

# **Shape and Form in Art**

Instructional Program for Grades K-4

## **Teacher's Guide**

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\*Correlated to the National Content Standards for Visual Arts Education, Grades K-4

# Shape and Form in Art

## Instructional Program for Grades K-4

### Introduction

This delightful program covers basic information about shape and form in art for early elementary students. Colorful animated sequences define shape and form. Other topics include: geometric and organic shapes, shape and form in the world around us, shape in painting, form in sculpture, shape and pattern, negative and positive shapes, and shape as a tool for drawing. Additional titles in the series include **Line in Art** and **Color in Art**.

### Student Objectives

#### (Correlated to the National Standards for Visual Arts Education)

#### After viewing the program, students should be able to...

- Understand that shape and form are an important part of the world around us, and important elements of art.  
**(Content Standard 2)**
- Identify and define geometric and organic/freeform/biomorphic shapes.  
**(Content Standard 5)**
- Understand the difference between shape and form and the difference between 2D and 3D.  
**(Content Standard 5)**
- Notice various types of shapes in the natural world.  
**(Content Standards 2, 6)**
- Explain how shape and form are used in the compositions of paintings and sculptures.  
**(Content Standard 3, 4, 5)**
- Define symmetry (simple bilateral) and recognize it's use in masks and other art works.  
**(Content Standard 3, 4, 5)**
- Define and recognize negative and positive shapes.  
**(Content Standard 3, 4, 5)**
- Recognize and create patterns and motifs.  
**(Content Standard 2, 6)**
- Identify and utilize shape as a tool for drawing.  
**(Content Standard 1)**

# **Shape and Form in Art**

## Chapter Topics from the Program

1. What is Shape? What is Form?
2. Kinds of Shapes and Forms
3. Shape and Form in the World Around Us
4. Shape in Painting
5. Form in Sculpture
6. The Human Shape and Form in Painting and Sculpture
7. Shape and Pattern
8. Negative and Positive Shapes
9. Shape as a Tool for Drawing
10. Conclusion and Review

## Shape and Form in Art

### Hands-on Activities

#### Kindergarten

You may want to create a variety of prepared tubs for kindergarten art centers, many of which help teach about shape and form. These activities are very open-ended, with few instructions to follow, and therefore they make a good balance for more complex art activities with many directions and steps. Kindergarteners will naturally create patterns with all of the following activities, and correlations to hands-on kindergarten math will be strong.

#### **Use of Shape Templates**

Find large plastic shape templates and stencils to put into a tub with colored pencils and thin markers and plenty of paper. **(Content Standards 1, 2, 6)**

#### **Shape Stamping and Sponging**

Offer stamps and/or sponges in shape varieties, with stamp pads or trays with small puddles of washable tempera paint. **(Content Standards 1, 2, 6)**

#### **Shape Magnets and/or Felt Boards**

Lakeshore Learning (see the **Books and Sites** section of this guide for the website) or other early childhood catalogues offer products such as magnet boards and/or felt boards, which can be assembled to create images. **(Content Standards 1, 2, 6)**

#### **Foam or Wood Shapes with glue on board**

Cut a variety of poster board sizes, and offer these with foam and/or wood shapes for image creation. (Again, foam or wood shapes are in the school catalogues.) **(Content Standards 1, 2, 6)**

#### **Sketching Animals from Shapes**

If you demonstrate step-by-step drawing from shapes, kindergarteners are ready for this, especially as the year progresses. Books by Ed Emberley, and other simple drawing books (topics could include animals or vehicles, or cartoon characters such as Pokemon, or any other high-interest subject...many are available) can be used. Put these in a tub with a variety of drawing materials. **(Content Standards 1, 2, 3)**

#### **Building Blocks, Straws, etc.**

Building blocks, straws or other 3D play object are great for teaching about shape and form. **(Content Standards 1, 2, 6)**

#### **Free work with Play-doh**

Students love creating shapes and forms with play-doh. Collect cutters, rollers and other appropriate tools. **(Content Standards 1, 2)**

## Shape and Form in Art

### Hands-on Activities

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

##### Cartooning

First graders enjoy simple step-by-step cartooning. Demonstrate animals, or human faces with different expressions, using shapes of all kinds. Encourage students to make their own characters, not just copy from known or commercial characters. Students can ask each other to look at their cartoons and see if they can “read” them...detail and color will be important in the creation of an identifiable human or animal character. **(Content Standards 1, 2, 3, 5)**

##### Mandalas

Mandalas are radially symmetrical designs (symmetrical around a center) that have universal appeal. They can be found in many cultures and time periods. A wheel and a flower are both mandalas, as are a Tibetan sand painting and the stained glass rose window of a cathedral. Give students square paper of any size and show them how to fold the paper, first in half in one direction, and then in half the other way, to find the center. They can put a big dot in the center of the paper. Then, show them how to add shapes in each of the four quadrants, turning the paper as they go. (The paper will actually spin if the folds are done one at a time, opening the paper after the first fold.) Each shape they add should be the same shape and color, something easily repeatable. Demonstrate for them that the more shapes and colors added, the more fancy and beautiful the mandala will become. **(Content Standards 1, 2, 3, 4)**

