

Take One Picture

Week 6— The Great Wave by Hokusai

Katsushika Hokusai was a Japanese artist and print maker, whose works have become well known outside Japan. His best known work is *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.

He was born in Tokyo, around October 1760 and began painting at the age of 6. Between the ages of 14 and 18, he worked as an apprentice wood carver. As was the custom of the time, Hokusai changed his name many times during his life. It is estimated that his name changed over 30 times, more than any other artist of that time.

In 1811 he created the Hokusai Manga, a series of thousands of cartoons carved on woodblocks. The art form helped to influence the modern Japanese manga comics. Most of Hokusai's most important and best work was produced after he reached 60. Katsushika Hokusai reached the height of his career around 1820. He created wood-blocks of many different subjects at this time, including waterfalls, bridges, birds and flowers.

Despite his success, he lived simply and was poor. Like many other famous artists, he was only truly recognised and appreciated after his death.

Hokusai was a member of a Buddhist sect who believed that Mount Fuji was associated with eternal life. Legend has it that the secret of eternal life was put on its peak. His most famous work is a series of 36 prints of Mount Fuji. Katsushika Hokusai died in 1849, aged 88 and was buried in Tokyo. He worked right up until his death, completing *Ducks In a Stream* the year before he died. The cover art of the UK edition of *Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo is inspired by the work of Hokusai.



Art Ideas for all Children

- Recreate Hokusai's work using paint or pens. Think about the colours that he used as well as the proportion— look at Mount Fuji in the background.
- Using Hokusai's style paint a watercolour background and then when it is dry add details with a fine line pen.
- Make a Japanese fan. Fans came in 2 styles, one was circular and did not fold, the other was folded and would open into a fan. Draw a Japanese design on your fan eg fish, flowers or landscapes. Decorate with felt tips.
- Create a wave in a box— use an old shoe box and some tissue or crepe paper. Decorate the inside of your shoebox as a background. Add waves— rolling paper works really well, this is called quilling. Add a small boat on the waves and don't forget Mount Fuji in the background.
- Create a great wave in a bottle. Using an old plastic bottle or glass jar create your wave scene. Use blue food colouring to dye the water.



Links to Websites

[Short film about The Great Wave](#)

[Animated film about Hokusai](#)

[How to draw the Great Wave](#)

[Another How to Draw...](#)

[How to make a fan](#)

