

Title: Beginning Collage

The word **collage** comes from the French word “coller” meaning to glue. It is a form of art that is made from an assemblage of different medias that together, create a new form. It was first used in the early 20th century as an art form of groundbreaking novelty. It can be made from newspaper clippings, ribbons, bits of colored or handmade paper glued to a paper or canvas.

The history of collage started with the invention of paper in China around 200 BC. It became popular in the 10th century in Japan when calligraphers began to apply glued paper, using text on surfaces when writing poems. The technique of collage appeared in Medieval Europe during the 13th century. Gemstones and other precious metals were applied to religious images, icons, and coats of arms. Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso were two artist who brought collage to a new art form as part of a period known as Modern Art.

Collage can be used to explore many elements of art and composition. After exploring how to manipulate the materials, you can feature different elements of art in each new collage.

Materials

Have an organized way to store the following materials. A variety of glues: white glue, rubber cement, “Yes” Glue, glue sticks, scissors, (you can get scissors that cut different patterns), heavy papers, poster board, light cardboard, corrugated cardboard, tissue paper, a variety of papers, newspaper, magazines, maps, colored paper, scrapes from painting projects, wrapping papers, old cards, postcards, stamps, ribbons, cellophane, old photos, handmade papers, texture papers, catalogs, holiday cards, fabrics, foil, a variety of seeds, a variety of dried pasta, old jewelry, beads of all sorts. If you are interested in three dimensional objects try popsicle sticks, any small items you might find in thrift stores

Have your papers organized in boxes so it is easy to pull out what you need and easy to clean up. Have a box of colored paper, one with printed papers, a small pieces box, a special paper box, etc.



Prints: Have a variety of prints or cards of sample collages. (Braque, Matisse, Picasso, Beardan, Schwitters, Hamilton)

Series of Beginning Collage Lessons

This series of lessons does not have to be done in any order. The focus is how to do a collage along with the elements and principals of art. With each lesson you can introduce an element of art and teach how to use the materials of collage. You can use any materials you have on hand with each project. The following is just suggested materials.

Collage Lesson

Organic and Geometric Shapes

Ages/Prerequisite: None

Elements: Collage can be used to explore many elements of art and composition. After exploring how to manipulate the materials, you can feature different elements of art in each new collage.

Materials: Colored paper, scissors of all kinds, glue, glue brush, table protector, a variety of colored papers for collaging.

Prints: Show several Matisse, Braque or other collected collage prints for inspiration.

By asking the children questions discuss what a collage is and if the children have had any experience with collage.

Lesson:

First read the short definition of collage and in your own words tell the children about the history of collage. Asked the children what they already know about collage so you know where to start.

*“We are going to try a few collages today, looking first at **organic** and **geometric** shapes. Organic shapes are the shapes of nature; such as leaves, flowers, rocks, and clouds. They are irregular or curvy. Geometric shapes, on the other hand are based on mathematical concepts and aren’t often found in nature. They are the shapes in geometry; squares, triangles, pentagons, etc. Mathematicians make these shapes using tools like rulers and compasses.”*

*“Now cut out several shapes in three different sizes: small, medium and large. Have a pile for large, a pile for medium and a pile for small. First using just solid colored paper cut out several organic shapes in each size. Remember **organic** shapes are curvy, natural shapes. Now, try placing the shapes on a piece of colored paper; think about intersecting, and overlapping shapes. You can take the shapes and rearrange them in a pleasing composition.”*

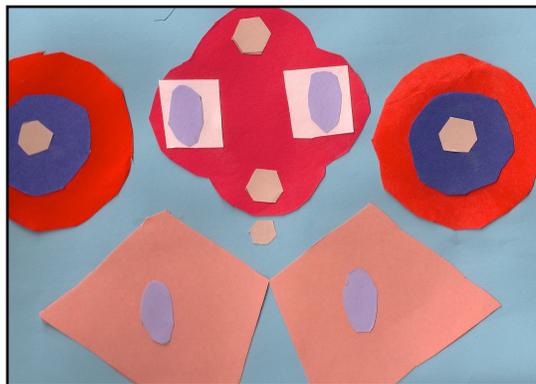
You can show prints of Matisse's paper cut outs if they need inspiration.