##### Simple Origami

First graders can learn that origami, or the art of paper folding, is a Japanese craft that is popular with all ages. Any fairly thin, precisely square paper can be used for origami. Origami also has value as a math activity. There are many great origami resources out there, but many origami creations are too difficult for the average 1<sup>st</sup> grader. Easy ones to start with are the cat or puppy and kite. These can be glued to paper, and embellished with hand-drawn details to create a “Spring Picture”. The kite is made from one paper, the cat/puppy body is one paper, and the puppy head is a third paper. Instructions for these simple origami pieces should be available in many resources.

**(Content Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)**

# Shape and Form in Art

## Hands-on Activities

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

#### Scribble Designs

This perennial art teacher and student favorite is a good project for awareness of shape variety. On a small piece of paper (6" x 9"), students draw an all-over scribble design, trying to make shapes of different sizes as they draw. Then, using any media, students color in all of the shapes to produce a finished abstract composition. **(Content Standards 1, 2)**

#### Geometric Coloring Sheets

A variety of coloring books are available with have geometric designs and patterns (see **Books and Sites** section of this guide.) These are great to offer in wide variety, stressing careful craftsmanship when coloring.

**(Content Standards 1, 2, 6)**

#### Cut-paper Collages

Cut or torn paper collages help give students a tactile/kinesthetic relationship to shape and form. Subject matter can range from a self-portrait to a still life, or an interpretation of a masterwork by a great artist such as Henri Matisse.

**(Content Standards 1, 2)**

#### 3-D Paper Masks

Mask-making projects can help teach concepts such as symmetry, exaggeration and expression, color relationships, and multi-cultural awareness. One great resource for 3D masks is Peggy Flores' video, **Maskmaking with Paper**, produced by Crystal Video. There are other mask project designs, and very simple ones will work. Providing examples to look at and a demonstration will help students get their best ideas going. Students can discuss visual aspects of the finished masks. Each student can chose a favorite (not their own) and tell why they like it. **(Content Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)**

#### Clay Projects

Students can create a clay slab and cut shapes from the slab, using cookie and clay cutters. Poke a hole in the top of each shape. After firing and glazing, these shapes can be strung together with wire and string to create a mobile or wind chimes.

Other good clay projects include coil pots or small animal sculptures.

**(Content Standards 1, 2)**

## Shape and Form in Art

### Hands-on Activities

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### **Mobiles with Organic Shapes**

Students can study the organic forms in the mobiles of Alexander Calder, the artist who invented mobiles. Using scissors, hole punches, colored tag boards, string and easily bendable wires, students can construct mobiles. Themes may center around the ideas of abstract organic shapes, or more naturalistic ideas like undersea life, outer space, or the circus.

**(Content Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)**

#### **More Origami**

In third and fourth grade, students will really begin to love origami. Teach origami projects which are not too difficult and demonstrate each one several times. Origami that works well at this level includes: drinking cup, square box, rectangular box, helmet, house, whale, sailboat, and the water bomb. These are classical origami items, instructions for which can be found in many places.

**(Content Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)**

#### **Foil or Papier-Mache Masks**

Tooling foil, placed on a cushion of newspaper, can be easily drawn on, and then pressed with clay tools into a 3D mask form. Students can draw symmetrical mask designs first on paper, looking at masks from around the world for inspiration. Finished foil forms can be cut with scissors and colored with permanent markers.

Papier-mache can be formed over a commercial plastic mask form, or over clay, which students have modeled. Use several layers of newspaper strips dipped in art paste, and allow the paste to dry between layers. Paint with tempera paint and finish with a clear spray finish. Embellishments can include sequins, feathers, raffia, 3D paper elements, yarn, etc.

**(Content Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)**

#### **Modeling/Shading of Forms**

Teach students how to model simple shapes to produce an illusion of 3D form. As in the video, start with a circle, and indicate the light source (sun). Then show how shading the side of the circle away from the sun gives a 3D illusion. Students can expand their abilities with this idea by drawing planets on black paper with oil pastels. Using plenty of white oil pastel will help with the dramatic effect of blending the dark to light side of the planets.

