

Patterns from 5 Cultures

Here are some ideas to inspire you for your art project!



You will see many patterns in the following slides: from Egypt, Japan, New Zealand, Africa, and India.

The page at right is from an old pattern book in the NY Public Library.

"Patterns from Egyptian Ceilings"
Source: New York Public Library

Egypt: Ancient Patterns

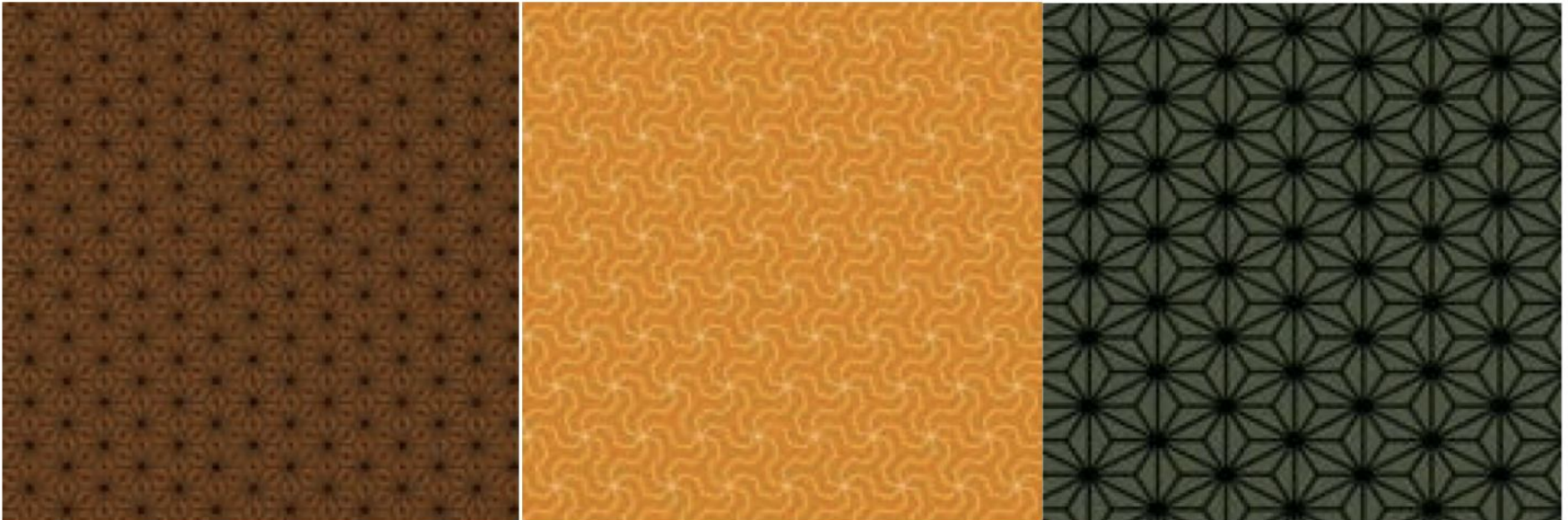
- These are examples of patterns on ancient tombs (right) and the ancient hieroglyphic alphabet (below).
- They look complicated, but are based on simple shapes that are rounded, curved, repeated.

A		H		N		U	
B		I		O		V	
C	or	J		P		W	
D		K		Q		X	
E	or or	L		R		Y	or
F		M		S		Z	
G		T		SH			



