

Let's Teach Art

Why We Teach Art

We know why students so often look forward to their art classes: it is a change and it is fun! It is a time when there is no right or wrong answer; when as long as they try, it is impossible to fail; and when there is nothing to memorize. Their ideas are welcome, almost any solution they devise is acceptable, and they might have an opportunity to socialize with friends. Art is considered a “frill” in some school systems today, but fortunately for students, most states continue to recognize the benefits and specify a minimum weekly period of art(s) instruction. Most elementary classroom teachers incorporate some form of art into many of their lessons, but it is a special treat for children to look forward to their *art day*, when the *subject* is art. Home schoolers have also learned that their students benefit from art lessons.

Whole-Brain Development

Research has shown that students who participate in the arts (visual arts, music, drama) perform better in other fields of study. Students can be *encouraged* to come up with creative solutions, and it is amazing how inventive students can be. Their higher-order thinking skills and problem-solving abilities increase as a result.

Character Development

Art is such a personal thing! If a student feels you do not approve of what he or she has made, it is almost as if you have said, “My, what an ugly face you have.” Students are highly sensitive about their work, and your expectations and suggestions should be phrased carefully. This does not mean that you should never criticize children’s art. Simply let them know that you expect their best efforts, and don’t hesitate to send them back to develop something further.

Recently I saw a child throw away a work of art that he had worked on carefully for an hour. It was as if he were saying, “Tell me to get it back out and that it is beautiful.” My personal opinion is that students should understand from the beginning that they are not allowed to throw away artwork. I tell them that if they don’t want their artwork,

I certainly do. I also feel students should be expected to manage with just one piece of paper. At a certain age, their expectations are so high that they rarely meet them, and some students keep “starting over” and never get anything finished. Perseverance is important in character development, and art is a wonderful place to reinforce it.

Whom We Teach

Every Student, Daily

One of the hardest things when teaching art is to remind yourself that all students are entitled to their share of your time and attention—those to whom art comes easily, those to whom nothing comes easily, and those in the middle who do not give you trouble. Observe your interactions with students from time to time to be sure you are being fair to all. Encourage all the students to help you teach by noticing if someone is having trouble and helping that student to catch up.

Students with Disabilities

Many students with disabilities are mainstreamed (placed in the least restrictive environment) or are participants in inclusion, in which they attend a special resource classroom part of the day and are included in special classes such as art, physical education, and music. The section “Adaptations in Art for Special Needs Students” in this chapter contains helpful hints from a number of specialists in this field.

Attention-Seeking Students

For some students, negative attention will serve just as well as positive attention. You can help these students control themselves by intervention techniques. Give this student more classroom tasks and responsibilities. Let him or her be a special helper to get out and put away supplies. Have a table or place where a student who is disturbing others can be moved for a time to work alone. If necessary, get eye-level with this child and clearly state what you would like for him or her to do, then ask for your request to be repeated back to you. Sometimes you just have to back off, busying yourself nearby and getting back to it later. If the student is severely behaviorally disordered, work closely with the classroom teacher to keep art a pleasant learning experience for everyone.

Gifted Students

Students who are gifted in art usually love to draw at an early age. They show unusual perseverance in completing a project and will often put in far greater detail than most, sometimes taking an idea far beyond the basic premise. Keeping this type of child content is seldom difficult because they naturally tend to work harder and longer at most open-ended assignments. However, they may become more easily bored if they have completed a simple task before the rest of the class. They are usually willing to try something that is unique, and

frequently show extraordinary originality. Encourage this student to draw in a personal sketchbook, or to make a drawing of a still life that you have set up elsewhere in the room. One colleague suggests that students whose work is complete can make mini-versions of the project. These small examples can be mounted and displayed as a group. Some schools offer classes that feature problem-solving and skill development for artistically gifted students. Other ways of identifying gifted students are through interviews, portfolios, and intelligence and creativity tests.

What Children Should Know and Be Able to Do

Teaching the curriculum of art is an ongoing, sequential process. The elements of art and principles of design, which are the basic building blocks of art, are introduced in kindergarten and reinforced and expanded as the student grows older. Ideally the student will learn about a number of artists, styles, and cultures throughout the elementary years.

Skill Building

Skill building is also an ongoing process. Students should have experience every year in creating from clay, painting, sculpture, drawing, and printmaking. In-depth experience in a medium fosters creative exploration.

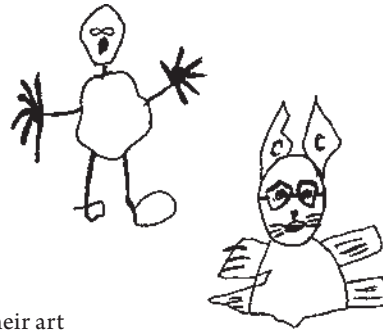
Grade-Level Characteristics

The following characteristics of students at each grade level are aligned with the National Arts Standards for Education and various states' grade-level expectations, which were developed by experienced art professionals. Naturally, some students will be far beyond these levels, whereas others may not yet have reached them. Chapter Two will have further information about writing lesson plans to include the National Arts Standards.

The Kindergarten Child

Characteristics of Kindergarteners

- Able to verbalize needs
- Quite self-centered
- Unable to sustain any activity for terribly long
- Leave out things that are not important
- Feel no need to make colors relate to reality
- Do not work particularly well in groups
- Have little sense of scale—they are the center of the universe in their art



What Kindergarteners Can Do with Materials

Art equipment: learn to take care of brushes and put them back in proper containers; learn about and use art tools in a safe, responsible manner

Clay: manipulate to form a ball; make a coil; flatten; squeeze; make a pinch or coil pot

Drawing and painting materials: learn to use large markers, crayons, large and small brushes, Payons®

Paper: cut, glue, tear, bend, fold, curl, pleat, fringe, fold in half and match edges

Print: make a simple print with stamps, fingers, or objects

Scissors: use with control to cut curved or straight lines and create a circle

Found objects: create sculpture from found objects

Kindergarteners' Understanding of Concepts

Identify and draw differences in line: thick, thin, zig-zag, curved, straight, interrupted

Recognize and draw geometric and free-form shapes, categorizing as large or small

Make large shapes by combining geometric and free-form shapes

Identify and use light and dark colors

Identify and use primary and secondary colors: red, yellow, blue, green, violet, and orange, but may not be able to identify whether they are primary or secondary

Identify and create pattern by repeated use of line, color, form, or a single shape

Perceive things that are alike and different

Recognize differences in art media

Talk about their own art and that of other artists, identifying the subject of an artwork

Communicate ideas that are personally important

Be aware of houses, buildings

Be able to talk about design on clothing



Suggestions for Teaching Kindergarteners

- Allow kindergarten students to experiment with materials.
- Let them make portraits of themselves, family, and friends.
- Give skills and media lessons step-by-step.
- Allow each student to make an individual portion of an all-class project.

Kindergarten Content Connections

Language Arts: left-to-right hand-and-eye movement; sequencing of thoughts; puppetry; journals with writing and drawing.

Have students draw a picture that tells a story about an experience they had last weekend. They could dictate or tell the story to an older student or adult helper who could write it.

Dance: stretching, turning, bending; tempo; working with a partner; running, skipping, hopping, leaping, sliding, galloping; moving forward, backward, and diagonally.

Take students outside and allow them to interpret different kinds of line (curving, straight, zig-zag through physical movement). Let them make “line” to music.

Mathematics: shapes; patterns; measurements; counting concepts.

Challenge students to fold copy paper into eight sections. Have them draw the number and appropriate number of geometric figures in each section: 1 circle, 2 ovals, 3 triangles, 4 rectangles, 5 pentagons. In the remaining three sections, they can draw free-form figures (clouds, an outline of a shoe, a star).

Science: classification of living and nonliving; seasonal change; weather; plants; habitats; animals (wild and domestic); volume measurement.



Each student may make an individual portion of an all-class project, which is assembled on a large paper background (butterflies, fish, flowers). When these are pasted in place, an appropriate background could be painted in by several students.

Have students make a drawing that shows awareness of nature (seasons, trees, flowers, animals).

Social Studies: self, home, family, relatives, neighbors, community, holidays, and safety.

Have students make a portrait of the family taking part in a community celebration (being in a parade, flag raising ceremony, fair, fireworks display).

Students can draw an “indoor picture” of a bedroom, family room or kitchen, classroom.

Have them draw an “outdoor picture” of a building they know (the school, a movie theater, the grocery store).

The First-Grade Child



Characteristics of First Graders

Have difficulty with more than one idea at a time

Are more aware of the people around them, and can work with others in a group

Can draw a complete figure, but exaggerate the more important parts

Love lessons that are full of activity and fun: imaginative stories, fantasy, plays, games, and dances

Can work enthusiastically and be absorbed in creating art

Show satisfaction with artwork and desire approval of the teacher and classmates

Are interested in mechanical devices and moving parts

Draw what they know, not what they see

Have a great range of maturity that results in wide differences between them on ability to listen, comprehend, and follow directions

What First Graders Can Do with Materials

Brush: learn to make controlled (dragging, not pushing) strokes with the brush

Clay: make pinch pots or form a piece of “pinched out” sculpture from clay; make simple coil pots and apply glazes; simple slab construction

Equipment: use safe practices with art tools

Markers, pencils, or crayons: use materials to fill an area with solid color or value differences

Paint: mix primary colors to make secondary colors; fill an area with solid color, make value differences (colors lighter or darker); fingerpaint; watercolor; understand and use crayon resist

Glue: use with control, take care to close the bottles

Paper: fold and identify and edge; glue; fringe; pleat; tear (with difficulty); cut

Print: make a simple monoprint by painting with watercolor (damp paper will reactivate the watercolor)

Weaving: weave paper in a simple pattern

First Graders' Understanding of Concepts

Recognize and describe line, shape, color, and pattern in historical artworks

Respond to a feeling about a work of art based on their own lives

Appreciate rhythm in a work of art such as van Gogh's *Starry Night*

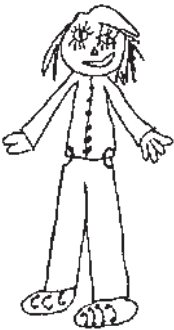
Understand that form and function go together (a clay pot must be strong)

Know that artists have designed clothing, buildings, and furniture

Recognize and use different shapes (geometric and free form) and categorize size differences

See the difference between two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional forms

Discuss subject matter in art; understand differences in still life, portrait, landscape, seasons



Understand careers: police officer, doctor, minister, firefighter, barber

Understand how to show space (with reminders): overlapping, figures smaller in background

Identify the concept of middle or center

Recognize texture and pattern in clothing or in nature, and describe it



Suggestions for Teaching First Graders

Teach students one step at a time.

