MOSAICS

IN PAPER

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THE IW MUSEUMS AND SCHOOLS PROGRAMME IS

Supported using public funding by

Department for Education | ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

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A mosaic is a pattern or image made of small pieces of coloured stone, glass, ceramic or paper. They were popular in Roman times and were used to cover floors. They looked good, would last a long time and could be washed. The Romans used coloured stones or tiles that were set in mortar. These tiles **Tesserae**. Some mosaics depicted geometric patterns, others contained pictures of animals, people and Gods.

Try making your own mosaics out of paper

You will need:

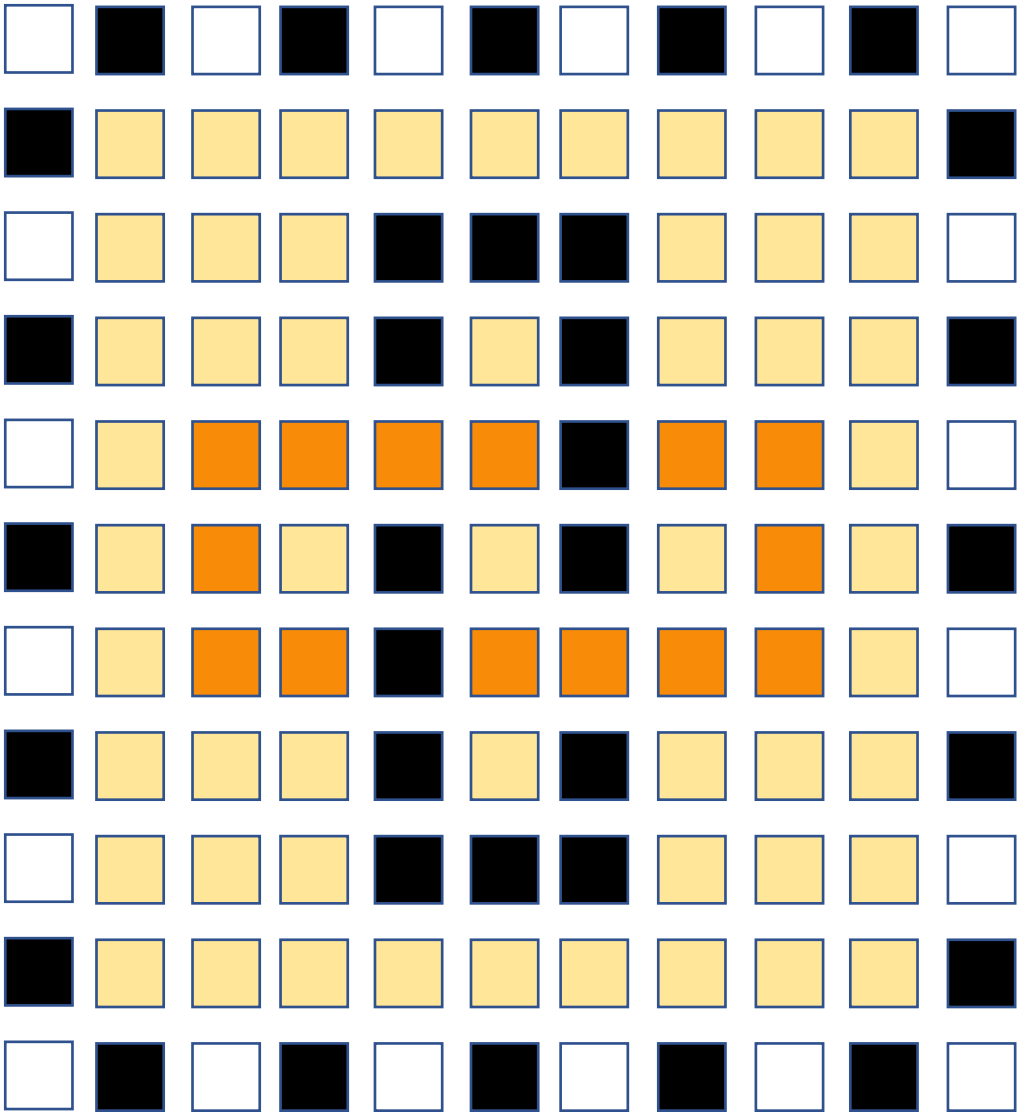
Coloured paper or thin card
You can also paint card so you have the exact colours you want. Sample colour swatches from paint shops are good for getting different shades and tones so you can make images look more 3D.

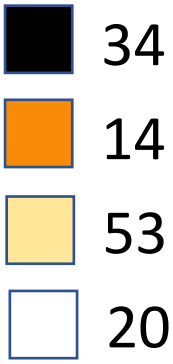
Scissors or punches
Use scissors to cut out your tesserae or, if you have one, a punch. Punches come in all shapes and sizes and are useful if you need a lot of the same uniform shape. Turning them upside down to punch means you can see where on the paper you will cut from and reduce waste.

Pencil and ruler
You can use squared paper or draw out grids using pencil and ruler to mark out the size of tesserae you want.

