



Quatrefoil (four-lobed) sword guard with design of dragon, peony, and ball, 1700–1868. Japan; Edo period (1615–1868). Copper alloy with various metal inlays. *Transfer from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, B87W11.*



Round sword guard with open work designs of hollyhock leaves and stems. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron. *Transfer from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, B87W15.*



Sword guard, 1800–1900. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868) or Meiji period (1868–1912). Iron. *Transfer from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, B87W20.*

Create Your Own Samurai Identity

SAMURAI ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Design Your Sword Guard (Tsuba)

Sword making is a refined and highly scientific art that is revered in Japan. A sword guard (*tsuba*) is a metal guard on a samurai sword between the handgrip and the blade. It protects the hand from sliding onto the sharp edge of the blade. Sword guards vary in shape and design and were carved or molded. Use the templates or create your own shape and design a sword guard.



Materials:

Template copied on cardstock or tag board, glue, metal foil, permanent marker, and scissors.

Sword Guard Templates (Figure 2)

Procedure:

1. Choose a shape from the sword guard templates (Figure 2).
2. Cut out the front and back pieces from the template.
3. Trace the template onto metal foil. Cut out both shapes.
4. Decorate your foil using permanent marker. Dry.
5. Assemble both sides of your sword guard with glue. Press firmly.
6. Use the point of scissors to punch a hole in the center.
7. Smooth any sharp edges. Be careful as the foil may be sharp.

Sword Guard Templates (Figure 2)