Encourage them to talk about their own work and that of others.

Introduce the vocabulary of line, rhythm, shape, and space.

Have them identify line and shape in the room or on their clothing.

Teach them to thread a large-eye needle, tie a knot, and do simple stitchery.

First-Grade Content Connections

Language Arts: oral directions; working in sequential steps; rhyming words; categorization of objects; picture stories; care of materials.

Have students draw a picture with their family “all dressed up and ready to go” somewhere (the beach, a film, a picnic, a worship service, a wedding). They should write who is in the picture and where they are going.

Math: patterns, sets, geometric shapes, rhythmic curves; comparison of lengths; picture graphs; symmetry; problem solving; corners and sides.

Have them create an alternating pattern (ABAB) using line or shape.

Science: size relationships; changes in nature (moon, plant life, wind, clouds, light, animals, seasons); light and shadows; mechanical devices.

Have students fold a paper in fourths, horizontally, then draw a deciduous tree in four seasons—winter, spring, summer, and fall—one per section.

Have them make a marker drawing of one location where they have seen animals such as a zoo, a farm, or their own pets, and discuss the jungle or desert, and other natural habitations of animals.

Social Studies: the extended family; community helpers (barber, police officer, grocer, firefighter); earning and spending money; symbols such as traffic signs; U.S. symbols (flag, Liberty Bell, eagle).

Show artwork from different cultures or parts of the world such as Asian, Native American, and African. Talk about similarities and differences using some of their “art words” such as *color, shape, texture, line, and subject*.

The Second-Grade Child



Characteristics of Second Graders

- Welcome responsibility—the chance to show they know how to do something
- Observe more details in their surroundings (buildings, people, clothing)
- Love nature (animals), imaginary creatures, fantasy
- Are extremely self-confident; willing to tackle anything
- Are fascinated about how things work: castles, boats, machinery
- Are open to new experiences: field trips, TV, books, movies, new clothes
- Love games, stories, dances, plays

What Second Graders Can Do with Materials

General: construct sculpture from found objects; create realistic forms such as animals

Brush: wash brush between colors

Clay: create sculptures; roll coils; make a slab with a roller; make pinch pots; apply glazes

Equipment: understand and use safe practices; assist in getting materials out and putting them away

Paint: mix two colors of tempera paint to make a third color; control paint to make a variety of lines

Pencil, crayon, charcoal: create value by changes in pressure

Paper: use joining methods; curling; bending; scoring; folding, tearing; attaching one piece to another; weaving to create a pattern



Second Graders' Understanding of Concepts

Become more aware of size relationships in comparing objects and in regard to themselves

Become more aware that things are designed by artists (cars, clothes, kitchen items, furniture, buildings)

Become aware of themes in artworks from various cultures

Be able to add texture that resembles real texture, for example, hair, or to incorporate real texture within a composition

Understand that personal selections, such as clothing, reflect personal expression

Understand that line can be used to make something appear three-dimensional

Make geometric shapes

Understand positive and negative shapes (may be best done with cut paper)

Describe how atmosphere can be shown by color differences

Observe design (pattern, balance) in natural organisms such as butterflies or insects, and in art

Recognize differences in art media

Introduce unfamiliar art forms and materials

Suggestions for Teaching Second Graders

Stress cooperation, sharing, and responsibility.

Talk about jobs that artists have—let them *be* designers.

Allow them to combine found materials in sculpture.

Show them fantasy art in history and encourage fantasy paintings and sculpture.

Create a composition that uses a variety of lines: dotted, zig-zag, wavy, interrupted.



Introduce a paint-mixing technique that uses several values (tints and shades) of one hue, such as green. Allow the use of a small amount of the complementary color (red).

Lead them to compare and contrast two works of art, referring to subjects, the purpose of which it might have been created, the media used, and elements and principles of art.

Help them recognize differences in art between several cultures: “Western” art (European and North American), Native American, Hispanic, and Egyptian. Caution them about not using trite symbols (suns in corners with rays, stick figures, pointy mountains, “balloon” trees).

Have them make an original landscape or cityscape about their school, home, or neighborhood that creates the illusion of space (foreground, middle ground, background). Other appropriate themes are nature, countryside.

Second-Grade Content Connections

Language Arts: sequence stories; writing books; observing details.

Have them select a story that has many characters in it. They can use paper bags to make hand puppets “literary” using markers, scrap paper and cloth, glitter, and glue.

Allow them to write an original play for puppets and to act in it.

Mathematics: patterns; temperature; length and area; symmetry; three-dimensional forms

Show students how to recognize differences in artworks between two-dimensional geometric *shapes* and three-dimensional geometric *forms* such as cubes, spheres, cones, and cylinders.

Music: patterns in music and patterns in art.

Have students draw to the music.

Science: geographic environments; animals in their habitats; seasonal changes; geology; human growth.

Select a classification of animals, insects, or fish and discuss their habitats. Have students draw creatures with a marker and cut them out. On a larger sheet of paper, they can apply torn or cut paper to make a background collage of the habitat, then glue the creatures in place.

Social Studies: neighborhoods; style variations between Western and Asian landscapes; traffic signs; changes in shelter or transportation; clothing from earlier times.

Have students make a work of art in the manner of Plains Indians (kraft paper *parfleche* [tote bag] decorated with symbols) or a tipi decorated with symbols. Have them make a decorative “marker embroidery” based on the style of Woodland Indians. Compare the housing of the two cultures, on the basis of available resources.

Have students design a building that includes a roof, an entrance, windows, and a specific building material (brick, siding). This could be something like a filling station, a grocery store, home, city hall, a police station, or another type of community building.

The Third-Grade Child



Characteristics of Third Graders

Enthusiastic, open to new experiences and using new materials

Anxious to please their peers, careful not to do anything too different from what the other students are doing

Tend to separate themselves by gender outside the classroom, but work well in mixed-group projects

Interested in learning to draw realistically, frustrated at times when they are not able to appreciate that fantasy exists in the imagination and may be used in artwork

Enjoy art museum visits and learning about the role of artists in society

What Third Graders Can Do with Materials

General: distribute and collect materials; clean tables; take general responsibility

Brushes: wash brushes; mix colors with the brush

Clay: create sculptures; make coils or slabs; make pinch pots; apply glazes

Paint: mix tempera; understand crayon resist; use and take care of watercolors

Ink: stamp with vegetables; make potato prints; do fingerprinting or brayer prints; make monoprints; use collagraph printmaking; stamp

Metal tooling foil: emboss and stipple

Printing materials: glue cardboard, string, or found objects to a plate and make a print from it

Fiber arts: weave or stitch with yarn

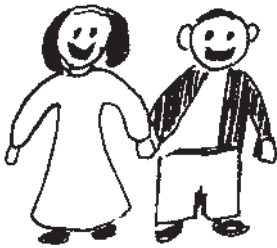
Colored pencil, oil pastel: layer two or more colors

Paper: cut well with scissors; use joining methods; curl; bend; score; fold; make forms from paper (origami, portrait heads)

Crayons: color firmly for scratch-art

Papier mâché: cover balloons; create facial mask forms

Paint: apply watercolor or thinned tempera in even strokes to make a wash (as in sky); use tempera to draw shapes and fill in evenly



Third Graders' Understanding of Concepts



Use horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines, textures, colors, and sizes

Comprehend foreground, middle ground, and background, and show these by use of middle ground, overlapping, size differences, and value differences

Discriminate between warm and cool colors; identify how artists have used colors for expression

Recognize and use real and invented texture

Identify contrast in a variety of size and color

Define symmetrical, asymmetrical, and radial balance; identify columns, beams, domes, and arches, and analyze how a building is constructed; develop personal use of color and other elements effectively in two-dimensional work

Become aware of articulation of parts of the human figure

Suggestions for Teaching Third Graders

Allow them to create a nonobjective work of art through the introduction of historical artworks.

Teach them to *see-teach* contour drawing of a hand and the human form (blind contour drawing may be a little beyond them).

Discuss proportions of the human form; have them draw their classmates in an action pose.

State objectives when beginning, then help them evaluate halfway through whether they are meeting the objectives in their own work.

Talk about works of art; compare and contrast two similar paintings from different cultures or time periods. Discuss subject, elements and principles, the theme of the artwork.

Introduce sculpture in the round (both by showing existing artworks and demonstration). Help them realize that this is not just two-dimensional (height and width) but also has depth, and will be looked at from all directions.

Discuss how some people feel one way about a work of art, and others have very different reactions, and why that is.

Talk about *how* things work (buildings, machinery, transportation)—the *why* of form and function.

Third-Grade Content Connections

Language Arts: writing about artwork; creating and illustrating stories.

Have students make or decorate a container of folded paper, clay, or papier mâché, then write several sentences about how they made it.

Mathematics: mapmaking; geometric forms; symmetry; multiplication; division.

Have them identify lines of symmetry in shapes and in polygons.

Music: singing scale in accurate pitch; performing folk, patriotic, and spiritual music; recognizing rhythmic patterns; identifying musical symbols; comparing music to painting; using terms common to both (rhythm, color).

Have students compare the art and the music of a particular culture or time period, and find similarities and differences.

Science: the solar system; electricity; magnetism; the environment; energy (light); rocks; how to classify animals: reptiles, birds, amphibians, mammals; simple machines (inclined plane, balance).

Have students draw flowers, butterflies, trees, animals, shells, or plants either from life or reference photos. Stress that when using a photo reference, it is important to make changes in the background or the pose, otherwise it is simply copying.

Social Studies: communities (differences due to location and weather); ancient and foreign cultures; multicultural similarities and differences (any art project should relate to the history of the culture that worked in the same manner).

Have students identify artworks from cultures within the following areas: United States, Europe, and Africa. Students should compare masks from various cultures around the world (Native American, Italian African). They can make a mask from tooling foil.

Have students make a “community” assignment (family, teams, scouts, classroom, people who work together).