**(Content Standards 1, 2)**

#### **Clay**

Clay projects mentioned Projects for Grade Two would also work well for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. **(Content Standards 1, 2)**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

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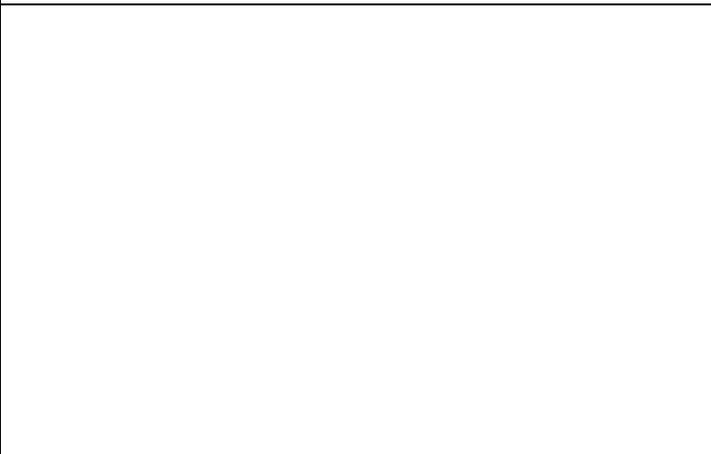
Class \_\_\_\_\_

### DESIGNS FROM NATURE

Be inspired by the natural world. On the left are some shapes and forms from the natural world. In the empty boxes on the right sketch a design of some practical object like shoes, a chair, a car, a house, teapot, or anything useful.

Let your design be based on the forms of the natural objects.

Share your ideas with the class when you are finished.



## **Glossary**

Balance – principle of design in which elements of a composition seem well arranged

Composition – the ways in which the elements of a work of art are arranged

Detail – the small, well-defined parts of a work of art

Expression – emotion or feelings

Form – element of art that refers to the three dimensional – having length, width and depth

Geometric Shapes – the shapes known by names: circle, square, triangle, etc.

Gestural Drawing – drawings done quickly to capture movement

Highlight – the small, bright white areas on objects that show reflected light

Inspiration – the ideas, motivation, and enthusiasm to produce artwork

Motif – a repeated group of elements from a pattern

Negative Shapes – background or non-subject area shapes in a work of art

Organic Shape (also known as Free form or Biomorphic Shapes) – the shapes without names, frequently from nature

## **Shape and Form in Art**

### Glossary (continued)

Pattern – repeated shapes

Positive Shapes – subject area shapes in a work of art

Relief Sculpture – a sculpture that comes forward from a flat surface, as opposed to being freestanding

Scale – relative size

Sculpture – three-dimensional artwork

Shape – the element of art that is a distinct space, having length and width, (2 dimensions); a shape is created when a line reconnects with itself

Symmetry – identical balance on two sides of a center line (bilateral); or balance around a center point (radial)

Three-dimensional (3D) – having length, width and depth

Two-dimensional (2D) – having length and width but no depth (flat)

# Shape and Form in Art

## Books and Sites

Find a wide variety of useful picture book resources on multicultural topics, origami, masks, geometric and other unusual coloring books, at:

<http://store.doverpublications.com/>

Excellent videos for the classroom on many art topics including masks and elements of art:

<http://www.crystalproductions.com/catalog/index.php>

The PBS series "Reading Rainbow" covered many wonderfully interesting topics, many of which would extend a study of shape and form in art. Videos or DVDs and teacher guides are available to order at:

<http://gpn.unl.edu/rainbow/>

The Getty Museum has many resources for teachers at:

<http://www.getty.edu/education/search/>

**Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists Series**, books by Mike Venezia and videos based on the books. These are excellent books and videos for teaching about art history, with clear information and entertaining humor. The websites are:

<http://www.gettingtoknow.com>

<http://www.mikevenezia.com>

Find excellent early childhood resources at:

<http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/store.tem>

### **Ed Emberley's big green drawing book**

By Ed Emberley, Boston: Little, Brown, 1979.

Note: Ed Emberley has a whole series of books on drawing for children in addition to this one.

### **Draw 50 Animals**

By Lee J. Ames, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974.

Note: There are many good step-by-step drawing books on the market, such as this one.

### **Dots, spots, speckles, and stripes**

By Tana Hoban, New York: Greenwillow Books, 1987.

Note: Tana Hoban has many books of photographic images that encourage children to find design and beauty in the world around us.

### **Cartooning for kids**

By Carol Lea Benjamin, New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1982.

### **Mark Kistler's draw squad**

By Mark Kistler, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988.

Note: Mark Kistler has a several books, videos and a website for children on cartooning techniques. <http://www.draw3d.com>

# **Shape and Form in Art**

## Conclusions and Review Questions

- Notice shapes and forms in the world around you.
- Notice shapes and forms in paintings and sculptures. How are they used?
- What is shape?
- What is form?
- What is a geometric shape?
- What is an organic or free form shape?
- What does symmetrical mean?
- How can you create a pattern with shapes?
- What is a motif?
- What are positive and negative shapes?
- How can shapes help you draw?

# **Shape and Form in Art**

## Instructional Program for Grade K-4

### **National Standards for Visual Arts**

#### Content Standards

#### Grades K – 4

**Content Standard #1:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

**Content Standard # 2:** Using knowledge of structures and functions

**Content Standard #3:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

**Content Standard #4:** Understand the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

**Content Standard #5:** Reflecting upon the assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

**Content Standard #6:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

**Note:** To find the Achievement Standards which correlate to these Content Standards, and to learn more about the National Standards for Visual Arts Education in general, the following website is recommended:

<http://www.getty.edu/artsednet/resources/Scope/Standards/index.html>