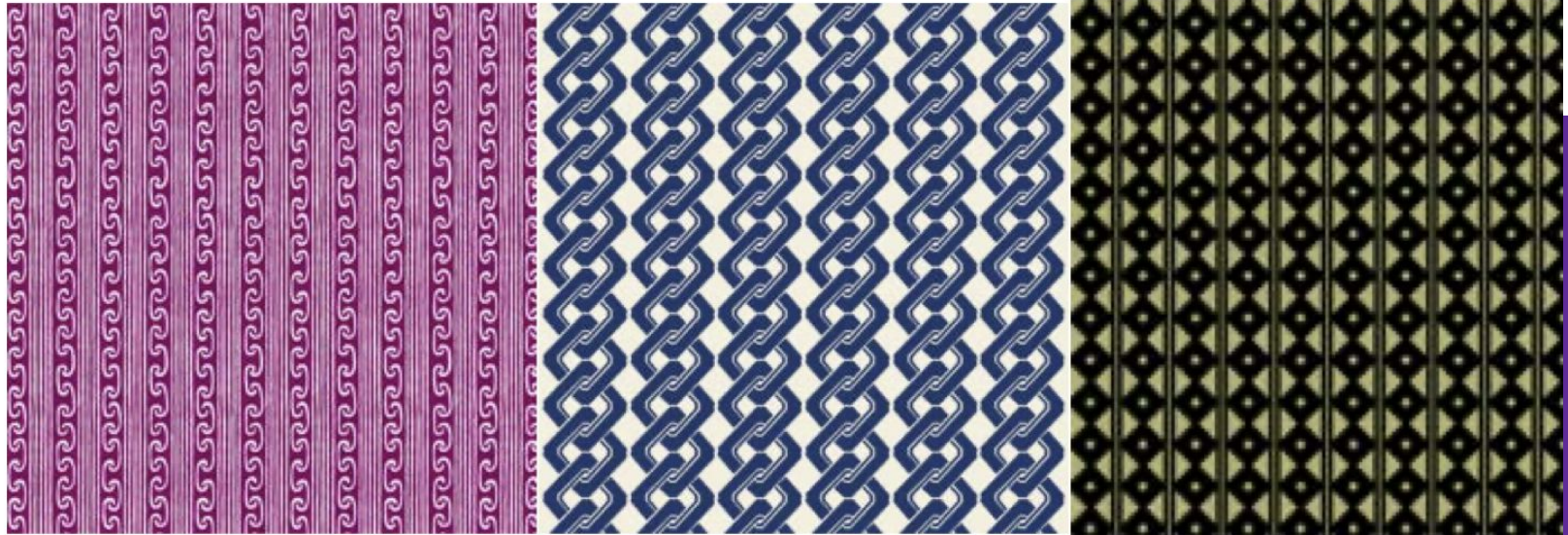
Japan: Kimono Patterns

- The images used on kimonos often have complex levels of meaning.
- The most popular bird depicted on kimono is the crane. Believed to live for a thousand years and to inhabit the land of the immortals, it is a symbol of longevity and good fortune. Below are several other popular patterns.
- These first ones are Asanoha (Leaves).



Japan: Kimono Patterns

- These are examples of Shima (Stripe).



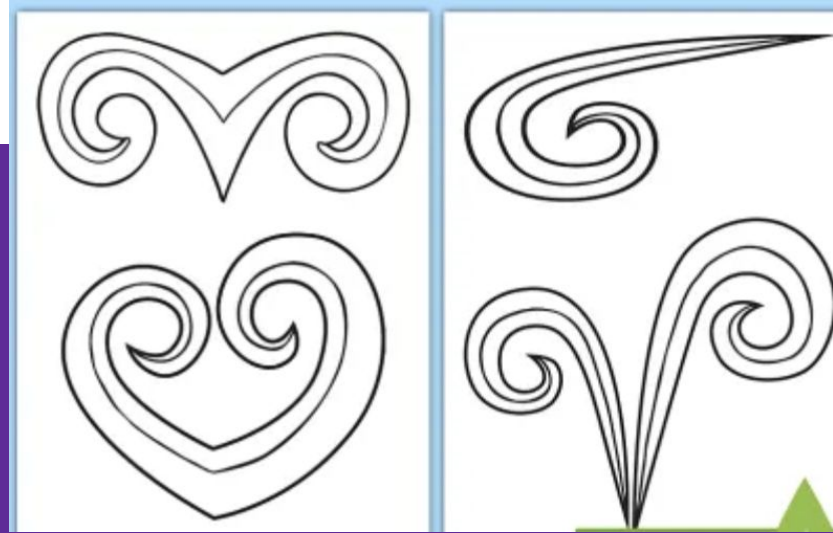
Japan: Kimono Patterns

- These are examples of Nami (Waves). Waves are a popular motif because Japan is a long, thin island country with the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Sea of Japan and East China Sea on the other. The length of the country results in an extensive coastline with lots of beaches.



Maori: New Zealand

- Traditional patterns used in Maori (the indigenous tribe of New Zealand) carving were often inspired by the natural environment, including spider webs, fish scales, and the unfurling fronds of the fern (koru).



Maori: New Zealand

- This symbol is called Papahu (Dolphin). The Maori consider dolphins a sign of protection.
- New Zealand is an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. It consists of two main landmasses—the North Island and the South Island—and more than 700 smaller islands.



Maori: New Zealand

- The picture below shows a Maori fence using simplified fern (koru and frond leaves) and dolphin images.



Africa: Adinkra Patterns

- The symbols (Ashanti) often represent ideas or sayings (proverbs).
- They are stamped onto cloth.
- They can be a form of visual communication, celebration, storytelling...

From PBS Kids' Africa -->

Traditional Ashanti Symbols



The Crocodile (Odenkyem)

He lives in water, yet lives by breathing air.



The Heart (Sankofa)

This symbols reminds us that we can learn from our past mistakes.

Africa: Adinkra Patterns

- The symbols (Ashanti) often represent ideas or sayings (proverbs).
- They are printed or woven into cloth.
- They can be a form of visual communication.

From PBS Kids' Africa -->



ESE NE TEKREMA

A reminder of the need for friendships and sharing.