The Fourth-Grade Child



Characteristics of Fourth Graders

- Are developing a sense of humor; love comics and cartoon characters
- Can develop feelings of inferiority about their lack of ability to draw what they see
- Compare their work to that of peers
- Are open to viewing different art styles and do not yet judge if something is “good” or “bad”

What Fourth Graders Can Do with Materials

- Brushes:* successfully mix paint; care for watercolor sets; wash brushes and clean up
- Clay:* do ceramic coiling; make pinch pots or clay animals; create portrait and figure sculpture; apply glazes
- Paint:* mix colors to make tints and shades; apply watercolor wash, wet-on-wet, and resists
- Pencil, marker, charcoal:* make a value scale; create light medium and dark values
- Ink:* create a brayer printing, a glue-line print, a collagraph, or a monoprint on plastic sheet; draw with pen and ink
- Paper:* cut skillfully with scissors; score; curl; fold origami shapes
- Fiber Arts:* weave with a simple loom (cardboard, straws, paper plate); make decorative stitchery
- Sculpture materials:* handle plaster-gauze well; do additive sculpture; use papier mâché



Fourth Graders' Understanding of Concepts

- Comprehend color scheme based on color wheel: warm versus cool, contrast, mood, “grayed” colors
- Create the illusion of space through placement, size, and value
- Use facial proportions correctly; develop a more realistically proportioned human figure; show movement
- By looking at art, become aware how artists depict animals and the human figure
- Identify different media, subject matter, and art forms such as sculpture, tempera, watercolor, prints, portraits, landscapes
- Comprehend that form follows function in design, and can point out or bring in specific examples
- Understand that many artists express themselves and their cultural identities through their artwork
- Recognize architecture from various climates and cultures of the world on the basis of the construction materials used, including their own regional architecture
- Can show various styles of art and discuss aesthetics issues: “Could something ugly be art?” “Should the artist care whether other people appreciate what he or she is doing?” “Why might mountains look different depending on which culture paints them?” “Should art look real?” “What is beautiful?”

Suggestions for Teaching Fourth Graders

- Use distortion, simplification, or exaggeration to create an abstraction of an object, place, facial characteristics, a still life.

Avoid having them copy, as many already lack confidence in their ability to draw. Remind them to avoid trite *symbols* such as “balloon” trees, happy faces, and rainbows. But talk about real symbols—things that are understood by most people, such as street signs.

Introduce still life to foster the decision-making process, highlighting unity, variety, emphasis. Talk about positive and negative space, radial balance, center of interest, focal point, contrast.

Introduce proportions of the face; have them do self-portraits; draw fellow students; discuss body proportions; learn to really look.



Encourage exploration of color schemes through an open-ended landscape assignment.

Introduce sculpture in-the-round.

Compare and contrast two artworks from two different cultures (time or place), on the basis of theme, media, subject, and elements and principles of art.

Fourth-Grade Content Connections

Language Arts: research skills related to artists; bookmaking.

Tell students to imagine themselves inside the picture looking out at the viewer. Have them write a letter to a “pen pal” about how the world looks from that viewpoint (even if you are a flower or a bowl of fruit).

Mathematics: estimating fractions; shapes (trapezoids, parallelograms, pentagons, hexagons, octagons); use of money; measuring length; creating computer drawings; using calendars; using the metric system.

Have them design a new paper bill and coin for a country or state. It could be based on a political figure, or a profile of themselves as a king or a queen. They should make a design for each side.

Science: ecology; constellations; weather forecasting; space travel; light and color; body systems; machinery.

Have students draw a factory. They should think about how things might work to manufacture something they like (a toy, candy, t-shirts, television sets). They can use ballpoint pen or colored pencil to draw a factory where this might be manufactured.

Have them select a real constellation (perhaps from one that is visible in the month they were born) and draw an imaginary person or creature using the locations of the stars within that constellation.

Social Studies: state history (politicians and pioneers); regions of the world (tundra, rain forests, deserts); mapmaking; Native American cultures.

Have students do a painting about an event in the life of a well-known person from your state or region that made him or her famous.

Drama: drama from a variety of cultures and periods, improvisation.

Have students learn facts about a famous artist or other individual from your state. They can pretend they are the person, and even wear similar clothing. Have them tell facts about that individual as if they were a robot, once someone “presses their button.”

The Fifth-Grade Child

Characteristics of Fifth Graders

Love *being* designers—doing an actual assignment to design clothing, furniture, a house, and so on

Are eager to help; enthused about art; take responsibility; are helpful to classmates; work well in groups; are open to creative problem solving



Are interested in learning about new tools and techniques; are capable of working with almost any material

May lose confidence in their artistic ability because their drawings are not “real” enough or think their classmates’ projects are better

Tend to stay separate (boys and girls), with different interests, hobbies, activities

Are able to concentrate for much longer periods of time

Can begin to display giftedness in art; those who love art will devote long hours to it

What Fifth Graders Can Do with Materials



Charcoal, pastels, pencil, colored pencil: create texture and surface interest

Equipment: use scissors; lino tools; cutting knives

Clay: make clay tiles; create boxes; do slab or coil construction; make a portion of a mural

Paint: tempera—make a sharp edge; watercolor—blend from light to dark, mix a variety of hues; acrylic—same skills as tempera, use intermediate tones, Payons®

Ink and markers: apply ink wash; display control of line; use markers with style and control

Paper: fold; score; cut with scissors; do controlled tearing; use joining techniques such as slits or tabs

Fiber arts: do batik; print; use tie-dye; stitch; use applique

Sculpture materials: create an assemblage of found materials; use papier mâché and plaster-gauze; create a ceramic sculpture; create a cardboard sculpture

Printmaking: use lino-cuts; do eraser stamping; create stamp Styrofoam images

Fifth Graders’ Understanding of Concepts

Learn that sculptors are sometimes commissioned to do monumental artwork for public places

Respect that appropriate sculptural materials must be used, or the sculpture may disintegrate

Recognize the influence of geographic and climatic conditions on building materials used in private homes and public buildings

Compare and recognize differences in artworks from a variety of cultures

Recognize the artist’s intention in using images and color to create mood

Identify symbols, natural images, and objects used to create artworks

Understand and use several different ways of showing depth (overlapping differences in color and size, rudimentary perspective); recognize that light, distance, relative size, and motion affect the appearance of an object

Suggestions for Teaching Fifth Graders

Let *them* point out strengths and weaknesses in their artwork and changes that might improve it.

Introduce many different styles of art and discuss whether something has to be “real” to express the artist’s idea.

Assign research projects about artists.

Enlist students to assist in hanging artwork, organizing materials, in performing any of the art room chores.

Review concepts of realism, abstraction, positive and negative space, light and shadow, texture.

Introduce one- and two-point perspective.

Do group study, reporting, and projects.

Fifth-Grade Content Connections

Language Arts: advertising; group work on research of famous Americans.

Mathematics: decimals; fractions; angles; Roman numerals; computer drawings; length (metric and feet).

Have students work with a partner to measure a room in the school (sometimes they can measure floor tiles and figure out the total by multiplying the tiles). After they have figured the measurement out in yards and inches, have them convert it to metric standards.

Have them learn about a horizon line and vanishing point by using converging lines to create a perspective drawing of a cityscape, giving the illusion of space.

Music: classical versus popular; instrumental differences; melody, harmony, rhythm, pattern, and variation; pitch and beat; standard notational symbols.

Find works of art from two different periods, and music from the same general eras also. Play the music, then have students select in which era they think the artwork was produced. Have them put it in words. This can lead to an interesting discussion of similarities between art and music.

Science: machinery (turbines, water power, pulley); habitats; human functions; astrology; flight; environmental preservation; use of the microscope; classification; nutrition.

Have students select an environment (desert, jungle, water, air, temperate climate), then select one classification of creature that lives there—animals with fur, insects, birds, meat-eaters (carnivores), plant-eaters (herbivores). They should research how environmental change affects that creature, or if it does. They can then do a painting of the creature(s) in their habitats.

Social Studies: American history; cultural symbols; the environment; geography.

Talk about visual culture. Ask students to talk about comics, video, movies, Websites, and advertisements they see. Have them make a tagboard “cereal box” with their name as part of the name of the product. They can make preposterous claims for what this cereal will do. Emphasize thinking about ads they see, and what they think of them.

The Sixth-Grade Student

Characteristics of Sixth Graders



Know everything, or think they do, but are still quite open to new experiences

Are interested in learning about artists, why their work looks the way it does, what contemporary artists are doing; have begun to form a real opinion on certain kinds of art and artists

Experience dramatic mood swings because of physical and emotional changes; seek peer approval

Have a short attention span at times

Display a preadolescent interest in music, language, videos, movies, television

Often prefer being by themselves, independent of adults

Respond positively, and are proud to see their work on display

What Sixth Graders Can Do with Materials and Technology

Drawing media: use charcoal, pencil, pastel, or oil pastel; draw an object from observation; apply tip or side of media firmly or softly

Clay: sculpture a bust; make boxes; do slab or coil construction

Paint: mix colors in all paint media; overlap and smoothly blend colors

Ink: control ink wash; make line drawings

Paper: create a sculpture; use three-dimensional forms; make origami folds

Fiber arts: use batik; print; create tie-dye; tie simple knots; wrap; weave; do beading; stitch; use applique

Sculpture materials: use assemblage; use papier mâché; make a cardboard relief; sculpt with paper or pulp; use found materials; cut paper

Printmaking: make a monoprint, a collagraph, or a string print

Technology: create different kinds of lines using general computer software; take digital photographs or use a disposable camera

Suggestions for Teaching Sixth Graders

Base as many projects as you can on *self* (self-portrait, human form). Have them create a realistic portrait.

Help develop abstract thinking through giving several different three-dimensional projects.

Help students be able to look at a work and identify into which of the following categories it most logically fits: reality, expressing feelings, elements and principles, and serving a purpose.

Conduct aesthetic discussions about nonrealistic works of art. Talk about how different cultures have different ideas about what is beautiful. Students may respond negatively to unfamiliar artwork from other cultures or time periods because of their personal experience or what their friends may think.

Take them outside the classroom to draw houses, buildings, people, cars, playground equipment.

Help them progress sufficiently in their art skills so they will want to continue learning, rather than concluding that because they may not draw realistically, they are not “artists.”

Find out what they know and understand about art and artists; have ongoing discussions about the influence of society on the type of art that is created and the place of the artist in society.

Interest them in art from other cultures and trying their hand at similar projects.

Introduce them to making posters, teaching the use of balance, space, and emphasis.

Motivate through encouraging fantasy art or depicting imaginative experiences; they should be very interested in Surrealism.

Make handmade books to be used for journals.

Sixth-Grade Content Connections

Language Arts: art journals; poetry related to artworks; literature from other cultures; oral directions.

Have students research and make a visual report on the life of an artist, then present it orally to the class.

Have one person describe a work of art to the class, which the others may not see. They are to draw what they think it looks like based on what they hear.

