

Teacher Notes

Before You Begin

Try the full cyanotype process yourself before teaching it. Exposure time, sunlight strength, paper sensitivity, and rinsing can all affect the final result. A quick test print helps you understand how the materials respond in your specific environment.

Keep Instructions Short

Introduce only the steps students need at that moment. Too much explanation at the beginning can make the activity feel technical and reduce curiosity. Demonstration usually works better than long verbal instructions.

Leave Room for Choice

Avoid showing one “perfect” example and asking students to copy it. Let them choose their own materials, compositions, and arrangements so the final prints reflect individual decisions.

Use Ordinary Materials

Encourage students to work with leaves, grasses, classroom objects, and other materials they can find nearby. The goal is not to collect the most beautiful objects, but to notice possibilities in things that are usually overlooked.

Expect Unexpected Results

Cyanotype is affected by sunlight, movement, exposure time, and material thickness. Prints may not turn out exactly as planned. Treat these differences as opportunities for observation and experimentation rather than mistakes.

Let Students Witness the Process

Whenever possible, allow students to watch both the exposure and rinsing stages. Seeing the paper change helps them understand how sunlight becomes part of the image-making process.

Make Participation Flexible

Not every student needs to work, speak, or share in the same way. Some may need more time to observe before beginning, while others may prefer to work quietly or respond through their artwork rather than discussion.

End with Reflection

Place finished works together when possible. Encourage students to compare different outcomes and notice how the same materials and process can lead to very different images.