

# BUTTONS!

Famous painter Vincent van Gogh used to live at 87 Hackford Road in London. The house is nearly 200 years old.

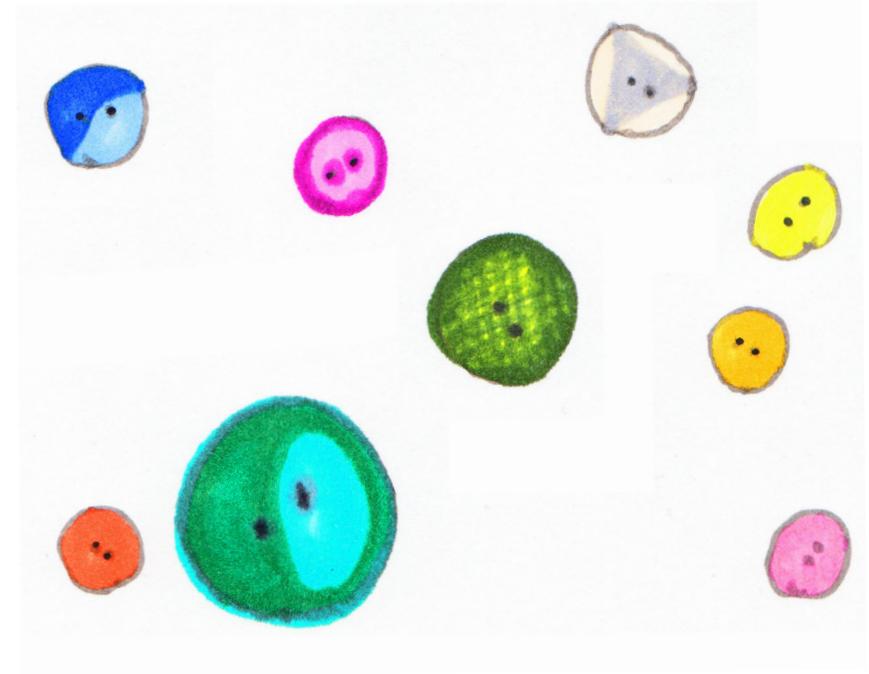
Several buttons were found under the floorboards at the Van Gogh House - who may have left them there? Why?

The buttons are made from different materials including brass and shell. Do you have a box of loose buttons at home? If so, spend some time putting them into groups of different materials.

Many modern buttons are made from plastic but you may also find some made from wood, metal, fabric and even shell. Why do you think these materials were chosen for making buttons? What properties do they need?

Why not have a go at making your own buttons using different materials?

Share your creations with us on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook via our handle @VanGoghLondon and #vincentstreasures or email them to us at [info@vangoghhouse.co.uk](mailto:info@vangoghhouse.co.uk)



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## Vincent's Treasures

We have worked with teachers and children to develop a series of activities to be done at school and at home. For more information, visit [vangoghhouse.co.uk/learning](http://vangoghhouse.co.uk/learning)

Created by Lucy Hall, Livia Wang and Janet Currier, with support from Oval Learning Cluster, The National Lottery Community Fund, Van Gogh House London and children and teachers from Reay Primary School.

# BOTTLE TOP BUTTONS



## You will need:

- Plastic bottle tops (milk bottle tops work well)
- PVA glue
- Water pot
- Fine or medium sized paint brush
- Coloured tissue paper cut into small shapes (approx. 2-3cm diameter)
- A compass or other tool to make small holes (with adult supervision)

## Instructions:

1. With an adult to help you, use a compass or other pointy tool to make two holes in the centre of your bottle tops. Milk bottle tops work well because the plastic is thin.
2. Mix some PVA glue with water (1:3) in a pot and stir thoroughly with your paint brush.
3. To decorate your button, firstly cover it with a thin layer of the glue/water mixture.
4. Now, carefully place a tissue paper shape on top and, holding it in place, gently brush over the top of the paper with your brush.
5. Continue to add your tissue paper shapes on top, overlapping so that new shades appear.
6. Try to cover the whole button with flat tissue paper.
7. As you become confident, you may want to experiment with making patterns and gluing 3D tissue paper shapes on top.
8. Once dry, the PVA glue should give your buttons a varnished effect.

# CARDBOARD BUTTONS



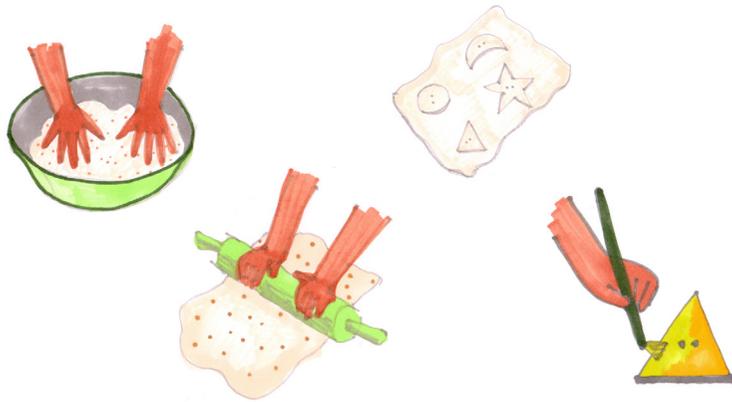
## You will need:

- Thin cardboard packaging (cereal boxes work well).
- Small, circular objects to use as stencils (e.g. glue stick, bottle tops).
- Compass
- Pencil
- Watercolour paints
- Thin brush
- Water pot

## Instructions:

1. Firstly, cut out a flat piece of cardboard to work from. Now, using a glue stick lid or other circular object as a stencil, draw circles onto your cardboard with a pencil. Make sure that the circles are spaced apart so that there is room to cut them out.
2. Cut out your circles and, with an adult helping you, make two equally spaced holes in the centre of each circle using the compass.
3. Now it's time for the creative part! Using your watercolour paints, decorate your buttons with bright colours and beautiful patterns.
4. Once dry, they will be ready to sew onto fabric although they may be better for creating art with, rather than fastening your clothes!