Mathematics: measuring; geometric figures; scale drawing; ratios and proportions; fractions; area; volume; perimeter.

Have students draw a floor plan of their room or home to scale.

Have them “enlarge a masterpiece.” They can use a magazine photo or postcard, with the ratio $\frac{1}{4}$ inch equals 2 feet.

Music: jazz, orchestral, musical theater, classical and contemporary music; musical vocation.

Have students select music and art from the same culture, then compare them and find similarities and differences.

Science: weather; geology; climate; natural resources; magnetism; nuclear energy; human organisms; genes and chromosomes; substance abuse; aviation; space exploration.

This is the perfect age for biological information about the human organism. Students can draw their own hand or foot from direct observation.

Have them cut a piece of blue or black construction paper into eight small pieces. They can use chalk to draw cumulus, stratus, cirrus, and nimbus clouds. They should glue each small piece onto a piece of paper, identify it, give the altitude at which it is generally found, and describe the appearance (example: fluffy storm clouds).

Social Studies: the ancient world; current events; environmental concerns; animal rights; their country’s heritage.

Students can learn to identify the characteristics of works from Greece, Rome, Egypt, or other locations in Africa or Asia. They can compare and contrast similar works from two entirely different cultures, discussing theme or cultural context.

Have them study African empires, dividing research on agriculture, arts.

The Seventh-Grade Student



Characteristics of Seventh Graders

Are more aware of physical appearance than previously; suddenly interested in the opposite sex

Would like to be treated like an adult, yet often revert to childish solutions and behavior

Want to be individuals, yet very sensitive to peer pressure and want to identify with a group

Interested in exciting experiences

What Seventh Graders Can Do with Materials and Technology

General: capable of handling materials and equipment with skill

Equipment: use lino-cutting tools; X-acto® knives

Clay: do slab and coil building; create sculpture; make pinch pots

Paint: understand mixing color to make tints, shades, “grayed” colors; make textures with a variety of strokes

Ink and markers: use hatching, cross-hatching, sketching, and ink wash; understand controlled directional use of markers; create implied texture

Paper: make handmade paper; create origami or paper sculpture

Fiber arts: stitch; weave; make baskets; use batik; make a fabric collage, knot; wrap; make paper; quilt; use applique; understand book arts

Sculpture materials: use files or sandpaper; adhere materials; work with clay or plastercraft; make papier mâché

Printmaking materials: make a relief block print (woodblock or lino-cut)

Technology: create different types of shapes; work with a variety of fonts on the computer; apply design knowledge to photography

Seventh Graders’ Understanding of Concepts

Transform personal experiences into art forms

Recognize that different cultures have styles in artwork that reflect people’s values and beliefs

Identify and use elements and principles of art, recognizing rhythmic lines, complex shapes, analogous colors, balance (radial, symmetry, and asymmetry), focal point and contrast

Do research on something if it is of interest to them

Record reality in landscapes, cityscapes, and portraiture

Be aware of how color, line, shape, and composition affect a composition

Interpret subject and theme, identify center of interest

Show interest in learning about architecture; recognize how different cultural influences and location affect the style of buildings

Suggestions for Teaching Seventh Graders

Encourage them to take photographs or use the video camcorder to record their world.

Compare and contrast two artworks by artistic style, media, and art processes. Notice how class members react differently to abstract and nonobjective works.

Encourage computer-graphics experimentation.

Spend more time talking about what artists might have been thinking, why they work the way they do, and what effect society has on the appearance of art.

Give assignments that are open-ended enough to allow the students to show unique interpretations.

Occasionally allow students to select the appropriate media to express themselves.

Discuss appearance: about how people look, why people wear what they do, how hair styles differ.

Seventh-Grade Content Connections

Language Arts: using dictionary and encyclopedia; group discussions and presentations; listening skills; speaking in front of the class.

Have students be an “art critic” for a newspaper.

Assign small groups to research an artistic movement, culture, or time period on the Internet or library to share with the class. They can write a tabloid “newspaper” about that time period (using their own words). Assign a different “section” to each person or group (food, art critic, books, comics, headline stories, obituaries). Appropriate illustrations could accompany each section.

Drama: film and drama reviews; plot, setting, character, theme; oral communication (skits, demonstration, speech, pantomime). Have students interpret a famous work of art with props, acting, and costumes. For example, one small town in the United States sets aside one week a year in which townspeople make life-size interpretations of twenty-five famous paintings (a definite tourist attraction).

Mathematics: volume, area, perimeter; shape and space; segments and lines; parallel and perpendicular lines; circumference of a circle; angles; square roots; percentages; fractions.

Plan a pi day celebration on March 14 (3-14). Have students dress like “math geeks,” serve pizza, make mandalas (circular designs with personal symbols) or hex signs (geometric forms based on a circle).

Have students make three-dimensional geometric forms found in Chapter Ten.

Science: human body systems; genetics; ecosystems and community; animals and their habitats; reptiles; flowers; trees and shrubs.

Take students outside to find a tiny living organism (such as a plant, an insect, or a bird). They can use colored pencils to “enlarge” the item, making a “scientific illustration” to display in class. It may take a second day to finish this.

Social Studies: world geography; inventions; Renaissance art; political organizations; mythology; religious architecture; maps.

Have students read a few myths, then write a myth to explain a natural phenomenon such as an earthquake, a volcanic eruption, the sun coming up and going down each day, leaves falling from trees, chicks being hatched from eggs, and so on.

Compare religious architecture from several cultures (Native American, European Gothic, Asian temples, Islamic Mosques). Talk about similarities and differences.

The Eighth-Grade Student



Characteristics of Eighth Graders

- Are highly self-conscious and interested in personal appearance; are aware of how others see them
- Have raging hormones; volatile personalities, trying various roles from week to week
- Helpful; interested in service projects and environmental concerns
- Inquisitive and interested in complex ideas; want to relate education to their lives
- Interested in personal lives of entertainers, sports stars, TV personalities
- Sensitive about artistic ability; take criticism of their artwork personally
- Interested in working with others on a joint project

What Eighth Graders Can Do with Materials and Technology

- General:* physically work with most artistic materials, simply differing in degree of skill
- Marker, ink, pencil, or colored pencil:* create continuous, even tones
- Crafts:* work skillfully with crafts such as jewelry, weaving, stitchery, and batik
- Technology:* apply elements and principles of design to photography, digital art, and the use of a video camcorder
- Clay:* model sculpture; work with coil and slab building; make pinch pots
- Fiber arts:* make jewelry; knot; make paper; use batik; quilt; use applique; understand book arts
- Paint:* mix paint to create tints and shades or a variety of colors; model; show depth; represent something realistically
- Computer:* combine lines and shapes to make effective designs

Eighth Graders' Understanding of Concepts

- Want to know why things are taught and the application to real life
- Can continue to learn about careers related to the visual arts
- Can identify and use varied line quality, value differences, complementary colors, formal and informal balance, scale relationship, perspective, diminishing size, and color to show depth
- Use materials and techniques to depict moods, ideas, feelings
- Apply design elements to creating objects and materials for living
- Identify artwork from different cultures and time periods by specific common characteristics
- Think abstractly; can grasp double meanings, morality, and symbolism in artwork
- Can interpret the meaning of work and identify whether it demonstrates reality (imitationalism), expresses feelings (emotionalism), emphasizes the elements and principles of art (formalism), or is a useful object (functionalism)

Suggestions for Teaching Eighth Graders

- Help them improve skills in a variety of media, introducing new ways of using familiar materials.
- Give them "real" assignments when possible: posters, designing jewelry, fabrics, murals.

Assign open-ended topics that allow them to express moods such as happiness or sadness.

Assign a painting related to time or space (past, present, or future).

Help them develop aesthetic judgment and discuss how they apply it to daily life (as consumers and connoisseurs of art).

Continue to introduce and discuss historical artworks from a variety of cultures.

Personalize some projects, encouraging them to use their own faces, names, or initials as design elements.

Encourage them to work in groups on a large project such as a mural, or reports on artists, or even several working together as collaborative artists.

Eighth-Grade Content Connections

Music and Drama: creating and painting scenery; painting to music; relating the music and visual arts of a specific time period.

Language Arts: American literary heritage; communication and research skills; illustrating a short story; using dictionary and encyclopedia; oral presentations; using the library.

Encourage students to write about their own art through keeping a sketchbook or journal.

Talk about popular or visual culture today. What are some of the images that are well known to contemporary society? Ask students, if you were to illustrate a short story (your own or one that you are reading), how could you illustrate it using a pop-culture image?

Have students paint a “narrative painting” to illustrate a story in the manner of some great illustrators such as George Caleb Bingham, John Quidor, or N. C. Wyeth.

Mathematics: problem solving; American to metric conversions; perpendicular and parallel lines; area, volume, shape, and space; fractions; percentages.

Have students make a Renaissance drawing using the golden rectangle and formal perspective.

On the computer they can make a drawing using a horizon line, single vanishing point, and perspective. This could be a room or a cityscape.

Science: astronomy; energy; weather; oceanography; land forms; volcanoes; earthquakes; geology; fossils; mapping; population.

Ask students to design an Earth Day project that will affect their immediate environment. This could be stream clean-up, improving drainage on a school’s grounds, clearing a walking path in a nearby wooded area, or planting bulbs and plants in a cleared garden area.

Social Studies: American history to 1900; economic organization; research skills; political organizations.

Ask students to consider how differences in background (religion, immigrant group, gender, level of education, economic status, age, and attitude toward the environment) might affect the way art might look to different groups of people.

Have them think about how symbols (political, religious, governmental, environmental) identify the beliefs of certain groups. Make a circular design for a political button to identify a political party (not necessarily a party that already exists).

Relate the history of American art to their studies of American history and literature.

