of Congklak	x		x		x

Batik



OBJECTIVES

Social Studies

- Students will see how a visual art can be used to transmit culture.

Art

- Students will create a piece of batiked fabric.

MATERIALS

Batik handout

for fabric batik:

color wheel

paraffin wax

paper and pencil

charcoal

old brushes (They cannot be reused for paint after being used for batik, because of the wax residue.)

white cotton fabric (Old sheeting works well; do not use synthetic fabrics, as they do not take dye well.)

cold-water dyes

old coffee can or other disposable metal container for each workstation

hot plate or electric burner for each workstation

sheets of old newspaper

iron

optional: examples or photographs of Indonesian batiked cloth

BACKGROUND

The art of batik was developed by women in royal families to make hand-decorated clothing; at first, certain patterns were allowed only for court use. Eventually, the making of batiks became widespread. Batiks were worn by men and by women as head coverings, shawls, and sarongs (a wraparound skirt worn by both men and women). The original dyes, applied to a creamy, off-white cloth, were a deep blue made from indigo and a brown made from *soga* bark. Now dyes of many colors are used.

Making batiks by hand with a *tjanting* (pronounced “chanting”) is a time-consuming process. A *tjanting* is a tool used to apply hot wax to cloth. Fine hemp or cotton cloth is used. A special formula of beeswax and paraffin wax is applied to the cloth in intricate patterns with a *tjanting*. Then the cloth is dyed in the first color—in traditional batiks, indigo blue. All unwaxed areas turn blue. When the cloth is dry, some of the wax is removed, revealing cream-colored undyed areas. (Where the wax is not removed, the designs will remain cream.) Those areas to remain blue are waxed, and the cloth is then dyed brown. After this final dye the

cloth is rinsed in hot water to remove all the wax. The completed design uses cream, blue, brown, and dark brown (where the indigo and brown overdyed each other).

SPECIAL NOTES

- This is a rewarding project, but it takes several class sessions to complete, as the cloth must dry thoroughly between wax applications. This can be simplified by using only one color of dye for each batik.
- This project can be successfully completed by students as young as upper elementary school. However, because of the use of hot plates and melted wax, safety precautions are important. Every workstation must have adult supervision; parents are often willing to volunteer.

PREPARATION

- If you are using new fabric, wash and iron it before beginning the project to remove any sizing used by the manufacturer. Avoid using synthetic or permanent press fabrics, as they do not take dye well.
- Set up a separate area for dyeing. Protect it well with layers of newspaper. Plastic gallon milk containers with the tops cut off make good disposable dye containers. Use a dye specially formulated for cold-water use, as hot-water dyes will melt the wax.
- Set up as many wax centers as possible. The fewer students who share each wax pot, the less likely accidental upsets will be. Make sure each table is supervised by an adult. Protect the work surface with newspaper. Use a hot plate or single electric ring (placed on a sheet of metal) as the heat source. Place a pan of water on the electric ring, and stand the wax pot in the water. *Wax should never be heated over direct heat, as it is highly combustible.* The wax is hot enough when it penetrates cloth easily. Test it on a scrap of cloth.

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute the handout. If possible, show photographs or examples of batiked fabric.
2. Use a color wheel to show students how different colors of dye will interact with each other. Ask students for two color names, then see what will happen if one is overdyed on the other. This should help students work out a color sequence for dyeing. Alternatively, you may wish to choose one color sequence for all students, to minimize the number of dyes to set up.
3. Direct students to choose a color sequence, keeping in mind the effects of overdyeing and the fact that colors must go from light to dark. Have them write their color sequences on the top of their drawing paper. As they work on their designs, check the color sequences to be sure that they are possible.
4. Demonstrate the best way to wax fabric: dip the brush in the wax, keeping it there long enough for the brush to get hot; move the brush quickly to the fabric and make two or three strokes on the fabric; reload the brush with wax

and repeat. You may want to hold a piece of cardboard under the brush with your other hand to keep wax from dripping on the fabric.

5. Students proceed to wax the areas of the cloth that will remain white. To dye the fabric, immerse it in the dye until it is a shade darker than desired, as it will appear lighter when it dries. Remove the cloth from the dye and rinse it gently in lukewarm water. Do not squeeze or wring the fabric, as this will damage the wax. Hang the fabric to dry.
6. At the next session, students wax the areas to stay the color of the first dye bath, then proceed as before.
7. When the finished fabric is dry, you need to remove the accumulated wax. Place the batik between sheets of old newspaper. Press with a hot iron, keeping the iron in motion. The heat of the iron will melt the wax into the newspaper. As the sheets of paper become soaked with wax, place the cloth between fresh papers and iron again. Continue ironing and changing the paper until all the wax has been removed. If some residue remains, making the fabric stiff, you may want to leave it, as it will increase the brightness of the colors. If the batik is intended as clothing, it may need dry cleaning to remove the last of the wax.

VARIATION

While not as authentic as the fabric batik, this paper batik can give students a feel for the technique, in far less time, and without calling for pots of hot wax and dye.

Materials

- paper and pencils
- crayons
- India ink
- brushes

After discussing the batik technique, have students prepare drawings on paper, then fill in the areas of color with crayon. When the entire image area has been filled with color, brush India ink over the whole sheet. The waxed areas will resist the ink, creating an effect somewhat similar to that of batik.



Batik



Batik is a technique for decorating fabric. It is based on the fact that wax keeps out water. In batik, areas of fabric are coated with melted wax. When the wax has cooled, the fabric is dyed. Because the dye cannot penetrate the waxed areas, these areas do not change color.

The very simplest kind of batik consists of areas of white against a colored ground. But Indonesian artisans developed much more complex types of batik. One piece of cloth may be waxed and dyed a number of times. By the time the piece is finished, the background is a very deep color, with intricate multicolored designs.

No one knows where the technique of using wax resist to dye cloth was first used. Artisans from India brought the technique to Indonesia centuries ago. Over the years, Indonesian artists made this craft distinctively theirs. One contribution was a tool to make applying the wax easier. This tool is called the *tjanting* (pronounced “chanting”). It looks like a small copper funnel. The bowl part holds a small supply of hot wax. The fine spout is used to apply the wax. Because the opening in the spout is so small, it is possible to make very fine lines and dots of wax—much finer than can be made using a brush.



Detail of batiked fabric

Traditional Indonesian batik designs include geometric shapes and shapes based on flowers, birds, and animals. The *garuda*, a mythical bird, is often used. So are the phoenix and the dragon.

One challenge in designing a batik is that you cannot apply dyes in the same way as paint. When you use paints to add color to a design, you can control the colors, and use as many different colors as you want in a painting. But when you dye cloth, colors combine, just as if you were mixing the colors on a palette. For example, if you put a piece of yellow fabric in blue dye, the fabric will not come out blue. The blue and the yellow will combine to make green. Also, a light-colored dye will not show up on a dark one. Brown will show up over yellow, but yellow will not show up on brown. So when batik artists begin to work out a design, they must choose their colors carefully, and work out the order they want to dye them in.



You can do your own batik, using a simple version of the Indonesian technique.

(continued)

