PROJECT #66

# CREATE A CIRCLE BACK TO YOU

You can find mandala shapes all around you in nature, appearing in snowflakes, spiderwebs, pinecones, and sunflowers.

Many cultures have used these types of patterns, inspired by nature, in their art. Artists from around the world, especially in India and Tibet, create mandalas using all kinds of different materials.

Making one is the perfect project when you want to slow your brain down and enjoy a quiet, creative moment with yourself.

You can make a natural mandala from anything! Part of the fun is taking a peaceful walk to collect sticks, rocks, leaves, and even weeds.

When you make a mandala from nature, you are playing with the seasons! In springtime, you can use flowers; in the fall, you can use leaves. What kind of mandala could you make in the winter?

You can draw a mandala, too! It’s another great way to express your feelings on paper using shapes and colors to guide your drawing.

A special thank you to artist Shawn Bowman for sharing this wonderful project with us!

**Step 1 of 15**

If you are drawing a mandala, skip to step 5. If you are making a natural mandala, let’s get started!

For a natural mandala, you will need:

A bag or other container for collecting your materials

A place to walk, which can be around your home, your school, or in a park

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**Step 2 of 15**

Okay, with your bag or container, go for a walk and see how many different colors and interesting shapes you can find.

Next, find a flat space, like a table or sidewalk, to lay out your materials.

You can also design your mandala on top of construction paper to create a color contrast.

**Step 3 of 15**

Start your mandala from the middle and work your way out. There’s no wrong answer! Just keep experimenting until you like what you see.

You might choose to use the entire head of a yellow dandelion, or take it apart to use the green and white seeds inside.

As you lay things out, take time to notice the different smells and textures.

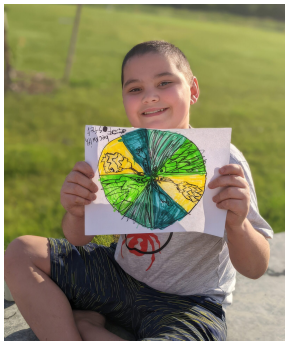
**Step 4 of 15**

Natural mandalas are temporary. The flowers will wilt and turn brown, or might even get blown away in the wind, but that is what makes them special.

Often in life, we think about finishing a project or getting something done. With a mandala, we are living in the moment, thinking deeply about the natural things around us.

The idea behind making a mandala is to get lost in your work, which can be really helpful on days when you’re feeling stressed or worried.

If you’re finished, you can skip to step 14, or go to the next step to try drawing a mandala.



**Step 5 of 15**

To draw a mandala, you will need:

Paper

A pencil

Markers or crayons

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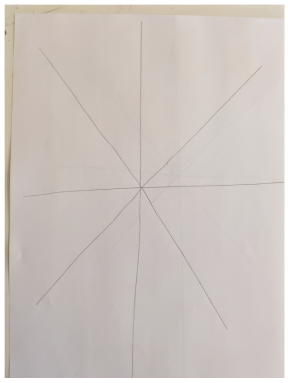
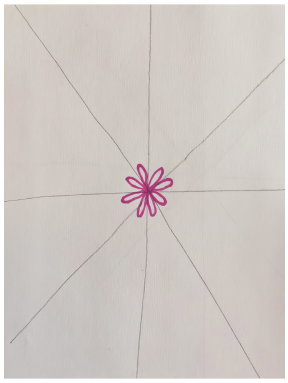


**Step 6 of 15**

If you are using a piece of paper, lightly draw a plus sign.

Next, draw an ‘X’ on top, making sure all the points meet in the center of your drawing.

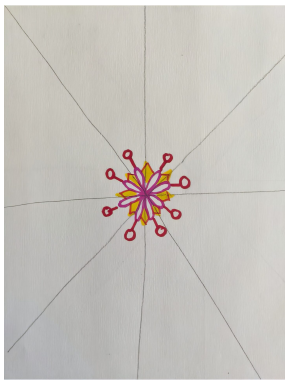


**Step 7 of 15**

To make a mandala, draw something special in the center and work your way out, adding new shapes and colors to each pie section, like these pink flower petals.

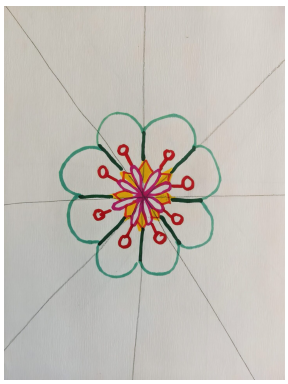
There is no right or wrong way to make a mandala. Think of it as a doodle that starts in the center and works its way outward.  Whatever you draw in one section of your pie slice gets repeated all the way around.

Don’t worry if it doesn’t come out even. It’s super OK not to have a perfect drawing!



**Step 8 of 15**

You can use whatever shape you like, making some layers small…



**Step 9 of 15**

…and other layers can be bigger.

**Step 10 of 15**

Little details like this “u” shape can look really cool when they are repeated.

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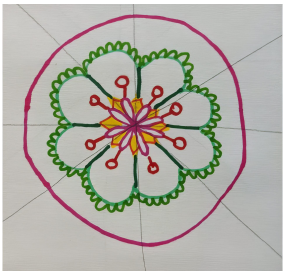


**Step 11 of 15**

You can even create a simple shape like this circle going all around your mandala.

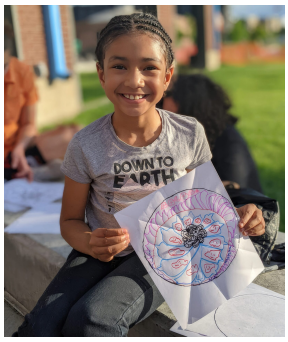
**Step 12 of 15**

Once you've finished your design, you can go back and fill in some of the empty spaces with dots and other textures. Try experimenting with new shapes and colors.

This is something special just for you, so embrace this opportunity to free yourself to try new things.

**Step 13 of 15**

Looking for more inspiration?  You can follow along with this artist as she makes her design in this video:




**Step 14 of 15**

Everything about drawing a mandala is up to you and your imagination. Think of it as a creative gift to yourself.

**Step 15 of 15**

Do you want to share your mandala with others? Click the yellow button below to add your creation to the OK You gallery.

Liked this project? You might also enjoy DRAW A MAZE TO FIND YOUR WAY.

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