Adaptations for Primary Children

- Create an “art book” during the year that students are in kindergarten. Start it with a self-portrait on the first day, and finish it with a self-portrait during the last week. You may be the one to add a date on each piece, but this portfolio can be used to assess progress in art, and teaches students that their work is valued and worth taking care of.
- Primary children have short attention spans (theoretically it is one minute per year of age), but I find them capable of using most media. Working step-by-step is a necessity. Their work is often so free and charming that I feel it is possible to overteach at this level. They are generally better at painting than drawing. Sometimes just putting out painting materials (they can paint with fingers, small sponges, Q-tips, or jumbo brushes) and giving a suggestion or two (such as to paint on the entire paper, or to use their imaginations to create a magical place, or to paint their “birthday celebration”) leads to wonderful results. Children enjoy learning to use the brush to create texture, lines, or shapes. For watercolor resist, one teacher suggests using Cray-pas and cake tempera instead of crayon and watercolor because they don’t take as much pressure to get intense lines.
- Put out two small puddles of primary colors and allow students to use a finger to mix and make a secondary color into any shape they want, perhaps drawing a face into their shape. A damp sponge is fine for cleanup.
- Primary students are great at collage with geometric and free-form shapes. Keep leftover construction paper scraps in a box, and during your leisure time cut them on the paper cutter into smaller pieces. The children love to use paper punches, and of course can cut up their own scraps. Remind them that the pieces from which they cut (the negative shapes) are also interesting. Show them how to turn the paper as they cut, to use just a drop of glue (or a glue stick), and to leave some of the background showing when they glue things in place. Each lesson could include cutting, pasting, and drawing.
- If you use fingerpaint paper (slick-finish), and the paint gets a little too thick, a monoprint can be made by placing a second paper on top, and gently rubbing with the *clean* palm of the hand from the center toward the outside edges.
- Take students outside to draw clouds, using chalk on light blue paper. Teach them the names of the various cloud formations.
- Students can use crayons to make rubbings on copy paper of a variety of textures (indoors or outside). They then can cut these textures into shapes to use in a collage. After it is glued in place, ask them “What can it be?” Perhaps then they would draw on the textures with marker, or cut and add accents of colored paper.
- Art teachers at times avoid using geometric templates, but drawing around a circle (for example) can teach cooperative learning, with one student holding the template in place while the other draws. Where the circles overlap, students can fill with different texture or patterns in each distinct area. Students also can work together to draw a border around the edge of paper by holding a ruler in place. This border can be filled with a pattern.
- Talk about art with the students. Show paintings of landscape, seascape, portrait, narrative (story telling), and abstract. Have them figure out the real objects in an abstract painting (Picasso always had a subject, as did Miró).
- Primary children enjoy talking about artists and art (they certainly see enough of it on cartoons, animated films, and videogames). They enjoy “I spy” (spotting or guessing an object in a painting) or scavenger hunts.

Adaptations in Art for Special-Needs Students

Today's art teachers try to accommodate different learning styles by using a variety of methods, such as demonstrating, writing on the board, talking about art, and hands-on work. For the student with physical and mental disabilities, other methods of learning can be utilized that will make their art experience easier and more successful. Some of these suggestions are from some of my Fontbonne University teachers-in-training who were already working with special-needs students.

General Suggestions

- Be aware of the goals on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) in order to help that student achieve personal goals. It might be a more important goal for the student to learn socialization, to complete a task, or to develop fine-motor ability than to make a fine work of art.
- Relaxing background music or headphones may help the student who has trouble focusing on the task at hand.
- Give support only as you sense the student needs it, instead of automatically assuming you know what his or her needs are.
- Break activities into shorter tasks. Perhaps put the "steps" on the board or poster as a reminder. Many young people have trouble following long lists of instructions.
- A "time-out" table or area is helpful. Some students might be able to concentrate better by being allowed to work somewhat apart from other students for a while.
- Substitute the medium if certain students are having great difficulty (oil pastels instead of tempera paint, for example).
- Pair a special-needs student with a different buddy each month (to help get supplies and to make sure the student understands). This is good for both students.
- Draw lines with a pencil where you want a student to apply glue or cut with scissors.
- Use symbols to represent colors: for example, heart = red, sun = yellow, or bluebird = blue.
- If you are testing, allow more time for a special-needs student, or read the questions aloud. Highlight words you feel the student especially needs to learn or recognize.

The Student with Impaired Vision

- Use tactile materials such as clay, wire, fingerpaint, cardboard pieces, popsicle sticks, or other three-dimensional materials that allow the student to feel the texture.
- Place supplies within a frame taped on the table. (This could be no bigger than a roll of masking tape, or a taped-down box lid.)
- The student can hold or feel an object with one hand while drawing it with the other (a friend's ear or a twig, for example).

- Use square crayons, or those that are flat on one side, to avoid having them roll off a table.
- In talking about perspective with a visually impaired student, relate the appearance of objects farther away to hearing. The farther away something is, the fainter it sounds.
- For the student who wants to use appropriate colors, pencils, markers, or crayons could be “color-coded” by putting a different number of rubber bands on each color (arrange by spectrum). Paint could be put in film canisters and coded the same way.
- Tape screen-wire to a piece of cardboard as a drawing board. The student can feel a waxy surface left by drawing with crayon on paper that has screen-wire placed underneath.
- Make an outline with a glue gun, wide black marker, glued yarn, wax crayon, or black glue. A visually disabled student can then draw with crayon, chalk, or paint within the outline.
- Scented markers give visually impaired students the use of appropriate colors.
- Add sand to paint so the student can feel what has been painted. The student also can “paint” on cardboard with tiny balls of softened modeling clay.
- If the student cannot see at all, speak when you approach. Also let the student know when you are leaving. Have the student touch your hands while you are demonstrating.
- A sample “texture board” can be created for a visually impaired student to identify what he or she is feeling.
- Substitute yarn, crumpled tissue, or construction paper and glue in place of tempera paint.
- Students can use textured rubbing plates or make fish prints from fake fish.

The Student with Autism

- Students can write answers rather than speak.
- Model a project by working side-by-side with the student.
- Give adequate warning for the end of work time or for a change of pace.

The Student with Impaired Hearing

- Touch the student’s arm to get his or her attention.
- Be sure you are facing the student, when giving instructions, for those students who may be able to read lips.
- Check that the student understands the assignment. Repeat twice, slowly, or write the steps.
- It may be necessary to draw or write what the assignment is about.

The Student with Motor Impairment

- Cutting paper may be a problem, and several types of special scissors are available. Squizzers, snip-loop scissors, and spring-action scissors spring open after being squeezed. Some children's scissors have four finger holes so a "guiding hand" can be used to help the student cut.
- A student might find it easier to tear paper rather than cut it. Or someone else could hold the paper between both hands while the student cuts from the bottom toward the top.
- Tape paper to the table to hold it in place while the student is working.
- Use tempera paint in large refillable markers.
- For a student who has difficulty gripping a pencil, crayon, or paintbrush, place the object inside a foam curler or tape it to the hand.
- A student with motor impairment may benefit from being able to trace around a template.
- Felt-tipped pens may be easier for a student to handle than crayons.

The Student with Behavioral Disabilities

- This student often does well with three-dimensional materials or those that offer resistance (such as clay, lino-cuts, or carving). This student usually thrives on being given responsibilities and being a helper. Especially to this student, offer praise freely for a task well done.
- It may be necessary to count backward from five to calm a student.
- If the student is disruptive, move him or her to a quieter place to work. Time-out may be necessary.
- Frequent breaks or a change of pace allow the student to compose him- or herself.

The Student with Developmental Disabilities

- Select projects that are appropriate for the ability of this student. If necessary, substitute a different medium or goal.
- Overteach! Allow the student to complete one stage before beginning another. For many students, each task should be explained in separate steps. Explain repeatedly if necessary.

How We Teach—Thoughts on Teaching Art

One premise of this book revision is that some people who are not formally trained art teachers will use it as a resource for teaching art to children. The important thing for anyone who teaches art to remember is that there is more to art than drawing. I frequently hear “I can’t draw a straight line,” as if that were the primary requirement to become an artist. Naturally some students draw with more skill than others—perhaps because their powers of observation are keen, but more likely because they love drawing and have had more practice.

Any student can be an artist or at least learn to love looking at art, even without the greatest ability to realistically draw what he or she sees. Media such as sculpture, photography, ceramics, digital printmaking, and collage offer the opportunity for creative expression to everyone. Students have been exposed to art appreciation at a younger age, and love to go just look at and appreciate the artwork. Art museum attendance is at an all-time high. Contemporary art museums attract visitors of all ages and interests, and outdoor sculpture museums are springing up all over the world, as people enjoy seeing art in park-like settings.

Encouraging Creativity

The results in fine art (painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking) and fine craft (fiber arts, ceramics) have many similar characteristics. Although it is often necessary to lead students step-by-step through the use of unfamiliar media, a good art teacher does not expect a specific result, but rather offers the students a chance for creative individual solutions. The predesigned craft kit is an extreme example of knowing in advance what the end product will be.

Have a Quiet Thinking Time

This will be a time for students to envision what they will do. One colleague teaches students from kindergarten on up to make a preliminary pencil drawing for every project.

Teach Them “Use Your Mistakes”

In my opinion it is better for students not to get new paper to start over each time they make a mistake. Instead, let them learn the saying “Use Your Mistakes.”

Praise When It Is Justified

If you always say something is wonderful, it will lose its meaning. Instead, praise one aspect of the artwork. Try to avoid simply telling a student the work is good. Instead, try for a specific remark, such as “You really made an effort to fill the page,” or “I notice that you varied the thickness of your lines,” or “I love how you used these two colors together.”

Ask Questions

Ask what is in a picture rather than telling what you think is there. Instead of suggesting to a student what to do to change or improve an artwork, guide the student by asking what he or she was thinking about doing next.

Have High Expectations

Few students will work on something any longer than they have to. You will do them a favor by not accepting casual, half-completed work.

Walk Around

While walking around, sometimes hold up and discuss the work of a student who has found an unusual solution to a problem. Remember to do this with each student over the period of the year.

Avoid Patterns

Although tracing around a pattern may help with motor skills, it rarely assists creativity. *Avoid showing your example.* Certainly if you are going to teach something, you should try it first to make sure you know what pitfalls there might be. But if you bring in your example, then students will try to make theirs just like yours, in order to please you.

Never Draw on a Student's Work

If you want to show them how to do something, or you have an idea that might improve their work, draw it on another sheet of paper, or even put tracing paper on top of their work to show them, then wad it up and throw it away. You can even “draw” it with a finger. Although drawing on the work is often the easiest way to solve a problem or improve the work, you are virtually saying that you do it better than they do.

Relationships with Students

Friendliness, caring, tolerance, and consistency are important attributes for teacher-student relationships. If you are relaxed and calm, and students know you love teaching them, they will recognize it. Be a good listener. After you have presented a lesson, ask individuals in the class what the “steps” will be, or ask if they have an idea they would like to share related to the project. This helps to keep them involved, and allows you to clarify any misunderstanding. Afterward ask the students what they learned (if you write this on posterboard as they talk, the answers can be displayed with the artwork for viewers to see).

