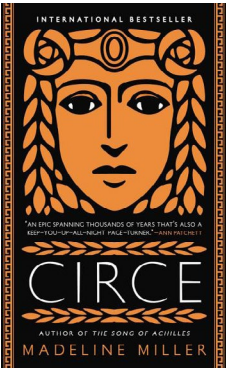


THE BIG LITTLE READ

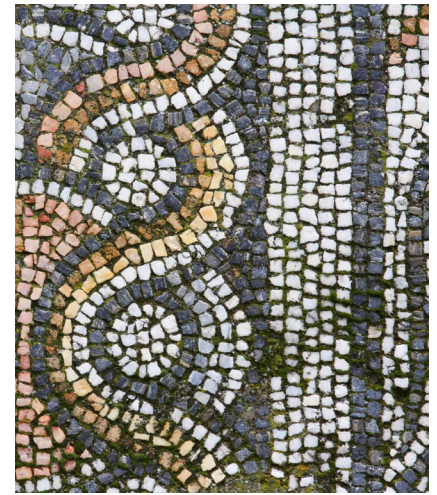
Ancient Greek Designs and Patterns



WAM loves readers! The Wichita Public Library organizes The Big Read every year, encouraging Wichitans to read a book as a community. This year's Big Read selection is *Circe* by Madeline Miller, a novel about the Greek goddess Circe. This fun artmaking activity pairs with this year's book selection, and uses simple materials you have on hand at home.

"It's all Greek to me!" Imagine traveling back in time, more than 3,500 years ago, to experience life

in ancient Greece. The Greeks have helped shaped the Western world today with many of their discoveries and ways of life. In fact, mosaic art and design originated from the ancient Greeks. Mosaic comes from the Latin word "musaicum," meaning "work of the Muses." In Greek mythology, the Muses were the nine sisters who represented the arts. The early mosaics, many that have still survived today, were made in the floors of Greek homes in the 1400s BCE (before common era). The floors were constructed out of natural clay, and bits of pottery were stamped into the floor to create a firm and more durable surface. People began making the floors look nicer by pressing colored stones and special tiles into the wet clay to create elaborate mosaics. Greeks used specially cut square-shaped tiles called *tesserae* (tess-uh-ree). Some designs represented scenes or beautiful patterns. By today's definition, mosaic refers to a surface decoration made by inlaying small pieces of variously colored material to form pictures or geometric patterns.



Mosaic floor from Aphrodisias



π

In addition to creating patterns and designs in the floors, Greeks saw patterns and numbers in everything! Greek mathematicians were the first to discover many mathematical formulas we still use today, such as the *Pythagorean Theorem*. They were the first to discover π —the lowercase Greek letter sometimes spelled out as *pi*. Pi is used by mathematicians to define a circle's circumference (the distance around the outside edge) to its diameter (width) and is derived from the first letter of the Greek word *perimetros*, meaning circumference. The Greek mathematicians also defined the word "geometry," which means "to measure the earth" as a system of explaining measurements, angles, and mathematical formulas. Numbers are everything!

GO FIND!



Look for this mosaic artwork in the first-floor gallery, in the *Foot in the Door* exhibition. Its position is D-137.

What do you see? Does this picture remind you of anything?

How do the lines and colors you see make you feel?

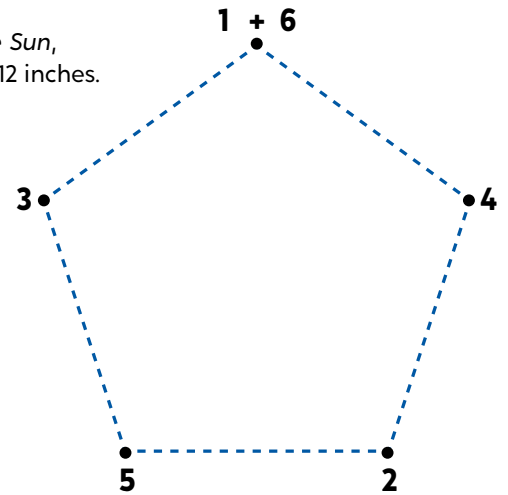
Can you find any repeating colors or patterns?

There are at least four more mosaic artworks in this exhibition. Can you find them?

Kate Pepper, *Here Comes the Sun*, 2020. Glass and ceramic, 12 x 12 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

GO EXPLORE!

