

Art, a Capitol Idea

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES: Earl M. Jones

Landscape

Objectives: Students will listen to or read about the history of landscape and will create a landscape, emphasizing value and color.

Other possible related activities: Aesthetics-Discuss is the Realistic Approach. Compare the aesthetics of Realism and Superrealism

Use of Value in Landscapes

When creating a landscape in a colored medium, students may forget to consider the value of each color and the range of values they use and how that range affects the balance, contrast, and unity of an artwork. The actual colors in the landscape or color choices of the medium often determine value choices. This activity is designed to help students consider value while working with a colored medium.

Show the class a slide or color reproduction of *Near Francis, Utah* by Earl Jones. Ask students to describe the colors they see. Next, ask them to describe the values they see. Then show the students figure 1, which is *Near Francis, Utah*, changed to tones of gray. To help the students understand how value contributes to the look of the artwork, show them figures 2 and 3: the values have been changed. Figure 2 has had the contrast decreased, so it is all similar grays, and figure 3 has had the contrast increased so it is just black and white. (Figures on pages 30-32)

Ask students to think about how value can affect an artwork. Ask: What changes when the contrast is shifted? When might you want a landscape to have low or very high contrast?

Give students several hardnesses of charcoal or drawing pencil and a large sheet of paper. Have them make a value drawing of a landscape, preferably while outside or looking outside. Then have them make adjustments-darkening sections, lightening others with kneaded eraser, until they are happy with the value range and balance. Have students turn the drawing sideways and upside down to help eliminate the distraction of the subject matter.

Next, have students complete the color mixing activity or, if the students are experienced with color, have students make a painting of the same landscape using colored pencil on good quality paper.

Advanced students may paint the landscape using pastels, colored pencil, or paint.

Young students may use markers or paint if colored pencils are not an option.

Variation: Show the class examples of landscapes, and have students describe the different qualities of those landscapes. Choose one of the following drawing techniques and have students use that technique to draw a landscape.

Drawing Techniques

These techniques can be used with any drawing activity: incorporate as desired.

1. **Gesture:** gesture can refer to the pose that a figure may take, but it is also a term that signifies a type of drawing that is made with speed and spontaneity. A gestural drawing does not set out to describe the subject in a detailed way but uses sweeping strokes and dashes to convey the general essence of the object. These quick studies record the function of action, life, or expression of the object or subject. Gesture drawings often form the foundation (or underdrawing) for later detailed drawings.

2. **Contour:** contour drawings are similar to gesture drawings, but emphasize a slower, more deliberate approach. This method involves using line to describe the three dimensional qualities of an object. The contour of an object not only includes the outside edges, but should also give definition to the multiple planes of the object or subject. Contour drawings should also include inside contours such as the edge of a form or plane. Cross contour lines follow around the object and may dip or rise as the contour changes. Contour drawings usually have varying line qualities (e.g., thick and thin lines to indicate the thickness of the form).

3. **Stipple:** stippling is a drawing technique in which dots rather than lines form an image. Groups of small dots placed close together will read as a patch of gray tone from a distance. By altering the size and spacing of the dots, it is possible to create a full tonal (or value) range. Stippling does not have to be mechanical, as the dots can be dashes or short swirling strokes. Stippling is useful as a texture-producing technique, and colored stippling is used for the pointillist technique of color mixing.

4. **Crosshatch:** crosshatching is a form of shading carried out using two or more sets of parallel lines, one set crossing the other at an angle. Varying the thickness

or spacing of the lines will produce the various tones. The broken nature of crosshatching, when seen at a normal viewing distance, can produce a more vibrant quality than flat areas of tone. Crosshatching does not need to be mechanical, and can include curved, broken, or dotted lines.

See examples on page 35.

The following is a list of six exercises to help students learn to see and draw better.

They're also fun!

A New Way of Seeing

1. Work fast: Do three five-second sketches of an object found in the room. Don't worry about detail; just react to the object, its movement, size or gesture.
2. Blind contour: Do two sketches looking only at the object, not the paper. Pretend your pencil is drawing along the edges (contour) of the object. Try and have your pencil and your eyes move at the same speed. Don't lift the pencil off the paper; draw into the shape if you want to get the inner details. Take about two minutes per drawing.
3. Modified contour: Do one drawing, still looking primarily at your subject. You may look at your paper when you change direction or draw into the primary shape. This should create a more accurate image, but refrain from looking at your paper. Look at the object for nine seconds and at your paper for one second. Do not be concerned about erasing to get a more accurate drawing. Just draw in the new corrected line. This drawing should take about six minutes.
4. Memory drawing: Do one drawing using both your memory and observation skills. Before drawing, look closely at your subject for about three minutes. Try to memorize details (size, texture, contour, angles). Then, turn away from your subject and draw it from memory. Try to remember the details. Take about six minutes for this drawing.
5. Draw what isn't the object (negative shape): Do one drawing of the negative shapes around an object. Find the relationships between the shapes of the object and the area around it (background). Use a border around your object to help you define the negative shapes around the object. Take about six minutes for this drawing.
6. Work upside down: Use the image of the Matisse drawing from the appendix. The drawing is upside down on the page. Try to also draw it upside down on your page. This forces the brain to think in series of lines and shapes rather than to identify the subject as an object. Do not "verbalize" the names of the objects you are drawing; just think in terms of lines, angles and shapes. This drawing should take about 10 minutes.

Mixing Colors

Objective: Students will learn to mix colors and will demonstrate their ability in a colored pencil drawing of a landscape.

Materials:

- blue, red, and yellow soft lead pencils such as Berol Prismacolor, Design by Spectracolor, or Basic by Liquitex
- paper, 80 lb. white drawing paper from the district is okay
- good quality pencil sharpeners
- eraserspink pearl work, but "ink" erasers are better
- spray fixative

Have students bring a fruit or vegetable to class. Give students the three colored pencils and have them make a simple color chart. Demonstrate several techniques for students: Pencil lines all go one direction. Pencil lines are scribbled freely, pencil lines are close together or far apart. Pencil lines cross. Pencil lines are carefully layered and then burnished with the yellow pencil. Highlights should be identified first and left white. After the demonstration, allow students to experiment for a few minutes on a small piece of paper. Then have students complete the color chart on the following page. For advanced students, use 12 pencil sets and make a large color chart. See appendix. Put the actual color names from the brand of pencils you are using down the left side of the table. Put the colors in the same order across the top of the chart. The diagonal line down the center (from left to right, top to bottom) will be the pure hues.

After students have completed the color chart, they can make a drawing of their fruit or vegetable using the colored pencils. Students should choose one main way of laying down color and be consistent. For example, all scribble lines, all cross hatching, etc.

When students have completed the first drawings, have them assess the drawings using a rubric similar to the one on the following page:

For advanced students, substitute appropriate criteria.

Research shows that providing the students a criteria-based rubric prior to the lesson improves student success.

Have students go outside or sit where they can see outside through a window and make a colored pencil sketch of a landscape scene. Or, have students draw a landscape from memory: somewhere they particularly like to go. For young students, make sure the scene is kept simple.

Assess, using criteria similar to the following:

- filled the whole page
- used all colors
- left some areas white
- made some areas very dark

Add whatever criteria matches your particular curriculum goals.