It is often easy to pick up clues when a student is having a bad day, and sometimes a little extra attention may be something you can easily do during an art class to make it better.

Where We Teach

There is nothing more exciting than walking into a school that is an “art school.” Every classroom has student artwork hanging inside and outside each room in addition to the “art” displays. The classroom teacher may be pleased to receive student artwork to display within or just outside the classroom, or to keep artwork within individual student portfolios.

Approximately half of the visual art taught in public elementary schools is taught by the classroom teacher. Wherever or however you teach, you may find something here that will be useful to you in organizing your situation. For art specialists, although the ideal is a separate art classroom, many teach in the regular classroom from an art cart, whereas others, who travel from school to school, teach out of the trunk of a car.

The Regular Classroom

Students will work at their own desks in most classrooms, but if you need space for larger projects, the floor or hallway can accommodate spillover. Each student should have a 22 × 28-inch portfolio (a folded piece of large posterboard) in the room to store both finished artwork and work in process. A storage cabinet for art supplies is ideal, but even a plastic tub with a lid can be used to store the crayons, markers, tempera, watercolors, colored pencils, brushes, and water containers that would be the basis for most classroom art lessons.

The Art Classroom

Some art specialists are fortunate enough to have a special art room that by its very nature can be an exciting place to enter. Most elementary and middle school art classrooms contain historical reproductions, art timelines, a color wheel, and posters with the elements and principles of art, as well as rules of respect. In addition, bulletin boards might feature one artist or artwork done by all grade levels in a specific month.

From a Cart

A storage area ideally will have a sink, desk and chair, and file cabinet. Sturdy shelving for supplies and a place to store plastic crates and works in progress will make it easier to keep the art cart up-to-date. A cart should be stocked with standard supplies of crayons, oil pastels, markers, glue, and construction and drawing paper, all of which can give students a satisfactory art experience. Students can do three-dimensional or larger two-dimensional work by allowing work to dry on newspaper or plastic outside in the hall before being gathered up and placed in large plastic bags or boxes. If hands will need to be washed, bring two or three buckets to fill with water. Works in progress can be placed in a general portfolio to be continued on your next visit.

In general, students’ artwork will be stored and displayed in their classrooms. A tagboard portfolio for each student’s artwork might allow the student to earn the privilege of continuing to work on an art project when other work is finished.

The Basics for an Art Specialist

Communicating with Classroom Teachers

It is important for art specialists to lunch with the classroom teachers, visit their classrooms, or even borrow their classroom textbooks. Try not to isolate yourself with the excuse that you have work to do. Sometimes a few minutes of conversation will assist both classroom and art teachers to devise a dynamic idea for a project in another discipline. The students' artwork often benefits when they build on what they are learning in the classroom.

Ideally, art specialists keep the classroom teacher informed in writing about what the students will be doing each week. If the lesson occurs in the regular classroom, students are then prepared for your arrival. When doing messy projects, have students wear a smock (a large t-shirt or an adult short-sleeved shirt worn backward and clearly identified on the outside of the back with the student's name in permanent marker). For older students, work aprons kept in the art room are easy for them to put on when they are needed.

Setting Routines

If you start teaching routines at the beginning of the year and stick with them, students will quickly learn to live up to your expectations. Train students to use certain pathways to enter and exit, and to approach and leave the sink or drying rack. When you are presenting a lesson, don't begin until every student is quiet. If someone is disruptive while you are talking, simply pause and look at the offender, waiting until the interruption ends, allowing peer pressure to help you with discipline. The other students want to get on with it, and they will usually quiet the offender. The occasional fake smile at that student when he or she notices you waiting is as effective as having to discipline severely.

Using Seating Charts

My feeling is that the teacher-prepared seating chart results in more productive classes. When students of various abilities and genders are seated at each work table, everyone seems to work at a higher level of achievement. Self-adhesive notes with each student's name on them can be put on a chart and easily rearranged as you get to know the students better. Some district regulations state that a seating chart should be posted on the door no longer than three days. From time to time move a few students who would benefit from working with a different group of people. Identify tables by color or number so you can get the attention of a group of students easily. Triangular or rectangular matboard forms can be hung from the ceiling directly above the tables.

Rewarding Good Behavior

Simply put, "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." Disciplinary measures need to be taken at times, but catching students being good is far more effective than catching them being bad. Rewards can be as simple as giving a student a task or responsibility ("Will you be my captain to pick up the artwork today?") or assigning table captains

for the week or a line leader for the day. One teacher has made a plain “artist’s palette” on white paper for each class and laminated it. If a class is well behaved, one student is allowed to color in one of the colors on the palette. When the palette’s colors are filled in, a reward is given.

You can make small certificate slips that you personally sign and hand out to individuals or to an entire class. For a particularly good month, you can offer food (a lollipop or popcorn party—a handful of popcorn on a piece of paper in front of each student). Allow the students to listen to music if they are especially cooperative (simply turn on a radio or tape if they are working especially well).

Controlling Noise

The philosophy of allowing talk during art lessons varies from school to school. Many feel that students have too little time during the school day for socialization, and art class offers a more relaxed atmosphere that fosters social development. It is very easy for students to go beyond quiet productive time to the chaos we have all had to deal with. Most teachers try for a minimum of ten minutes of quiet time during “creative thinking” sessions. Some allow talking privileges to be earned by good behavior. Students can be taught to become silent immediately if you get their attention by an arranged signal. Some teachers simply turn off an overhead light; another claps twice and waits for the students to clap twice in response. Several teachers solve the problem of noisy stools that are much too tippy by cutting a one-inch X in the side of a tennis ball to place on each leg of a stool. The stools glide easily and quietly.

Organizing the Classroom

Storage is usually a problem in an art room, so having supplies well-organized is always attractive and makes your life easier. Art supplies can be part of the decor of the room and contribute to the exciting atmosphere of the art classroom. Tops and insides of open-storage shelves can contain stacks of colored paper and rows of tempera paint arranged by the colors of the spectrum. Corners or tops of cabinets could be filled with the makings of a good still life such as nonfunctioning musical instruments, plants, stuffed animals, pottery, old chairs, antique containers, and boxes of fabric and yarn. Realistically, most people have a too-small supply closet that can quickly become a disaster if it isn’t organized from time to time.

Use small sectioned trays for the center of each table that contain sufficient pencils, markers, crayons, rulers, and scissors for each student at the table. Table captains can be responsible for keeping pencils sharpened and checking supplies at the end of each hour. Or have classroom sets of supplies such as brushes, rulers, erasers, crayons, and so on arranged on counters in coffee cans, cut-off bottoms of plastic milk jugs, or small baskets. Have a box for unused portions of construction paper.

Managing Equipment

Take care of equipment in order to keep from constantly replacing it. Simple supplies such as scissors and erasers are frequently borrowed and not returned, and you may find it necessary to “sign out” borrowed equipment. Make wooden boxes for long rulers, and small wooden platforms with holes drilled in them for individual brush or ink pen storage. A number on each hole that corresponds with the number of the student in your grade book lets you know at a glance who still has not cleaned and put his or her brush away. This same system works with scissors. Cutting knives can be kept blade down in a Styrofoam block, but for safety purposes I recommend that these be kept in a locked cabinet and checked out only as needed. Never allow them to leave your classroom.

Storing Artwork

Work in progress is often wet and messy, and must go on a drying rack, the hall floor, or a corner of the room until it dries. When it is dry enough to handle, the two-dimensional work can be stored in a class drawer or a class portfolio. Three-dimensional work can be placed in trash bags and identified with the teacher’s name.

Maintaining Portfolios

If you do not have a drawer for each class in which work in progress may be kept in large portfolios (made of folded and stapled 28 × 44-inch tagboard) labeled with the teacher’s name for each of your classes, work can be kept in individual student portfolios, either in the art room or in the classroom, until it is ready to be taken home or displayed. This allows you to see the progress a student has made, and you are easily able to select work for displays and exhibitions. This reinforces the value that you and students should place on their artwork.

Displaying Student Work Outside the Art Room

One way to let all students see that their work is valued is to display the work of *every* student, not selecting just a few of the “best.” Put artwork in your room, outside your room, outside their classroom, and inside and outside the office. Displays in community, school district, Internet, and state art exhibitions all offer opportunities to showcase your students’ work. One general guideline to keep in mind is that the farther away from the art room, the higher the quality of the work should be. If the artwork is arranged with the more eye-catching compositions on the outsides and near the middle, even average work takes on importance. It is also very effective to make a placard to place with a group of similar projects to explain what was learned (ask the students, they will tell you).

Use pushpins to easily hang examples of artwork or reproductions all around your room. When work is complete, use available walls and counters around the school or in the library for display. If it is absolutely necessary to send artwork home, keep a list of pieces you may want to have brought back for an art exhibit.

Signing Work

Students may sign their work on the front, but show them how they can inconspicuously print or sign their names next to a subject (such as an arm or leg of a figure), without detracting from the composition.

Making Labels

Make labels with space for the student name, grade, art teacher, and school. Have these neatly cut, and always ready to attach to any artwork that is displayed. For a uniform display, have these filled out with black ink.

Preparing Student Notebooks

Many middle schools purchase for their art students prepunched copy paper and clear plastic-fronted three-ring binders that are normally kept in the room. Students are requested to date and keep their thumbnail sketches, journal entries, notes, homework, and small works in progress in their notebooks. The students' first project can be a drawing for the front of the notebook.

Cleaning Up

Most art rooms have a single sink. If at all possible, avoid having young students wash their brushes or hands at the sink. Several teachers whom I've observed have enough inexpensive washcloths (watch for sales) for every student, which they keep in an open-sided plastic crate. When these are kept damp and rinsed from time to time, they are good for cleaning hands and tables. Machine washing weekly is sufficient.

Rinse sponges in a bucket of water, then *you* squeeze out the water and distribute sponges at the end of the hour for table clean-up. If you do not have a sink, a series of buckets may be used for handwashing if necessary. If it is a desperate situation, you can take all of the students to the bathroom to wash their hands. Modeling clay is more easily cleaned off hands by using dry paper towels.

Dismissing Students

Give ample warning about the end of the period. Assign different table captains each week to get supplies and put them away. All the students seem to help each other if a reward (such as being first to line up) is given to the table that is finished first, with everything clean. To be fair to all, some teachers devise and post a duty schedule at the first of the year. If sweeping is necessary, a different table can be given that duty each week. Another teacher tells students she will slowly count to ten to allow students time to get their work put away and their tables clean.

