

Line and Balance with Piet Mondrian

WebQuest Description: In this webquest, students learn about the artist Piet Mondrian, who used straight lines and the primary colors to create balanced works of art.

Grade Level: K-2

Curriculum: Art / Music

Keywords: Mondrian, art, painting, abstract, primary colors, line, balance

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Introduction

Have you ever seen a picture that looked like it might tip over to one side at any moment? If so, that picture is what artists like to call "unbalanced." Unbalanced pictures have more "visual weight" on one side than the other, so they look heavier on one side. Visual weight can be made by having bigger things on one side than the other, more stuff going on on one side of the picture, or brighter colors on one side of the picture. We are going to look at artist Piet Mondrian to see how he created balance using only two things: straight lines and primary colors. We will be looking at websites that tell us about Mondrian, we will be looking at his paintings, and then we will be creating our own balanced pieces of art in the style of Mondrian. Make sure your picture doesn't look like it will tip over!

Tasks

After we have studied Mondrian and his paintings, we will be going to some fun websites where you will actually make Mondrian style pictures on the computer! You will print out your favorite balanced design and then color it in with crayons the way you colored it on the computer screen. This will be your SKETCH, or plan. During the following art class, we will be turning our SKETCHES into final COMPOSITIONS, or pieces of art. You will use your sketch as a guide to create your collage out of construction paper and glue. When the collages are finished, we will share them with our classmates who can help us determine whether or not our pieces are balanced and how to fix them if they are not.

Process

DAY ONE:1. First, you will be paired up with a classmate in the computer lab. You will be sharing a computer with him or her. 2. As a class, we will be going to two websites to learn about the artist Piet Mondrian. We will be reading the information together. These are the two sites we will be visiting first:<http://artsmarts4kids.blogspot.com/2007/12/piet-mondrian.html>www.enchantedlearning.com/artists/mondrianQuestions: Which country was Mondrian from?Which medium did Piet Mondrian use?3. Now, we will look at some of Mondrian's paintings. We will be visiting these sites together, and then you will have some free time to look at the paintings on your own.<http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/results.html?searchTxt=&bSuggest=1&searchNameID=16070><http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/mondrian>Questions:What do you see in Mondrian's paintings? Do they look like anything?Which kinds of lines and colors do you see in Mondrian's paintings?Why do you think Mondrian painted like this?Do you like Mondrian's paintings? Why or why not?4. When time is up, your teacher will let you know it is time to go. Please log off the computer.**DAY TWO:**1. First, you will be paired up with the same partner you had last time. 2. We will be visiting three websites which have computer programs that allow you to create Mondrian style art on the computer. We will go to each site together.<http://www.kinderart.com/artists/mon.htm><http://www.enchantedlearning.com/cgi-bin/paint/aTaHwrfT2KAa/artists/mondrian/coloring/matrix.shtml><http://www.stephen.com/mondrimat/3>. Now, both you and your partner will have ten minutes each to come up with a balanced Mondrian style design that you would like to make into your collage. Your collage should NOT be the same on both sides, like one of the sides is looking into a mirror on the other side. When you have created the design you want, let the teacher know, and she will help you print out the design in black and white. You will then use crayons to color in your design like you did on the computer.4. You teacher will let you know when it is time to switch who is making the design and who is checking for balance. Remember to help your partner come up with a balanced design.5. Your teacher will let you know when it is time to log off the computer.**DAY THREE:**1. You will be using your sketch that you created in the computer lab as a plan for your final collage.2. Take a sheet of white paper and write your name and the date on it.3. Use the construction paper to cut squares and rectangles like the ones in your sketch. Use a glue stick to attach them to your white paper. You may use a ruler and/or patterns to create straight lines and shapes.4. Use a thick black marker and a ruler to draw the lines that divide up the colored spaces.5. Share your collage with the rest of your table. Decide whether or not it is balanced and why.6. When your collage is finished, hang it on the white board. We will spend the last ten minutes of class talking about the finished collages.

Evaluation

| Category and Score | Beginning 1 | Developing 2 | Very Good 3 | Exemplary 4 | Score |
|--|--|--|--|---|-------|
| Student used the computer to look at Mondrian websites as a class activity. | Student did not visit the websites or participate in reading. | Student was off task some of the time and participated minimally in the reading. | Student used the computer appropriately and participated in most of the reading. | Student stayed on task, participated in all reading, and used the websites appropriately. | %25 |
| Students will generate a balanced sketch on the computer and color it in as it appeared online. | Student did not generate a sketch on the computer, even with partner and teacher assistance. | Student generated a sketch on the computer, but it was not colored in the way it was on the computer. | Student generated a sketch on the computer, but it is unbalanced, or they did not assist their partner. | Student generated a balanced sketch on the computer, colored it as it appeared online, and assisted his or her partner. | %25 |
| Student will use his or her sketch as a plan for the final collage. | Student did not make a final collage, or the collage has nothing to do with the sketch, or is a complete mess. | The final collage is somewhat similar, but not close to what appeared on the sketch. Work is somewhat messy. | The final collage is almost exactly like the sketch, with a few changes (unless the changes improved balance). Work is neat. | The final collage is an exact replica of the balanced sketch, with the same shapes, lines, and proportions. Work is neat. | %25 |
| Student will create a balanced collage using straight lines and primary colors only. The collage should be asymmetrical, such as in Mondrian's work. | The collage is unbalanced, does not use straight lines, and uses colors other than primary colors. | The collage is almost balanced, or it uses many curved lines and non primary colors. | The collage is symmetrically balanced, or uses noncrisp lines, and uses primary colors. | The collage is asymmetrically balanced, uses only crisp straight lines, and only primary colors. | %25 |
| | | | | Total Score | %100 |

Conclusion

Congratulations! You have now created a balanced piece of art in the style of a very famous artist! The kind of balance that Piet Mondrian used is called "asymmetrical balance" because both sides are different. Can you identify some pictures in the art room that have asymmetrical balance? Can you identify any pictures in the art room that have symmetrical balance? Do you prefer asymmetrical or symmetrical balance? Does your collage look like anything? Is there anything that you would like to change about your collage?

Teacher Page

I created this very basic webquest with my second graders in mind. I thought that a webquest that could be walked through together as a class would be an appropriate way to introduce my students into art research on the web and making art on the computer. This webquest meets the Nevada standards: (2)1.1 describe works of art, using appropriate vocabulary, e.g., list or name subject matter and/or symbols (2)1.2 analyze works of art, e.g., identify elements and principles of design; discuss media, forms, techniques, etc (2)1.3 interpret works of art, e.g., describe possible meanings (2)1.4 judge works of art. share opinions b. support opinions, points of view by citing artwork (2)1.5 evaluate/share own artwork (2)2.1 examine historical/cultural context, e.g., observe works of art within their cultures, times or places (2)2.2 discuss materials, processes, purposes, e.g., learn how artist's choices are influenced by culture, time and place (2)2.3 discuss artistic styles, e.g., locate characteristics in works of art that identify individual artists, groups of artists, or cultures (2)4.1 demonstrate elements of art: line, shape, color (2)4.2 demonstrate design concepts & principles: repetition, symmetry, geometric shape, scale, contrast, contours (2)4.4 draw; using varied media, techniques and processes (2)4.11 work in at least one mixed medium; using varied media, techniques and processes, e.g., collage, wearable art (garments, head pieces, etc.), maskmaking, puppetry, book-making, jewelry, animation, combined media, etc. (2)4.12 create a work of art that shows the influence of a particular historical period or culture

Standards

Credits

Other