Moon and Star (Osrane Ne Nsoroma)

A symbol of faithfulness.

Africa: Adinkra Patterns

- The symbols (Ashanti) often represent ideas or sayings (proverbs).
- They are printed or woven into cloth.
- They can be a form of visual communication.



NSAA

A symbol of excellence, a reminder to not settle for anything but your best.



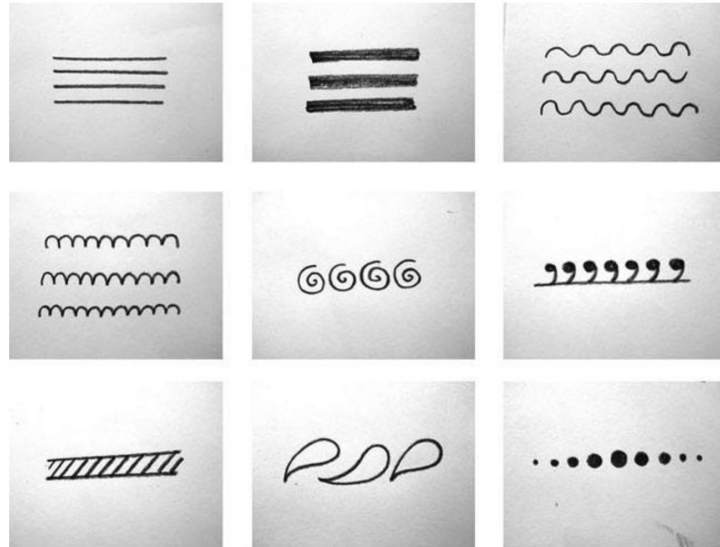
Ram's Head (Dwennimmen)

A symbol of humility, strength, wisdom, excellence and learning.

From PBS Kids' Africa -->

India : Mehndi Patterns

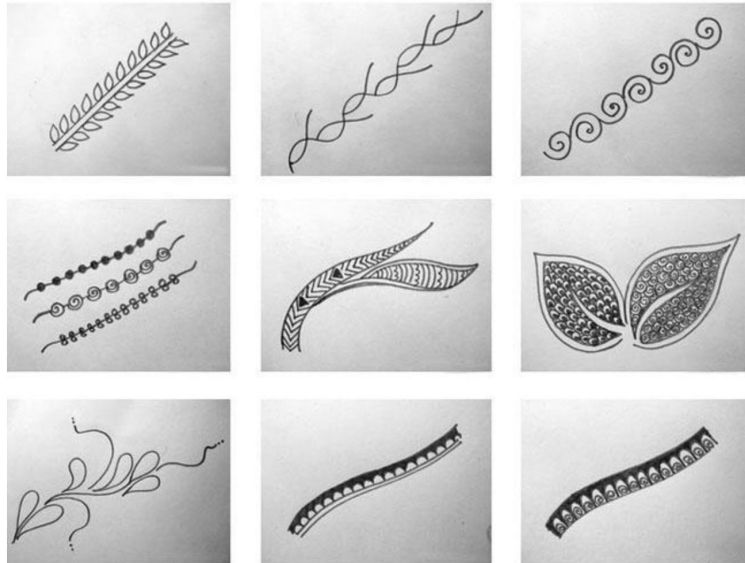
- Mehndi is a ceremonial art form from India and is applied during weddings using a special dye called henna.
- There are many variations and designs, and they can be very intricate (detailed).
- Below are some basic building blocks of these patterns.



Source: letscreatecrafts.com

India : Mehndi Patterns

- Below are more basic building blocks of these patterns, plus an actual Mehndi.



Source: letscreatecrafts.com



The Science of Patterns

Patterns in Nature

“The patterns found in nature have fascinated scientists for many years. Humans have looked at the stars to find patterns – called constellations...A pattern exists when a set of numbers, colors, shapes, or sounds are repeated over and over again.” Patterns exist in nature (fractals or spirals).

“Fractals are patterns that repeat at different scales. This means if you zoom in on a picture, you will see the same pattern replicated, and much smaller, inside the larger image. Broccoli is a great example of a fractal because a small piece of broccoli, when zoomed in, has the same pattern as the larger head of broccoli.”

“Another pattern found in animals and plants is a spiral. If you take a close look at a pine cone you will see a double set of spirals running clockwise and counterclockwise. Seashells and red cabbage are also organized in a spiral pattern. In fact, mathematicians have been able to create equations using spiral patterns that explain why the world works the way it does.”

“There are so many reasons why understanding patterns in nature is important. People have built cities and created art based on the patterns they see. We have used patterns, like the alphabet and sign language to help us communicate with one another.”

cite: <https://www.discoverycube.org/blog/moment-science-patterns-in-nature/>

