

Maze Making

with teaching artist Ben Pawlowski

Grade Band: 3-12

Arts Subject: Visual Art

SUMMARY

Teaching artist Ben Pawlowski takes students through the process of creating an original maze, while introducing several options for making the maze more creative and challenging.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students Will:

- Learn the basics of creating a maze from scratch
- Try out a number of different ideas for making a maze more challenging
- Experiment with different visual aspects of maze-making that can bring out the artist's personal style

GETTING STARTED

Vocabulary You Will Learn:

- **Maze**—A kind of puzzle that is made of several connecting paths, only one of which brings you to the end point, or the solution. The goal is to successfully solve the puzzle by finding your way from the entry point of the maze to the end point without getting lost. Mazes are a fun, interactive art form that have been around for thousands of years.

Materials You Will Need:

- Pencil with eraser
- A piece of paper

[**WATCH THE VIDEO**](#)

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TRY IT YOURSELF

How to Create Your Own Original Maze

1. To start, you'll begin with what Ben calls the "branch method." First, draw a path between your starting point and your ending point. Then, erase a small area along the path to create a "branch" off the path—a wrong turn or route someone completing the maze could take. You can repeat this step as many times as you would like until the maze feels sufficiently challenging to you.
2. Next, you can experiment with moving the starting point and ending point for the maze to see how that changes the solution. Just erase the points you created at the beginning and move them to different branches in the maze.
3. Another way to make your maze more challenging is by erasing an inner wall so that the path of your maze opens up to the space that runs between the branches. Just make sure you add a wall so that the maze doesn't open to the space outside of the path. One way to make this easier is by coloring in the path, so you can keep track of what is part of the maze and see where you need to add a wall.
4. You can also add certain tasks or challenges that the person completing the maze needs to accomplish before reaching the end. You can add items they need to collect, enemies they need to defeat, and people they need to save. You can use these challenges as a way to create a story or a narrative for the maze, if you would like.
5. If you'd like to add more artistry and personal style to the maze, you can experiment with different colors, different writing utensils, or different kinds of paper to draw your maze on.
6. If you want more than one person to be able to complete your maze, you can put it in a glass picture frame, laminate it, or cover it with clear plastic, such as acetate. Have people use a dry erase marker to trace their way through the maze so you can erase their markings when they're done.
7. Finally, you may want to check out mazes created by other artists for inspiration!

THINK ABOUT

In this video, Ben teaches us the basics of drawing a maze, and gives us lots of fun things we can try to make the maze more challenging and creative. He suggests adding different challenges for participants to complete, moving the starting and ending points, and experimenting with different materials. If you want to go even further, think about these questions:

- Ben suggests adding different challenges for people completing your maze to accomplish and talks about how this can create a story for your maze. For example, a story about a medieval knight could involve collecting a sword, slaying a dragon, and

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- saving a princess. What stories can you dream up that you could tell with your maze?
- Some people create mazes of real places, such as cities around the world. Can you create a maze between two real places in your life—for instance, your school and your home, or your bedroom and your kitchen?
 - Ben mentions different materials that you could use to create your maze, like paper, fabric, and different kinds of markers. But what if you wanted to make a 3-D maze? What materials could you use to make a maze that a small figure could actually travel through? You could try using cardboard, magnetic tiles, clay, and anything else you can think of!
 - What are other ways that you can bring in your own artistry, besides experimenting with different materials? Could you draw the maze in a creative shape, or add your own illustrations within or outside of the maze?

MORE ABOUT THE TEACHING ARTIST

Ben Pawlowski (he/him) is a visual arts teacher in Tucson, Arizona, who works mostly with middle school students. His goal as a teaching artist is to give learners a unique skill that they can build upon for years to come. Learn more about Ben at <https://www.benpawlowski.com/>.

ACCESSIBILITY NOTES

Don't forget that you can turn on "Closed Captioning" when watching the YouTube video to view English captions. Modify handouts and give preferential seating for visual presentations. Allow extra time for task completion.

CREDITS

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