

Upper Grades Collaborative Art



CREATIVE CHALLENGE

How can we demonstrate our understanding of collaboration skills, geometry, and elements of visual art through a visual art project?

CCSS AND NCAS STANDARDS

NCAS.VA:C1.1.4a Brainstorm multiple approaches to a creative art or design problem.

NCAS.VA:C3.1.2a Discuss and reflect with peers about choices made in creating artwork.

NCAS.VA:Re8.1 Grades 1-8 Concept: Identify the range of attributes that can be used to describe works of art (such as Elements of Visual Art) ...to aid students in experiencing and perceiving the qualities of artworks

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.B Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions.

PREPARATION and MATERIALS

Grouping: students in collaborative groups of three.

Materials: Strips of narrow [painter's tape](#) (about 36-48" per group), watercolor paper, sharpies, watercolor sets, water cups, paper towels, box of thin pasta like linguini, colored paper cut to approximately 9"x6". Posters: [Elements of visual art](#), [How to Collaborate](#) (In [Spanish](#))

Handouts: [Choices in Composition](#), [Decisions to make](#) (1 per group), [writing frame](#)

LESSON SEQUENCE

Elements & Textures Lesson (lessons are approximately 45 minutes)

1. Show [example artworks](#) to the class. Ask "What do you notice?" "What do you wonder?"
2. "You noticed a lot of ideas. The artworks you saw were generated by groups of students working together. You might have noticed they filled the SPACE of the paper with LINES to make SHAPES. Inside those shapes are TEXTURE and COLOR. Some of the areas are dark and others are light, in other words, they are different VALUES. Those six things are called [Elements of Visual Art](#). You probably didn't notice anything that looked 3 dimensional in those flat paintings, but that would be the 7th and last element, FORM."
3. "This art project has **three goals**: 1) **to practice strong teamwork** which means being able to work well with others or collaborate. That sometimes means putting the goals of the group ahead of your own desires. It means making strong choices with your words, your actions and your attitude. These are the skills that help you in school, the skills that help make the best sports teams or musical groups, and the skills companies need in their employees. 2) **to review the elements of visual art** 3) **to review and use mathematical geometry terms..**"
4. Distribute [Choices in Composition](#) handout.
5. Demonstrate how to draw each of the textures on the worksheet. [This video](#) guides this part of the lesson. A key to the first two (waves and zig-zag) is keeping the lines close together. Rulers are not needed. A key to "pebbles" and "spirals" is to start with the largest shapes ("boulders") and work down to the smallest circles ("gravel"). The "flowers" design can be [found online](#) and along with [many other great patterns](#). Change the textures to meet the needs of your students.
6. At the bottom of the page, have students make an initial indication of their preference for warm, cool or neutral colors as shown in the [example artworks](#).

Math patterns & geometry exploration lesson

1. Distribute one 9x6 colored paper, 6 pieces of linguine pasta per group.
2. [This video](#) leads students through all three steps: Students explore mathematical patterns of lines and areas, artistic division of space with lines, and agree on a team design. The concepts in the video can also be led in person if preferred.



Math Extensions (optional)

1. Math vocabulary extension 1 is a math vocabulary exercise where students demonstrate their understanding of geometry words. This can be led with [this video](#) or in person if preferred.
2. Math vocabulary extension 2: This handout of [words](#) can be printed back-to-back and cut into individual cards. Choose how you'll have students demonstrate these words either with pasta on the colored paper or as drawings. For example, you might put a few selected words into envelopes for teams to complete. Choose either extension 1 or 2 as they are too similar to use both.

Watercolor painting

1. Prepare a large table with the [Decisions to make](#) page, a sheet of watercolor paper, a container of water, 3 paint brushes, permanent pen, and a roll of the artist [tape](#). Have students gather around that table and select two students to be your hypothetical team members. They will sit next to you (the teacher) and you should have a *Final Design* available from one of them.
2. "You have explored maximizing the number of areas with lines, you have created designs based on your aesthetic sense and also created designs that show your understanding of geometry terms. Finally, your team agreed on a team design.
3. "These two students and I are going to show you how to collaborate as a team. There are three big decisions for our group to make. You already did the first one: creating a team design. For the next two decisions, I want you to practice a *decision protocol*. There are five skills we are going to practice in this protocol: **Think** of an idea, **share** an idea, give our **reason**, **compromise** and **work together**. Many of these have specific words or actions to use. For example, the next decision is which of the five textures you will use. (Waves, Zig Zag, Flowers, etc) My group will demonstrate. When I think of my idea, I cross my arms like this [demonstrate] and hold my idea to myself. When everyone is holding their idea, the person closest to me will unfold their arms and share their idea by saying 'I think we could use ____'. So in my group I might say, 'I think we could use zig-zag. The others in the group will not respond to this. They will not say, 'Oh, I love that idea... let's do that!'. Instead, they will continue to hold onto their idea and then share their ideas too, going around the group. 'I think we could use____...' Let's show them now. [demonstrate] If there are differing opinions after everyone has said their idea, then *give a reason* for the texture you suggested. For example, 'I think Zig-Zag is a good choice because it will look like all the angles we have in our design.' Finally, your group needs to come to a final decision. That means compromising, which may use the words 'I can live with ____' It requires *strength* to say, 'I can live with that idea.' knowing it's better for the group to make any decision rather than arguing and not succeeding. If your group can not come to a decision, you can decide with a coin toss, rock/paper/scissors or some other random decision maker. Be aware that artwork that is randomly created sometimes looks disorganized.
4. Use the same protocol to have your group choose a warm, cool or neutral color theme as was seen in the [example artworks](#). Slide 5 shows a mostly neutral color theme (grays/black) with a color accent (red).
5. When transferring the chosen group design to the watercolor paper, have one student hold the tape and the other two place their fingers where everyone agrees the endpoints of the lines are. If the tape-placer pushes the tape onto their pants a couple times, it will reduce the stickiness of the tape and improve the likelihood of the tape coming off without tearing the paper.
6. Ask the group, "How might we work together to create our painting efficiently?" One person can start drawing the texture areas with a permanent pen, another starts painting on one side of the paper while the third person paints the other side of the paper. Demonstrate how you might switch jobs after one texture area is completed.
7. Demonstrate the [wet-on-wet watercolor](#) technique to create color washes.
8. Release the students to their groups where they will use the [Decisions to Make](#) page to do what was demonstrated.

Reflection lesson & displaying artworks

1. Allow the paper to dry before students remove the tape.
2. Teacher puts all the artworks up for the class to see. "What do you notice?" Students share what they observe. (elements of visual art, math concepts, etc) "What do you appreciate?" "Where could this idea go next?"
3. Teacher provides a [writing frame](#). Teacher helps students with shared writing and then provides time for students to complete the writing prompts. [This video](#) shows the shared writing process with 3rd grade prompts but is similar to how it would be done with this project.
4. Final artwork and writing is mounted on construction paper and displayed as shown below.

