

Prekindergarten

Visual and Performing Arts: Visual Arts Content Standards.



ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

At the preschool level, children begin to form the language and vocabulary specific to the arts. Beginning with the ability to describe what they see and feel all around them.

At this level, children should be mastering the names of colors, and be able to describe an object by its color and size. An example would be, "I see a big yellow ball, and a small blue ball."

Ideas for what to do:

If the crayons are received during the time that these children are enrolled, the first activity that can be done is to sort the crayons by color. Once they are sorted by color, they can also be sorted into containers, so that each table has a container with three crayons of each color (for example). Students can talk out loud as they sort, and if able, they can start to count the crayons as well.

Example:

"Look at this big pile of crayons! If I wanted to make some smaller piles of crayons, what are some ways that we could organize the crayons?"

Students may suggest organizing by color or size, or they may just say to make six even piles, with the same number of crayons in each. This is something the teacher can elicit, and if students haven't thought of a specific idea (like sorting by color), then the teacher can also make suggestions.

The class can then work on sorting in the different ways suggested. This can also be done by putting a pile of crayons at a few different work centers so that students can work in smaller groups. The groups can all work at one type of sorting at a time, or groups can pick one and do it. If they do it differently, the groups can then share what they ended up with, and compare to other groups. Even if they did the same type of sorting, they can still compare, as everyone may not have piles of the same size (one group may have twelve yellow crayons, while another only has three). The groups can take a tour and see what other groups did, and then the class can discuss together what they noticed.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

At the preschool level, children are beginning to demonstrate skills for using materials and media, and they are beginning to express their ideas through their own works of art.

Ideas for what to do:

Have students sit in front of, or hold up a hand mirror, or alternatively look at a picture of themselves. Ask them what shapes they see. Guide them by first modeling what you see: *"I see a big oval head,"* and then draw the shape of a big oval head. *"I see curly black hair all around the edges,"* and then draw the curly hair. *"I see two eyes,"* and this time maybe draw the eyes in the wrong place. See if anyone notices that the eyes are down by the chin. If the children don't say anything, tell them that it looks a little strange to you, and ask them if they can help you figure out why it looks a bit strange. Fix the eyes, and then move on, detail by detail.

Once you have modeled the process, have children work on this project by looking at themselves. The way this is done will differ depending on how many mirrors you have access to. If you have enough for at least one group to work on it at a time, you can do it in this way, while other groups work on other projects or activities. If you don't have access to many mirrors, you can ask them to bring in a picture of themselves, or you can take pictures ahead of time, and print them all out so the heads are all of similar size (you don't want a group photo, with the child's head very small and hard to see).

Once they have done a self-portrait, they can also move on to family portraits, which you would need a picture of, or portraits of other people.

In a similar way that the children looked at shapes and lines and colors, and worked on getting the sizes and proportions looking right in the self-portrait, they can now move on to working with a partner to draw a portrait of them.

Once again it is best to model this activity for the students, by doing one yourself, and talking your way through it. Bring up a volunteer, teacher's aide, or parent volunteer. Have your crayons laid out and a big piece of poster paper that the kids can all see. Have the volunteer sit so that the kids can see her/his face as well. Then start talking about what you see, and drawing the shapes, step by step. Make some mistakes, and let them help you correct them.

Then pair the kids up, or make triads where they help each other talk through what they see.

This type of work can continue from people, to objects, to scenes and landscapes. Once a child learns to deconstruct a larger image into parts, it becomes easier to transfer this to paper.

AESTHETIC VALUING

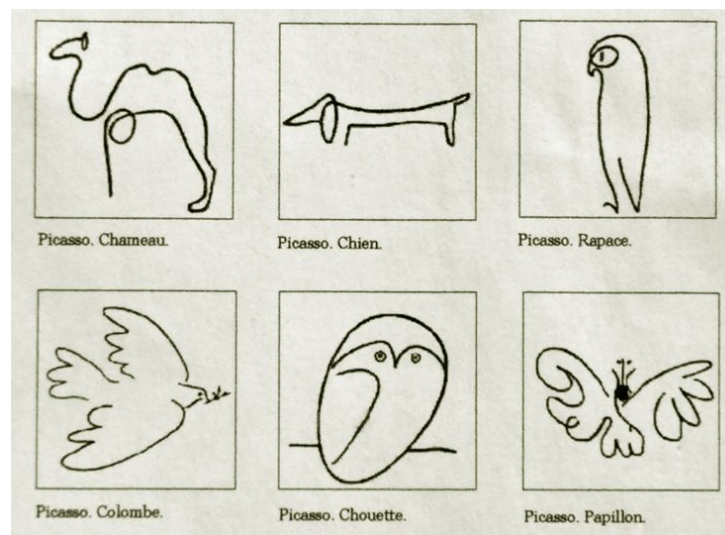
Children at the prekindergarten level can begin to analyze and make meaning of the art that they see all around them. We can help them find the language and vocabulary for this, especially as it connects to the work that is done in class.