"Think about whether your composition is balanced, or does it feel heavy on one side? Is there too much going on in any one area? Are the colors distributed in a balanced way? When you are happy with your composition, you can glue it down"

You can also do a quick demonstration on how to use the glue you have provided. If using a brush and white glue, be sure to brush a thin layer of glue over the entire piece you want to glue onto the paper.



*"Next, we are going to cut **geometric** shapes out in each size. Remember to vary the colors." You can use the metal inset material or pattern blocks if you have them to trace around. You can also use stencils to trace shapes. You can also free-hand cut shapes (if the children have the fine motor skills). "Choose a few colors that you want to focus on. Once you are happy with your composition, glue it down to the paper. Make sure to put the glue evenly on the shapes before pressing it to the paper."*



Evaluation

Hang all finished collages and ask the children questions.

'Where do you see organic shapes?'

"What about geometric shapes?"

"What compositions have strong negative and positive shapes?"

"Do you see any color schemes that are very successful?"

"Where do you see strong balance?"

"Do any compositions seem unbalanced?"

Collage Lesson

Symmetrical and Asymmetrical

Materials: Yes Glue, scissors, card stock paper, and a box with printed papers,

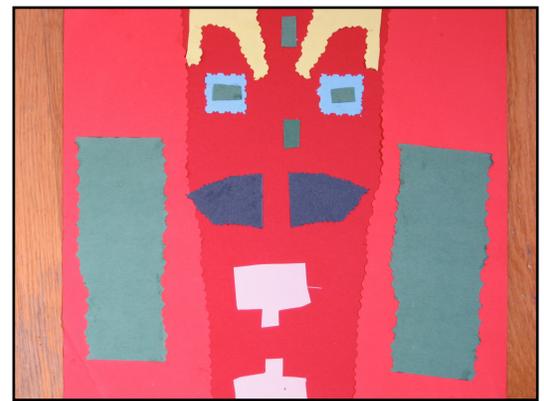
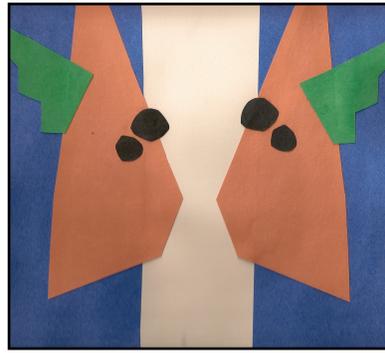
Prints: Edgar Degas', *"Dancers Practicing at the Barre,"* Leonardo Da Vinci's, *"Last Supper"*

Lesson:

*"Today, we are going to work on collages that use the concept of symmetrical and asymmetrical. A **symmetrical** composition is when an object and its mirror image appear on opposite sides of an imagined center line. (Show Leonardo Da Vinci's "Last Supper" which is an approximate symmetrical composition.)*

*"**Asymmetrical** is the most commonly used format and it involves the random placement of objects on a picture plane. This composition type requires the development of "felt composition." After placement, the artist must feel if they have achieved balance." (Edgar Degas' Dancers Practicing at the Barre is an excellent example.)*

*"First, we are going to cut out two of each shape and cut out enough different sized shapes either organic or geometric, to explore creating a balanced composition. Again, cut out large, medium and small shapes. Make sure you have a variety of shapes, sizes and colors. Once you have enough shapes cut out, try making a **symmetrical composition**. Imagine a line down the middle of the paper. Now place a shape in exactly the same place on each side of the midline. Continue to lay the pieces down and experiment until you have a successful composition; then glue them down."*



*“Now, for the second collage we are going to use geometric or organic shapes, but we are going to place the shapes randomly until we feel that we have found a balanced composition. This is an **asymmetrical composition**.”*



Now demonstrate how to lay out the shapes in a variety of ways until you have a composition that is balanced and interesting. Make sure you are satisfied with your composition before you start to glue.

Evaluation

Hang all finished collages and ask the children questions.

“Where do you see organic shapes?”

“What about geometric shapes?”

“What compositions have strong negative and positive shapes?”

“Do you see any color schemes that are very successful?”

“Where do you see good balance?”

“Do symmetrical and asymmetrical have a different feel?”

