

# Block Print: Wandering Dog

by Kim Fjordbotten

## Materials

Photograph of animal or pet  
Speedball Speedy-Cut Easy (special image transfer block for carving)  
Lino cutter handle and assorted lino cutters

## Goal

Students learn how to transfer a photo onto a lino block to create multiple handmade art prints. Discuss how a print looks different from a photo. Is one more interesting or more artistic than the other? Discuss the advantages of manual printing versus digital printing and vice versa. Does each method have a purpose in our modern age?

## Image Transfer Procedure

1. Take a digital photo of an animal that clearly shows the body shape and personality.
2. Using photo-editing software, create a high-contrast, black-and-white image.
3. Photocopy the image at the size that will fit your block. (Shrink it if necessary.) The photocopy toner is important for the image transfer technique in the next step.
4. Position your image face down on the lino block. Use a clothes iron on a fairly hot setting to transfer the image onto your block. The toner will cook into the block and remain as a reference for the next step, which is cutting the block.



## Block Cutting Procedure

1. Using a V-groover lino cutter, carefully carve the areas around the black toner. The cut areas will not print. The black toner areas are raised and will print. Do not make the cuts too deep: you can use the block for two-sided printing.
2. Cut an interesting background using marks and shapes of different sizes.
3. Now, use a brayer or roller to roll out ink onto a surface that can serve as your palette.
4. Once your brayer is evenly coated with ink, use it to transfer ink onto the block by rolling it over the surface. Repeat this process until the block is rich with ink.
5. Transfer the block to the inking station.

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## Preparation: The 1-2-3 Printing Station

Set up your printing area as shown in the image to include rolling palette, inking surface, and printing template. This simple system is surprisingly easy to control and reduces the amount of clean up.

### 1. Palette Area

Tape a sheet of disposable palette paper to the table. This will be the palette area. Put a small blob of printing ink onto the palette paper. Use the brayer to roll out the ink into a small square so that brayers can be uniformly coated with ink

### 2. Inking Area

Place the block on a stack of recyclable paper such as newsprint or an old telephone book. Use the roller to coat the block. Roll the brayer carefully back-and-forth in one direction. Then, go back and load up the roller on the inking palette. Turn your block, and roll the brayer back and forth in the other direction. If the papers under the plate become soiled, simply flip over a page to reveal a new, clean surface for the next student to repeat the process.

### 3. Registration Area

Teachers, create a template to help students to know exactly where to place their block and paper. Mark a sheet of paper with the exact dimensions of the block centered in an area the size of the paper to be printed. This is the registration area. A piece of glass or Plexiglas placed on top will protect the template so the surface can be quickly wiped clean as needed.

Now you can take advantage of a beautiful part of printmaking: artists can make many copies of their print to sell and share.