Ideas for what to do:

Connecting to the work that the children have done in recognizing shapes and using these to construct whole images, we can take one step further in beginning a conversation around the aesthetics of art, helping them find ways to talk about what they see, and compare and contrast different works and styles of work.

Bringing in examples of different types of work is an excellent way to show that not all art work is perfectly rendered and photorealistic. Abstract art, such as Picasso line drawings, can show children how simple lines can be used to make very recognizable images.

A simple online search for images of line drawings will provide endless examples of art work, both professional and amateur. An example could be this page of six of Picasso's simple drawings. A lesson can begin with looking at these six drawings, and having a discussion about what they children see.

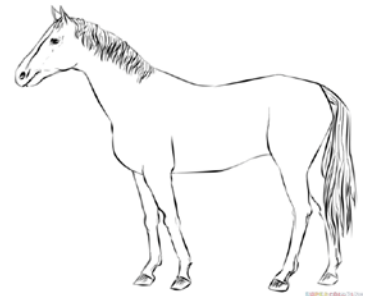
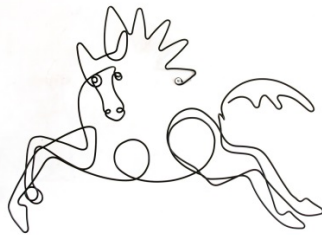


- Can they tell what each image is?
- How do they know?
- What are the identifying features that let them know that the camel is a camel?
- Does the hump give it away?
- What shape was used to draw the hump?
- Can they draw a shape like that?

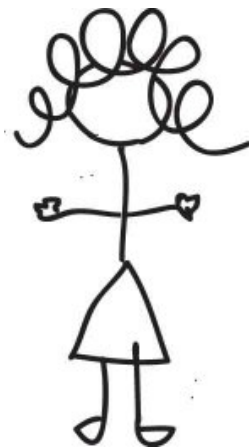
Now, let's compare some images. Let's look at these three pictures. What do we see? If you were to only look at the middle image, would you know that it was a horse? What are the parts of the picture that help you know that it is a horse? What are some things that are the same in all the

pictures? Do all the pictures include all of the *important* parts that help you know that it is a horse? How are the pictures different?

Next you can get into the discussion of value, to help children understand that the wonderful thing about art is that value is individual. Ask the children if one picture is *better* than the others? Take a vote, and tally it on the board. You can put the children into groups based on which picture they think is better, and ask them to agree on five reasons that they believe their picture is the best. Then come back together and ask the class to share their ideas. Being sure to emphasize that there is no correct answer, and this is why art is so special.



Another possibility is to include a children's drawing with the other images, in order to show that art at every level holds meaning and value.



CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

At this level, children can begin to make connections and applying what they are learning in visual arts, to other subject areas and careers. They are developing creative skills in communication and

problem solving, and they are learning to analyze objects and images based on their own feelings and opinions, as well as on what they see.

Connections and Applications

One of the content standards for visual and performing arts is for students to create visual patterns. This can be done through a combination of auditory and aesthetic work.

Ideas for what to do:

Before the class does this work on their own, model how you would create a visual pattern of a rhythm. Begin by clapping out a rhythm with short and long claps. Do the same rhythm a few times, adding in your voice as well. Then pick up a crayon and make lines and dots to match your rhythm. Then have the students practice marking their own papers as you clap out a rhythm.

They can then pair up and clap out different rhythms to each other, and try to draw what they hear.

Another option is to play a simple song, or read a poem, and show them how the patterns and rhythms of the work can be illustrated in an artistic way.

Careers and Career-Related Skills

To make the connection to how art isn't just for fun, but that it can also become a career that the children choose when they grow up, you can choose one such career, that of a storybook illustrator, and discuss how art is used to illustrate stories.

Ideas for what to do:

Read a book together that has simple and clear illustrations. As you read each page, take time to analyze the illustration that goes along with the page. Talk about what images the illustrator decided to include, and wonder out loud if there is anything important in that part that should've been included, or if there are other parts that could have been left out.

Example:

Find examples of illustrations from books, and read the words out loud to the class, or to a group. Discuss how the words connect to the images, and ask the students for feedback and ideas.

Then have students make up a story together, as a class, and talk through what images could be used to represent the parts of the story. The story can be printed into a booklet, and each student can then be given the chance to illustrate their own book.