



# GROSSOLOGY

in the Classroom

## Fish Printing Workshop

### Preparation

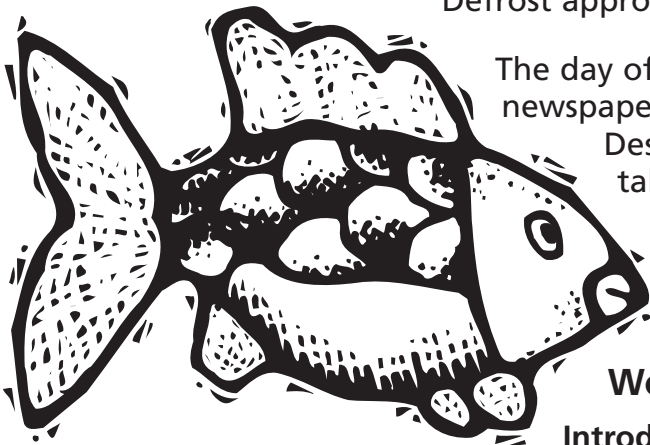
The surface of the fish must be thoroughly cleaned because mucus and dirt will obscure the detail. Wash the fish in soap (e.g. dish detergent) and water until the mucus is gone. If fish are to be used right away,

wash and pat dry. For use later, wash, dry, and freeze fish in plastic bags.

Defrost approximately two hours before use.

### What you need:

- 2-4 different types of fish (small, flat flounder or scup work well), fresh or frozen (rubber fish can be used). Depending upon the size of the group, you will need at least one fish for every 5 participants.
- Ink or paint (water-soluble block printing ink, acrylic paint, etc.)
- Paper (rubbing paper, rice paper, construction paper, etc.) OR white T-shirts OR T-shirt material cut into squares
- Small paintbrush for each fish printing station
- Newspapers
- Paper towels
- Pens or making pens



The day of the workshop, cover the fish printing tables with newspaper. Place the paint brushes and paints at each station.

Designate a drying station for the prints. Set up a paper table with pens or markers for signing and labeling the prints. If possible, it is best if the participants do not sit at the print stations, but rather at separate tables or on the floor until the printing begins.

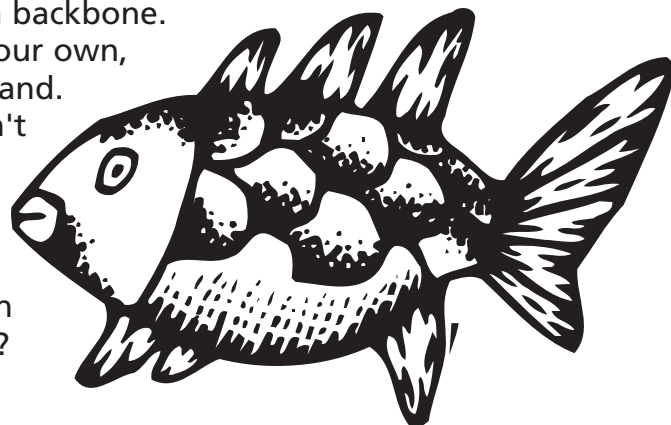
### Workshop

#### Introduction

With the participants seated on the floor or at tables away from the print area, as a display, hold up one of the fish that will be used in the printing.

All fish are vertebrates, which means that they have a backbone. The external anatomy of a fish is very different from our own, because they move and live in water, and we live on land. For example, fish have "noses" (called nares) that don't look anything like our own, yet their purpose is to smell chemicals in the water.

What can we say about how a fish moves by looking at its body shape or form? What body parts of the fish are similar to humans? What body parts are different?





### Fish Printing

The Japanese art of fish printing is called Gyotaku (Gyo means fish, Taku means print). The Chinese began making fish prints over 600 years ago as a means of recording fish catches. It was developed into an art form by the Japanese.

Demonstrate while you go over the steps of fish printing.

1. Choose which fish you would like to print.
2. With a small brush gently paint one side of the fish with ink/paint. Make sure all areas are covered including the fins. Use very little ink. Brush from the head of the fish to the tail. Most people use too much ink the first time, so be careful. After removing excess ink from your brush, brush gently from the tail toward the head. This will catch the ink along the edge of the scales and spines, producing sharper detail.
3. Take paper and gently but firmly press down on the fish. Rub evenly over all areas, especially the head and fins. Be careful to not move the paper while pressing.
4. Carefully lift the paper up, making sure the fish does not move and smear the print.
5. Wipe the excess ink/paint off with a paper towel. Make sure to wipe from the head to the tail.
6. Don't forget to sign your print and label it with the name of the fish.
7. Place your Gyotaku on the drying area. If you have time, try another print. If you choose to make Gyotaku T-shirts, the students can make another print on a clean section of the shirt.

