Step-by-Step Linoleum Cutting and Printing

Step 1: Designing Your Lino Print

For printmaking, it's always helpful to have a plan before you begin your work. Sketch your design on paper with pencil so you can easily make any changes or correct mistakes. Bear in mind that the print will effectively be a mirror image of your block so you need to work in reverse if you are incorporating any text.



Step 2: Transferring Your Design onto the Lino

Once you are happy with your design, the next step is to transfer it on to the lino so that you can easily cut your design into the lino. You can place carbon paper between your sketch and the lino and draw over your design to transfer it onto the block (which is why it's important to remember it's a mirror image when designing it).

Another option, especially if you have text, is to place your lino over your drawing, flip over, and rub the back of the paper with some pressure. This can lift the graphite from the paper and on to the lino which will give you a reversed image of your design. You can refine your drawing by tracing with permanent marker on the lino block.



Step 3: How to Cut Lino

Now you are ready to cut the lino. Use lino cutting tools to carve out the white areas (negative space) of your design.



Step 4: Inking Your Lino

Now you are ready for the exciting part of the lino printing process – printing! To properly ink your lino block, apply a small amount of ink to an inking plate (usually glass or plexiglass) using the roller to create a nice even layer of ink on both the inking plate and the roller. Apply your inked roller to your carved lino block, making sure the ink is evenly distributed.



Step 5: Printing Your Lino Cut

You may want to do a couple of practice prints on test paper to start with, in case you need to make some more tweaks to your linocut (remember you can only carve more material away, but you can't put it back!) Place your inked lino block down first and then the paper you want to print on; apply even pressure and use circular motions with a baren, a spoon, or your hand. Remove the paper from your lino cut slowly and carefully to reveal your finished design. Voilà!