Bringing in New Art Materials

Manufacturers of art materials are constantly coming up with innovations. Your students will usually become excited when you bring in something new. If a product (such as the nonbreaking, self-supporting acrylic mirror) comes onto the market, but is relatively

expensive, start by buying just a few a year until you have enough for your class. Vendors attend state and national conventions and have some of the finest art educators in the country demonstrating how to use new materials. Even young students can be told that they are using very special materials, and that care must be used in putting them back in the box to help make them last. If they mistreat new boxes of materials, then these should be put away and the old ones brought back out.

Recycling

Art teachers are natural scavengers. They use things from nature, and were into recycling long before it became fashionable. Notes sent home to parents often result in marvelous things being sent in to the classes. Of course, you must be prepared to store all the goodies you get, or use them quickly. Labeled, lidded plastic crates and copy paper boxes are fine for storage. Some towns have organized recycling centers for teachers, where, for a slight fee, out-throws from factories—such as foam sheeting, buttons, lace, film canisters, paper ends, newsprint roll centers, fabric, centers from fabric bolts, carpet tubes, and so on—are available for teachers. If your town doesn't have one of these centers, get together a group of teachers (or parents) and organize one! Let local manufacturers and merchants know that you are always in the market for quality junk.

Parent and Community Relations

Parents are very interested in their children's success, and artwork is a visible means of showing what is happening at school. Chances to display student work occur through changing displays in the school itself, occasional displays in the school library or at a local library, and a larger district exhibition (often at a recreational complex or shopping mall).

One reason for keeping a separate folder for each class is to allow you to accumulate work as the year goes on, and have it prepared for display to avoid the last-minute problem of matting sixty to two hundred works of art. If you simply have no place to store work, keep a list of work that you would like to have returned for special exhibitions.

Parent Volunteers

Although families have working parents, many still enjoy making time to volunteer occasionally. When you are involved in a large schoolwide project—such as paper making, marbling, or mural making—send home a request asking parents to schedule just one hour of work; you will find fathers, mothers, and grandparents who are willing to help. Here are a few suggestions of work that could be done at school or at home:

- *Public relations*, perhaps by a parent whose business or interests are in public relations
- *Photographing artwork for publicity*
- *Videotaping an exciting process* from beginning to end for reuse in another class

- *Creating a PowerPoint program*
- *Matting artwork for display*
- *Arranging bulletin boards*
- *Hanging or removing art displays*
- *Woodworking*, in the form of display boards, scissors and brush holders, or boxes for storage of posters or portfolios
- *Field trip escorting*, on an art field trip to a gallery or museum (or perhaps just to the neighborhood grocery store, to sketch nearby houses, or to go on a drawing excursion in a field or farm)
- *Assisting at an art open house*
- *Cutting or trimming paper* (to vary size of artwork, or make scrap paper manageable)
- *Being a Picture Person* (to teach students, perhaps once a month, about a culture or an individual artist)
- *Arranging a visit by a professional artist*

Newsletters

Art is important in students' lives! Let families know what you are doing and why. Include in a newsletter information about museum exhibitions in your town or a nearby state, art classes available in the community for students, "art" jokes or cartoons, examples of student artwork, quotes about art, art-related crossword puzzles and games, and recipes for art materials.

You might feature information about one artist in each newsletter (students could do the research). Inform families about projects and goals for each specific level. Art news can be included in a principal's newsletter, sent home with students, or posted on a Website. *Note:* be sure that any student whose name you use is not listed on the school's Do Not Photograph (FERPA—Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) list.

Any time a student has work on display outside the school, have a form ready to inform the family when and where it can be seen.

Student Recognition

Art Student of the Week (Month or Year)

Display the name with one or more examples of the student's artwork on an easel or bulletin board near the office. Make an announcement in the school newsletter, and present a fancy certificate.

Principal's Collection

Involve parents in helping you select one picture a year to be beautifully framed to add to a "Principal's Collection" for the office.

Competitions

You will be overwhelmed with many opportunities for your students to participate in a competition. Many offer worthwhile learning opportunities for students, as well as recognition for those whose work is accepted. If the competition fits into the curriculum and the students can learn something from it, probably no harm is done.

State and National Conventions

Consider doing a presentation of your students' work at a district, local, state, or national convention for art teachers. Successful interdisciplinary projects can be presented at state teachers' conventions or at conventions for other disciplines.

Public Relations Guidelines

Where Art Information Might Be Seen

- *A principal's newsletter or art newsletter* written to accompany principal's newsletter
- *The school's Web page*
- *A district newsletter* containing student

art from all the schools in the district could be a joint effort between parents, art teachers in all the schools, and the Public Relations Department. Let people know what your art students are doing.

- *The local newspaper or television.* If you are doing something that is special (a mural, an outside display, a monumental work of art, an unusual technique, sponsoring a visiting artist), this might be of interest to your local newspaper or TV station. Give them adequate notice.
- *Professional art magazines or journals.* Sometimes you and your students have done a project with an unusual and exciting result that might be surprising even to you. Share it with your fellow art teachers. Art publications such as *School Arts* and *Arts and Activities* welcome articles with quality photographs, and your students will be thrilled to see their artwork in a magazine.

Before Contacting the Newspaper

Check first with the school principal, who would probably inform the district's Public Relations or Communications Department. Some school districts encourage each school to have its own parent-ambassador committee, but these also must notify the district office before information is released. One large school district has a central communications committee that divides responsibility for Websites, newspapers, and television.

Sometimes the newspaper will send out a photographer, or the television station will send a video crew. More often you will find that if you take photos and send in pertinent information to the newspaper, eventually the photo will find its way into print.

What Is Newsworthy? What makes a Unique Story?

- Special news about a student's achievement, such as winning a statewide art competition
- Art students creating something special (such as teacher Linda Packard's students decorating shopping bags in which hospitalized children may keep holiday gifts or toys)
- Students doing a service project with retired individuals
- Students participating in an exhibit at the state capital during Youth Art Month
- Cooperative art partnership or exchange with a school from a different district

- A local angle to a national story (students creating art from recycled materials from a local store)
- Students at work; dramatic action

Photo Guidelines

Digital Images

- Use a high-resolution camera (5 to 8 megapixel minimum). The picture should be of reproduction quality, 300 ppi (pixels per inch), and will be reprinted CMYK (Cyan/magenta/yellow/ black). Take the largest picture you can take and the finest quality (then when the publisher reduces it in size, the result will be better).
- Inkjet- or desktop-printed photos may be of poor quality, and images taken on phone cameras are not of print quality.
- If sent by e-mail, the photo should not be larger than 5 megabytes. If in doubt, call the newspaper and ask for their guidelines.
- Formats generally preferred are jpeg (maximum quality), eps, and tiff.

Film Photos

- Traditional glossy photos from a 35mm film camera should be at least 4 × 6 inches.
- Include background information for a photo. Identify people in the photo from left to right. Check with your school office to make sure there is no student in the photo whose name is on the Do Not Photograph (FERPA) list. One district allows the use of children's first names only in a photograph to be published. Be certain the spelling of names is correct. If faculty members are included in a photo, also give the title of the person (fifth-grade teacher, principal, school nurse). If in doubt include a written permission signed by the parents of a child whose photo is used.
- If you are writing about an event, the most important information should be in the first paragraph. Include the five W's and H—who, what, when, why, where, and how. State if the public is invited to an event. Include the date an event might happen, the name and address of your school, and a phone number and name of person to contact for further information.

Tips on Photographing Art

Digital Photography

With the advent of the digital camera, photographing artwork is much simpler than it was. After taking a picture, you can check the exposure to see if it is correct, or if it is sharp enough. If you must expose at slower than 1/30th of a second, use a tripod to avoid camera shake.

Setting Up Artwork to Photograph

Natural Light

Photograph artwork in natural light to record the color as faithfully as possible. Ideally you have natural daylight behind you to provide light. Work closely enough to the artwork that it fills the frame of the viewfinder, eliminating distracting borders.

- If shooting outdoors, do this on a calm day in a spot that is sheltered from the sun. A cloudy bright day is ideal.
- To avoid distortion, photograph artwork by laying it on the floor, on a table, or pinned to a neutral backdrop. If the finished photograph is distorted or needs to be cropped, some of your problems can be adjusted in a computer program such as Photoshop.
- For three-dimensional art, hang neutral roll paper on the wall and allow it to go to the tabletop. Place the artwork on the paper. This eliminates a line behind the artwork. Take shots from several angles: eye-level, from above looking down, from below.

Indoors with a Flash

- When shooting indoors, check in the viewfinder to see if the lighting is even. If it is not, you may find it necessary to use the flash. If you are using an automatic camera with a flash, stand approximately six to ten feet back and use the telephoto function to frame the artwork properly. If you are too close with the flash, the colors will be washed out.

Indoors with Photo Floodlights

- Take the photographs some distance from windows, with no overhead lights.
- Position photo floodlights on standards at a 45-degree angle, approximately three feet in front of the artwork and between the camera and the artwork.
- If you have an adjustment for white balance on a digital camera, adjust it for indoor photography.
- Make sure there is no glare. If you see it in the viewfinder, it will show in the photograph. If this occurs, you may have to move the photo floodlights to a 90-degree angle to the artwork.

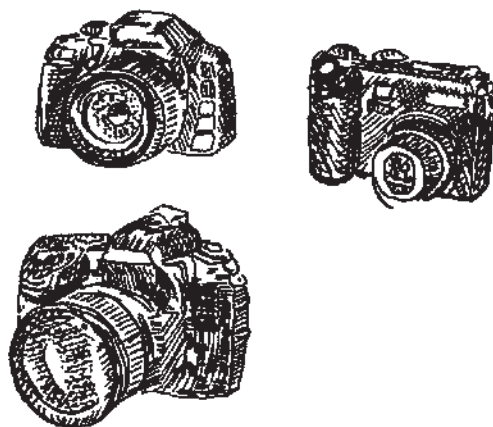
Using Film for Slides

- If you are using slide *film*, it should be for tungsten lighting, or use a blue filter to avoid a yellow tinge.
- If you still have use for print or slide film, you will get true colors by using a gray card (available at photo stores). Hold the gray card directly in front of the artwork, walk forward and fill the lens with the gray card, and “take a reading.” Step back to make the exposure at that reading.
- Bracket exposures. To bracket, make an exact exposure according to the gray card. Then overexpose one or two stops and underexpose one or two stops. If photographing many artworks, it may cost less to bracket than to retake the pictures. The lower the film ISO number, the finer the grain will be. The higher the aperture number (smaller lens openings), the greater depth of field (and therefore sharpness) you will have.

