

Ideas for Teaching Tessellation

1. Use pattern blocks to make tessellations.

- *Regular tessellation* is when regular, congruent polygons tessellate. Have them demonstrate regular tessellation by choosing only one color pattern block and making a pattern without spaces.
- *Irregular tessellation* is when you have a tessellation made up of two or more types of regular polygons. Have your students demonstrate irregular tessellations by using different colored blocks.

2. Search for tessellations around you.

- Have students look for tessellations in the classroom. You may see tessellations on your school's floor, on the tile in the lavatory, or on the ceiling tiles.
- Have students look for tessellations in nature. A bee's honeycomb has a tessellating pattern. The scales of a fish tessellate. So do the scales on a pineapple.
- Students may find other tessellations in quilts, on brick patterns, in stained glass, and on patterned fabric.

3. Study the artwork of M.C. Escher.

- Use Google to search for pictures by the Dutch artist M.C. Escher. He had many famous paintings, drawings, and woodcarvings that were tessellations.

4. Design original tessellating patterns on graph paper.

- Students can easily design their own tessellating pattern with colored pencils and a sheet of graph paper.