In about 600 BCE, the Greeks began studying numbers. A famous mathematician, Pythagoras, and his followers, devoted their lives to studying math and a belief that numbers served as a basis for all things in life. They looked for patterns to better understand mathematics. They were fascinated and marveled by the magic of math. The Pythagoreans used a secret sign, the *pentacle* (pent-tuh-cul). A pentacle is a never-ending line to create a star shape they believed helped ward off evil.



Follow the dot-to-dot to draw a pentacle in one line by not lifting the pencil from the paper. Notice the outside shape of the pentacle forms a pentagon (a five-sided shape). How clever!

GO CREATE!



You can become a master mosaic artist by cutting your own paper tesserae! When creating your mosaic, you can explore two principles of design: Unity and Variety. **Unity** is the arrangement in your artwork to create a sense of harmony and completeness. Using repeated colors or the same repeating shape are ways you can create unity in your composition. **Variety** is combining different elements in your artwork to create visual interest. Using some different colors or shapes of paper will create variety in your artwork.

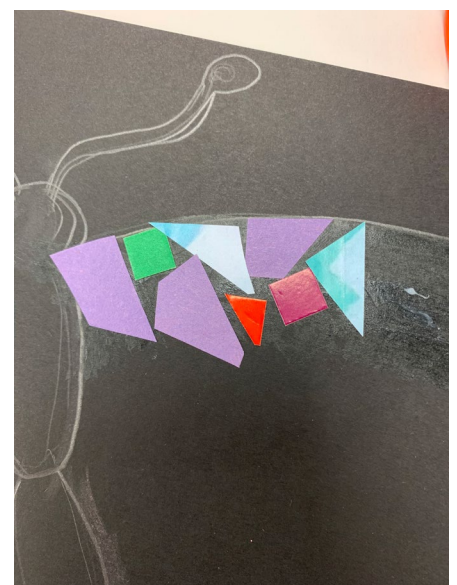


MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

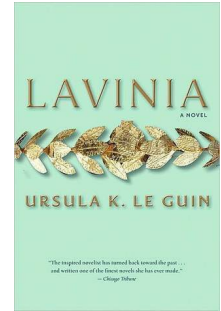
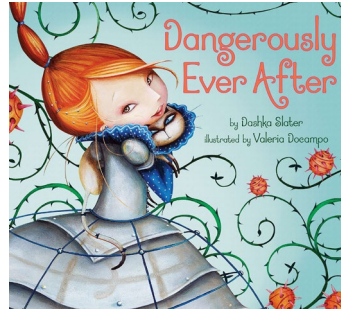
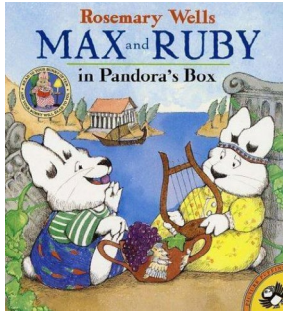
- Black paper
- Scraps of paper in various designs or colors (you can even use magazines!)
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Pencil

DIRECTIONS

1. Sketch your design onto your black paper using a pencil. Make a design or picture with large shapes.
2. Cut the paper into long strips. The wider the strips, the larger the tiles will be.
3. Stacking the strips on top of each other, decide if you want to cut the strips into small square pieces (unity) or different shapes (variety) such as ones with angles.
4. Be sure to cut plenty of paper tiles for your artwork! You can also decide to use one color, a few colors, or a variety of colors. You're the artist!
5. Start in a small area of your design. Lay some glue down and start adding in your tiles, leaving a small bit of space between them so that the black paper shows in between the tiles.
6. Keep adding the tiles, fitting them together like a puzzle. You may need to cut some to fit a certain space in your design.
7. Don't forget to fill in the background and space around your design as well!



The Wichita Public Library organizes the Big Read every year, encouraging participants to read a book as a community. This year's Big Read selection is *Circe* by Madeline Miller. Check out these companion books to the Big Read selection, perfect for younger readers. Kids of all ages will enjoy learning about the world of ancient Greece.



Preschool—*Max and Ruby in Pandora's Box* by Rosemary Wells

Primary—*Dangerously Ever After* by Dashka Slater

Intermediate—*Zeus the Mighty: Quest for the Golden Fleas (#1)* by Crispin Boyer

Middle school—*The Lost Hero (Heroes of Olympus #1)* by Rick Riordan

High School—*Lavinia* by Ursula K. Le Guin



The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts designed to revitalize the role of literature in American culture and bring the transformative power of literature into the lives of citizens. The Big Read brings together partners across the country to encourage citizens to read for pleasure and enlightenment.



Managed by Arts Midwest