# SALT DOUGH BUTTONS



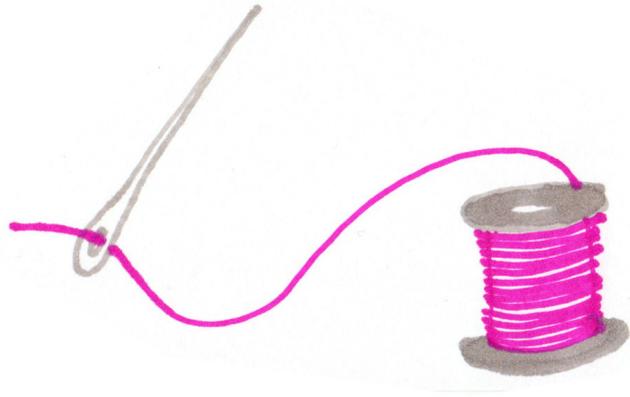
## You will need:

- 1 cup of plain flour (about 250g)
- Half a cup of table salt (about 125g)
- Half a cup of water (about 125ml)
- Rolling pin
- Parchment paper
- Glue stick top or bottle top for cutting circles. (You could also use other objects or small cookie cutters for cutting different shapes)
- A thin paint brush or stick
- Tools and materials for mark making e.g. fork, cocktail sticks, fabrics with textures.
- Poster paints

## Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to its lowest setting and line a baking tray with parchment paper.
2. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. Add the water and stir until it comes together into a ball.
3. Transfer the dough to a floured work surface and use your rolling pin to roll out the dough evenly. It should be approximately 5mm thick.
4. Press into your flat salt dough with your glue stick or bottle top and twist slightly to cut out circular shapes. You can also cut out other shapes using cookie cutters or with a knife, (but make sure that an adult supervises you!)
5. Make two holes in the centre of each button using the end of a thin paint brush or a thin stick.
6. Use your mark making tools to add pattern and texture to the surface of your buttons. Take care to press gently so as not to squash your button!
7. Place your buttons on the lined baking sheet with space between each one. Bake on the middle shelf for 1 ½ hours, or until solid.
8. Leave to cool and then paint. Poster paints work well.

# CLOTH BUTTONS



## You will need:

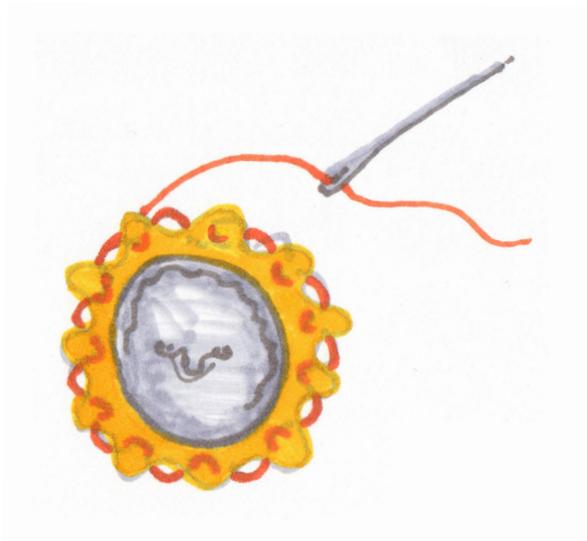
- Scrap material (not too thick – thin or stretchy material works well)
- A small circular object to draw round
- Some thin card
- A largish button or a self-cover metal or plastic button (available online or in fabric shops)
- A felt tip pen or soft pencil
- Scissors
- A needle
- Thread

## Instructions:

1. Find a circular shape that is about 1 cm bigger all round than the button you are going to cover. Place the shape on some thin card and draw around it to make your circle template. Now cut your template out.
2. Place the template on the cloth of your choice and draw around it with the felt tip or soft pencil. Cut the circle out.
3. Thread your needle with a length of thread that is about 50 cm long. Bring the ends of the thread together so that it is doubled up and make a knot in the thread about 1 - 2 cm from the end.
4. Hold the circle of material front side (the side with the pattern on it) away from you and bring your needle through the front side to the back side and pull the thread through until the knot stops it going any further
5. Now sew around the circle about 0.5 cm from the edge in a running stitch. Make your stitches about 1 cm long and 0.5 cm apart. Finish off near where you started your sewing, taking your needle back through the material, so it finishes up on the front side of the material



6. Place the circle front side down on a flat surface and position the front of the self-covering button face down in the middle of the circle. Carefully pull the thread so that the material begins to gather up around the button. Keep pulling gently until the material is all gathered together around the button.
7. Keeping hold of the thread so that the gathers stay tight, carefully knot off the thread as close to the material as you can. Cut the thread off with scissors.
8. If you are using an ordinary button you might want to make some stitches through gathered material before you knot the thread off to make sure that the material holds fast.
9. Finally, fit the back of the self-covering button on to the front, with the ridged side facing down into the material (the side facing you will have a circular groove in it). Squeeze the button back and front together firmly until you hear a click and can see that the back is tightly in place all the way round.



Don't forget to share your creations with us on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook via our handle @VanGoghLondon and #vincentstreasures or email them to us at [info@vangoghhouse.co.uk](mailto:info@vangoghhouse.co.uk)