

## Gyotaku - Fish Prints

**Grade Level:** K-12

**Essential Skills:** 1, 8

**CCSS:** RI.3.7, W.5.3

**NGSS:** 5-LS2-1, 5-ESS2-2, and 3-5-ETS1-1

**Social Sciences:** 1.2, 2.3, 6.1

**Time:** Full class period

### Materials:

Block ink, fabric ink or tempera paint; newspapers; paper or fabric for printing; brushes or foam brayer; [rubber fish replicas](#) available for checkout from Oregon AITC's Free Loan Library. You can also use a fresh, whole, real fish! NOTE: If you print on fabric you must use fabric ink.

### AITC Library Resources:

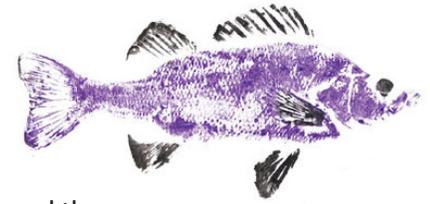
**Books:** *Get Oregonized* History Book and *Get Oregonized* Teacher's Guide  
*Watch Them Grow*  
*America at Work: Fishing Before We Eat: From Farm to Table*  
*What Hatches?*

**More lessons:** The Poetry of Agriculture

**Video:** Inquiry at Hinkle Creek

### Description:

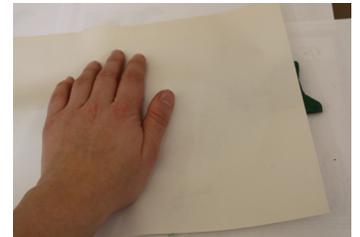
Gyotaku (pronounced GEE-OH-TAH-KOO) is the traditional Japanese art of fish printing on rice paper. The word gyotaku comes from *gyo* = fish and *taku* = stone monument rubbing. Gyotaku dates back to the mid-1800s. The fish prints were a way fishermen could record the size and type of their catches. In this lesson students make their own fish prints.



### Directions:



1. Cover the surface of your work area with newspaper.
2. Coat the brush or foam brayer with paint and evenly cover the top of the fish with ink/paint.
3. Cover any ink/paint which has gotten on the work area around the fish with clean newspaper. This will prevent unwanted blotches from getting on the printing paper or fabric.
4. Holding onto the edges of your printing paper or fabric, carefully place it on top of the inked fish. Do not move the paper once it is placed on the fish, as it will smudge.
5. Place the palm of one hand over the paper or fabric that is covering



the fish. Try not to move this hand. Use the fingers and palm of your other hand to gently press down on the paper or fabric covering the rest of the fish. Press as much of the fish as possible, making sure to press the fins and tail. Do not press on the same area twice or the print will be smudged.

