

Neo Neon

(art + social studies)

Classic neon signs are a part of everyday American culture, crossing over lines of economics, geography and heritage. Neon can be incorporated into expensive, artistic sculptures and it can also be used to define the word “kitsch”. The process of crafting a Neon sign is an art form — skilled designers sculpt glass tubing, attach it to a form and fill it with heated gases. The types of gas used determines the color that the neon glows.

Crayola® Neon Model Magic® glows brilliantly, especially against the contrast of a black background. This lesson incorporates the glowing “light painting” impact of neon signage in a clean, neat and easy-to-understand learning experience.



Grade Levels 5-8

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

Objectives

- Students will study a commercial art form and understand its historic and social meaning
- Students will apply linear color to a shape, bending and forming the lines in much the same way a sign artist would form glass tubing
- Students will design their own commercial message and determine how to visually communicate it

Preparation

1. Look for examples of neon signage in your area, or visit websites devoted to neon signage.
2. When neon signs first appeared in the early part of the 20th century, people associated them with progress and modernism. Today, neon evokes a sense of nostalgia and entertainment. Discuss other concepts associated with neon signage.

Process

1. Assign or allow students to choose a product to advertise with their sign. Prepare preliminary drawings on white paper, cut to 11" x 14", same

Materials

Crayola® Model Magic®, assorted Neon Colors (33214-1102), share one bucket across the classroom

Railroad Board, 6-ply Black, (13105-2102), 22" x 28" sheets, need 1/2 sheet per student

Acme™ Kleenkut Kid's Scissors (57027-1109), set of twelve, need one per student

Blick Multi-Purpose White Glue (57027-1109), 8-oz bottle, share one bottle between two students

Blick White Sulphite Drawing Paper, 60-lb (10209-1007), 100-sheet package of 12" x 18" sheets, need one sheet per student

Crayola® Fluorescent Markers (21218-1409), share one 6-color set between two students

Pilot Better Ball Point (20717-2009), box of 12, need one per student

Process, continued

size as half-sheet railroad board. Use fluorescent markers to plan. Students should keep the following in mind as they design.

- The sign must be cut to a relative shape, not just a square.
 - Signs must incorporate a picture or illustration relative to the product, not just text.
 - "Neon" (Model Magic) cannot overlap itself and should be as uniform in thickness as possible
 - Sign should be one piece.
2. Cut the outer shape of the sign out of the preliminary drawing with scissors. On the back of the railroad board, trace the shape of the sign and cut out with scissors.
 3. Place the preliminary drawing on the front side of the railroad board, and transfer design by tracing heavily with ballpoint pen to make embossed lines to use as guides.
 4. Roll Model Magic in coils and arrange in place on the sign. Recommend starting in the center and working to the edges to avoid accidentally flattening coils with the hand.
 5. Allow Model Magic to dry and glue coils permanently in place.

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.

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

- **5-8** Students integrate visual, spatial and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks.

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

- **5-8** Students compare multiple purposes for creating works of art.