Photographing Artwork in Process

This means taking pictures of students doing art, or with their artwork. Depending on the final use of the photograph (whether it is simply for a record, or to use for publicity), you may take it differently. As mentioned previously in “Public Relations Guidelines,” some students will be on a Do Not Photograph list in the office. If you do use students’ photographs for publicity, your district’s policy will guide you as to whether to use their names. It is likely that the district will have publicity releases that will be signed by the student’s parents. That being said, it is still wonderful to show students at work, and the more pictures you can take, the better.

Note: Further information on photography may be found in Chapter Twelve.



Tips on Safety

General Suggestions

For the students' protection and your own, always instruct students in the safe use of tools and materials, beginning in kindergarten and reinforcing each year. It is crucial that you take responsibility for making the environment in your art classroom safe for yourself and your students. Students under the age of twelve are particularly vulnerable to substances in art that might not affect older students. Be certain your materials have an AP (approved product) or CP (certified product) seal that is given by the Art and Craft Materials Institute. Check old materials for this seal, and throw them away if they do not have it. It is also advised that you use materials that state on the label "Conforms to ASTM D-4236." Some art materials also come with Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs).

Working with Clay

For a healthy environment, your kiln should be in a separate room or at least separated by a screen. If this is simply not possible, consider using wet, premixed talc-free clays, or paint the fired clay rather than using glazes. Have students wipe the tables with damp sponges after working with clay and dry them. Ideally, have your floor mopped nightly to avoid dust in the air.

Care of Cutting Tools

Be aware of age-appropriate use of certain tools. Sharp cutting knives and lino-cutters are wonderful tools, but should not be used by anyone younger than fourth or fifth grade (and then only with very specific safety instructions). Give frequent instructions on safe practices with scissors and such cutting tools as lino-tools, snips, or cutting knives. Tools such as cutting knives or lino-tools should be kept in a cabinet, counted before distribution, and again at the end of class. Have students use bench hooks when doing lino-cuts, and instruct them to always keep the knife facing forward, while keeping the other hand behind the knife. For curved cuts, show students how to revolve the material rather than the cutter.

Equipment

If you must use extension cords, they should be three-pronged and rated for the appropriate wattage for the purpose. Make every effort to run them around the side of the room or even up and over the top of a door rather than across a floor. If necessary, tape them down on the floor.

Staple guns should be off-limits to students. Students of all ages cannot resist trying to see if they work.

Have electrical equipment (kiln, electric drill) inspected for proper operation on a regular basis.

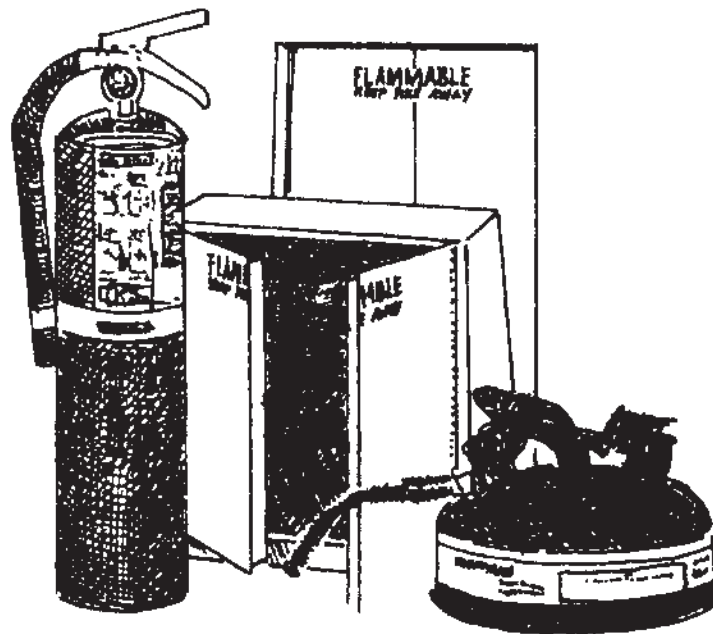
Make sure your fire extinguisher is routinely inspected or replaced.

Have a sturdy ladder and stepstool and use them rather than climbing on stools, chairs, or tables.

Make sure the guard on your paper cutter is always in place. If you allow older students to help you cut paper on the paper cutter, give them careful instructions on its use, and always be in the room while they are working.

Recommended Materials

- CP or AP pencils, watercolors, tempera, acrylic, oil sticks, crayons, chalks, and colored pencils
- CP or AP water-based inks instead of oil-based inks
- CP or AP pastes for papier mâché or CP or AP cellulose papier mâché
- CP or AP clear acrylic emulsion to fix drawings
- CP or AP lead-free glazes for ceramics
- Mineral spirits instead of turpentine or kerosene
- Water-based markers; nonscented instead of permanent or scented markers
- Glue sticks or white glue instead of rubber cement
- Shellac containing denatured alcohol
- Food or vegetable dyes (onion skins, tea) in place of procion dyes



Tips on Creating Art Bulletin Boards

Consider a bulletin board as similar in composition to a billboard or poster. The viewer only has a few seconds to get the impact and the message. If it is too busy, it simply cannot be absorbed. As in any composition, plan ahead and have a main element that catches the eye. A few large words and a

main element draw in the viewer. The supporting information may be smaller. If you only have small items to use, group them together on one sheet of background paper. Try to have larger elements at the bottom in order to keep the composition from looking as if it will fall over.

Materials

- Posters, postcards
- Magazine reproductions
- Roll paper in a variety of colors
- Construction paper
- Fadeless paper
- Cloth
- Pushpins or staple gun

Hints

When you take down a display, place letters and other elements into a tagboard portfolio to keep them flat for reuse. Cut paper into 4 × 6-inch pieces and cut out the letters by hand, or request that your school purchase a letter-cutting machine. For easy hanging and reuse of frequently used handcut letters, mount them on strips of paper and laminate. For titles, use questions such as, Who is this artist? Did you know? Can you imagine? Can you explain? Cut geometric and free-form shapes from construction or fadeless paper to place behind artwork. Cut silhouettes of people, buildings, animals, trees, flowers, and so on to emphasize the message. Vary the color scheme when you put up a new display.

Suggested Themes

Historical artist(s) of the month: Select an artist or historical time period to feature each month. Include the artist's name, reproductions, and biographical information.

Design concepts: Feature one element or principle of art, using large letters and various examples: color, positive and negative space, line, balance, formal and informal symmetry.

Seasons: Display artists' interpretations of summer, fall, winter, and spring.

Nature: Show different interpretations of the same subject (mountains, animals, landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes) by artists from different time periods or cultures.

Portraiture: Show unique approaches to portraiture by several different artists.

Crafts: Display photos of crafts such as basketry, ceramics, jewelry, masks, or weaving, or feature the work in several media by artisans of one culture.

Architecture: Use pictures of local buildings or famous buildings. Identify individual elements of a building such as columns, different roof styles, door or window styles, or differing cultural styles.

Cultures: Display examples of artwork by such cultures as Native American, Asian, Inuit, African American, Indian, African, Cajun, Mexican, or Hispanic. Make a comparison between the traditional art of one culture and a contemporary artist who is inspired by his or her cultural background.

Ancient and modern cultures: Include Egyptian, Greek, Cave art, German Expressionism, Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, or Impressionism.

Careers in art: Students could research famous artists in a variety of art careers (dress, shoe, and interior designers), architects, art educators, illustrators, digital artists, and so on, and feature them on a bulletin board.

Tips on Matting Student Artwork

Placing a mat on student work enhances and gives it importance. These suggestions are for simple, relatively easy-to-make mats, not archival matting. It is important to teach presentation and mounting skills to students from the earliest years. They can learn that mats must be kept clean and that artwork must be centered.

Materials

- Posterboard
- Metal ruler
- Construction paper
- Pencil
- Masking tape
- Markers
- Matboard
- Utility or craft knife

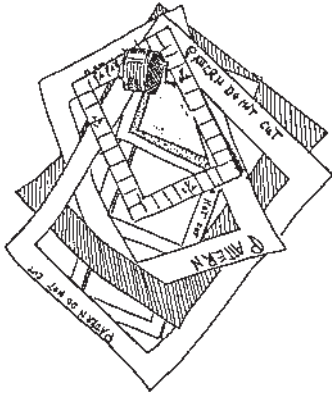
Personalize Purchased Mats

Mats are available for bulk purchase in white, black, or colors.

1. Use a metal ruler and wide-nib marker to draw a line in a color related to the artwork around the outer and inner edges of a purchased white mat.
2. Have students mount their pictures in a purchased mat or on construction paper and “continue” the composition onto the mat by drawing on the mat.
3. Double-mount work by using a purchased white mat and cut a colored piece of construction paper that will show $\frac{1}{4}$ inch on the inside and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch on the outside of the mat. Or simply place the matted picture on construction paper.

Things to Keep in Mind

- Colored work is effective with a mat in a related color, even if it is just a single line drawn with a marker on a white mat, or a double-mounted artwork.
- Neutral media—such as pencil, charcoal, and ink—look better mounted on neutral mats (gray, black, brown).
- The mat should be the same size on at least three sides (the bottom may be slightly wider if you wish). The mat should be two to three inches wide on all sides.
- Display several small unmatted works together on a single large sheet of construction paper to set them apart.



The Easy Way

Make posterboard patterns with a variety of opening sizes for older students to trace around. Hang the patterns on a nail and use marker on both sides to identify sizes. They should be told to always mark on the back of the mat to keep the front clean. Several construction paper mats can be cut at a time on the paper cutter. Mark the inside dimensions, then loosely fold them in half, cutting first one direction, then refolding and cutting the other direction.

Cutting a Mat

1. If the paper or matboard used for matting is not the appropriate size, cut the outside dimension of the mat on a paper cutter.
2. Measure the artwork and make the mat opening $\frac{1}{2}$ inch smaller in both height and width.
3. On the back of the mat, hold a long ruler diagonally from corner to corner and make a small X in the center.
4. From the center of the mat, mark the size of the opening on all four sides of the back. Either measure in from the edges and draw a straight line or use a T-square to mark where you will cut.
5. Hold a metal ruler steady and, starting at a corner, cut along the edge several times, making sure to cut slightly past the corner so the inside will fall out.
6. After cutting the mat, place masking tape on the back edges of the artwork, allowing the tape to extend over the edge. Turn it over and center the mat above the front of the artwork before placing it firmly down.
7. Turn both artwork and mat over and firmly press down the edges of the tape.