

Free-Form Stencil Drawing

Using repetitive designs in a composition builds unity. Stencils are dramatic when combined with various lines and shapes. The reversing of a pattern changes the pattern but adds continuity to the total artwork. Choose three shapes from a design and build a new composition by repeating and combining these shapes to communicate an idea or story.

Grade Levels 5-12

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Process

1. Develop a drawing in pencil on a 9" x 12" piece of 80-lb construction paper, any color. The color and weight of this paper makes the stencil durable and easy to use. The three shapes cut out need to vary in size and angles to make the final drawing interesting. Choose positive and negative shapes.
2. Cut clean shapes with sharp scissors.
3. Work the final drawing on the 11" x 14" white print/drawing paper. Artist tape secures the shapes to the paper for a good, clear edge when shaded. The artist tape does not stick to the drawing. Smoothly and consistently use left to right strokes, blending the color the total length of the stencil line. Reposition the shape and repeat in a new color. Shade color over color. Alter and move the stencil as many times as desired.
4. Remember to flip the stencil to make a new shape. Use only part of a stencil or stack the stencils to produce new lines. Keep the pencil strokes consistent but vary the length of the strokes. Make certain to use dark and light shading to enhance the rich color.

Options

- Abstract designs: squares, strips, curves
- Use shapes of hands, feet, etc.
- Landscapes
- Flowers
- Houses or buildings
- Glue the stencil shapes to the finished artwork



Materials

[Blick 80-lb](#)

[Premium Construction Paper](#), assorted colors (11409-1003), need one 9" x 12" sheet per student

[Watercolor Artist's Tape](#) (23025-1002), share two rolls across classroom

[Stonehenge™ Drawing Paper Pad](#), 11" x 14", 12-sheet pad (10440-1005), need one sheet per student

[Prismacolor® Pencils](#), (20508-0036) share one set of 36 pencils between three students

[Fiskars® Student Scissors](#) (57016-1065), need one per student

National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experience and ideas

9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

5-8 Students employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas

9-12 Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems

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

5-8 Students use subjects, themes and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artwork.

9-12 Students describe the origins of specific images and ideas and explain why they are of value in their artwork and in the work of others.