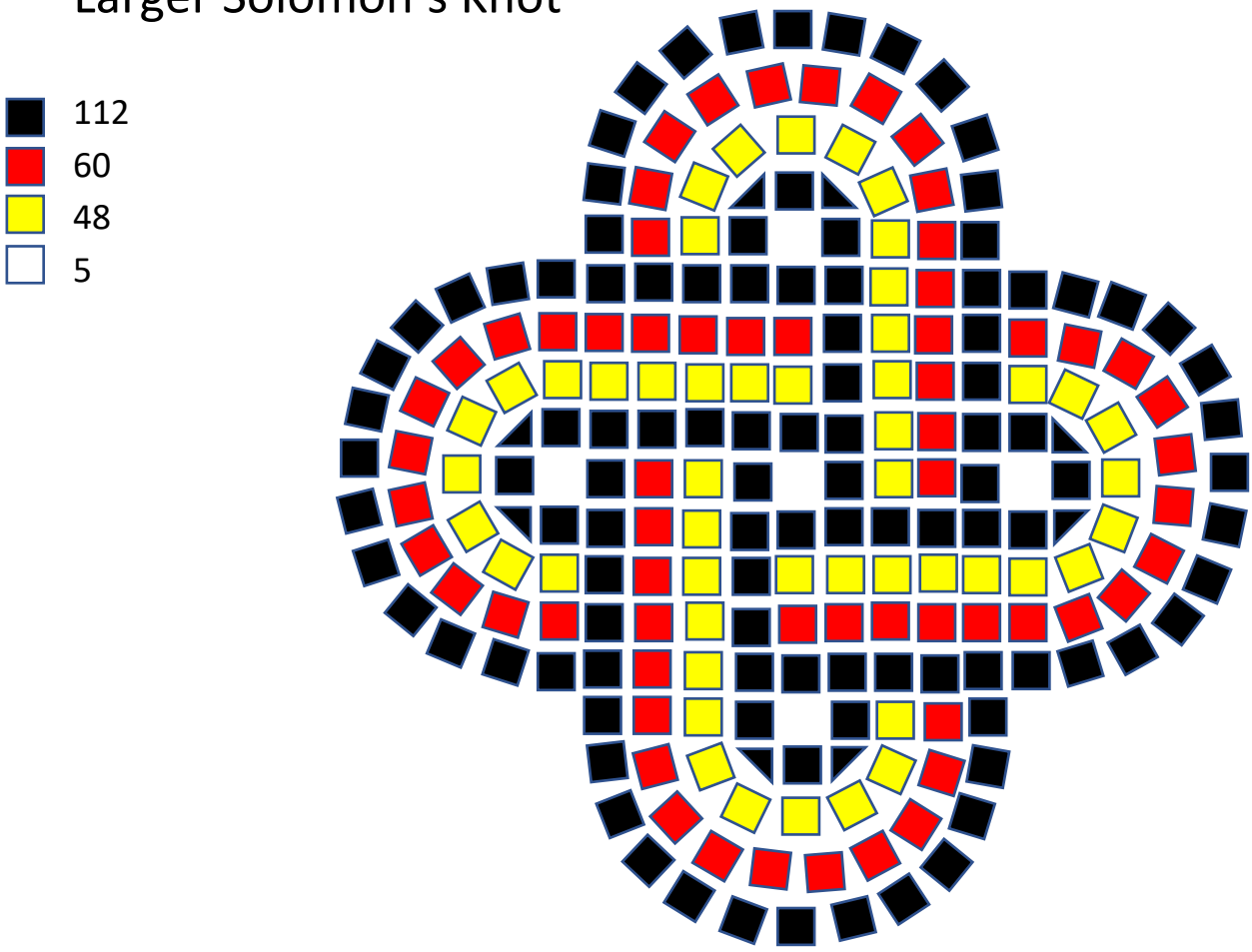
Try making the knots shown below. You could work in pairs or groups to share the work.

Basic Solomon's Knot





Larger Solomon's Knot



FURTHER WORK

There are lots of other edging patterns and knots that the Romans used. Try to find and recreate some of them or make up your own.

Create your own Medusa or God

The Romans would often have a mosaic of a Medusa head. It was thought to ward off evil and protect the home. There is a wonderful example at Brading Roman Villa. Try making your own, you can either draw out your design in pencil first or make it up as you go along.

Try and simplify your design as much as possible. You will have to cut your tesserae to fit some of the curves in your design. Keep snipping until it fits like you want it to.

Using colour swatch samples from paint shops is an easy way to get different tones for shading.

It might get fiddly and take a long time so you might like to collaborate with other people. Stick with it as the results are worth it!

FURTHER WORK

Design

If you were design a mosaic floor for your own house what would the design look like?

Would it be patterned? Contain pictures? Be brightly coloured?

Design your own mosaic floor.

Research

Research contemporary mosaic artists.
You could start with Cleo Mussi www.mussimosaics.co.uk

Jim Bachor www.bachor.com/pothole-installations-c1g1y

or Isle of Wight mosaicist Helen Goodman www.helengoodmanart.co.uk/mosaics

Keep 'em Peeled!

Look out for mosaics out and about. Once you start looking you'll realise how many there are and how wonderful they are as an art form.