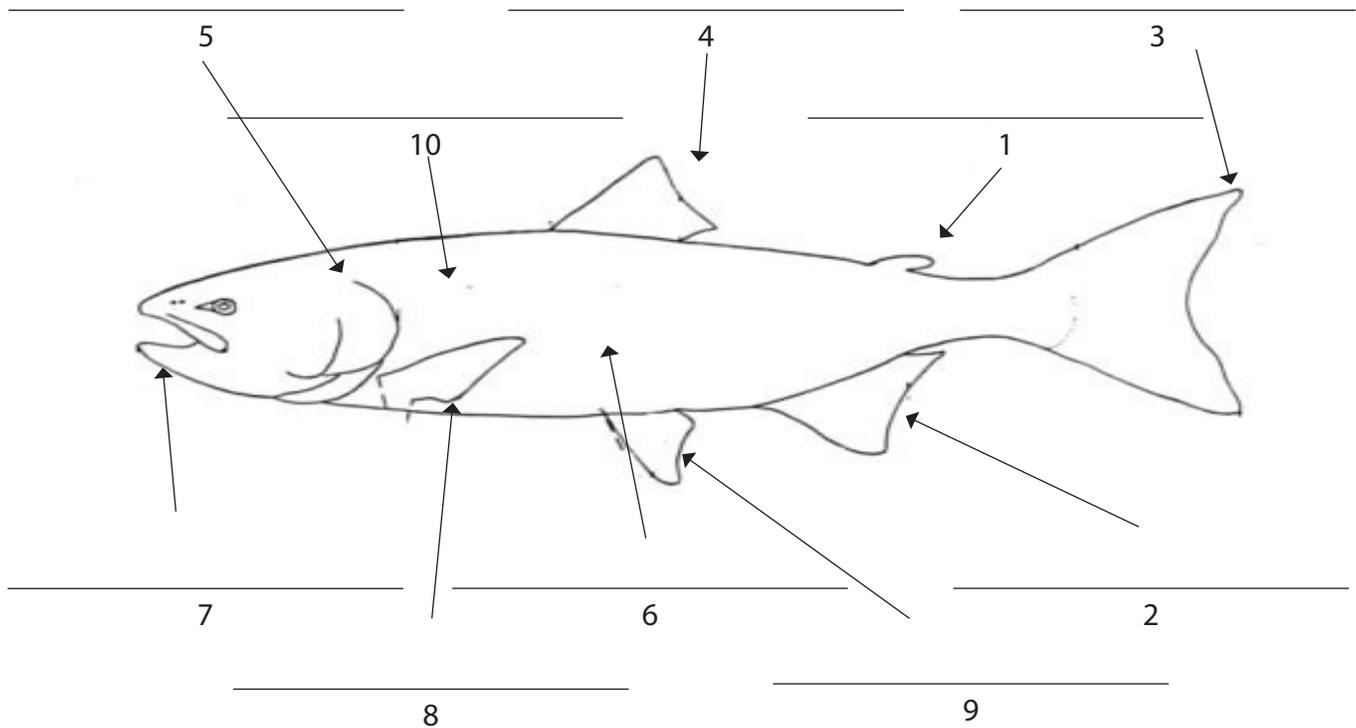
6. After you have pressed the entire fish, carefully peel off your paper or fabric from one end to the other. If you are using the same color paint for your next print you can apply another coat and repeat the process. If you want to use a new color simply wash the fish in warm, soapy water and pat dry. You will then be ready for a new color.

7. Complete the poetry activity and/or the fish anatomy worksheet on page 2.

**Extension Activities:** Haiku poetry is another Japanese art form. These are short poems, often inspired by nature, and use sensory language to capture a feeling or image. Haiku poems have a specific format. They are divided into three phrases. The first phrase is five syllables long, the second is seven syllables and the third is five syllables. Have students write a Haiku about fish, the ocean or Oregon's amazing coast. See the sample above, written by an elementary student.

A stroll on the pier  
dip your toes in the ocean  
build a sand castle

# ANATOMY OF A FISH



## Directions

Identify each fish part above. Match each fish part to their function below.

- |              |     |   |
|--------------|-----|---|
| Adipose fin  | ___ | a. A covering of the gills.   |
| Anal fin     | ___ | b. A pair of fins used for balance; located below and behind the pectoral fins.   |
| Caudal fin   | ___ | c. A special covering on the fish that protects its body from injury.   |
| Dorsal fin   | ___ | d. A pair of fins used to stay in one place, dive or rise to the surface; located in front of the pelvic fins.  |
| Gill opening | ___ | e. A single fatty fin found on some types of fish including salmon and trout; the fin that is removed on hatchery-raised fish before they are released. |
| Lateral line | ___ | f. The opening where water exits the fish after passing over the gills; oxygen is absorbed from the water by the gills.                                 |
| Operculum    | ___ | g. A single fin used for balance; located near the tail on the lower surface of the fish.   |
| Pectoral fin | ___ | h. A line of scales on each side of the fish.   |
| Pelvic fin   | ___ | i. This fin moves the fish forward in the water; located on the tail.   |
| Scales       | ___ | j. A single fin used for balance; located on the upper surface of the fish.   |