

Minimal Animals (art +math)

This lesson plan is a fun activity to explore the use of elements and principles of design to create fanciful imaginary creatures. It reinforces the concepts of symmetry, asymmetry and positive and negative space. Folding a piece of paper in half, it is very easy to cut a symmetrical shape. Both sides of the animal are exactly alike. Students draw only one half of the animal on one side of the fold. When cut while folded, it will become a complete animal. After it is opened flat, the animal is symmetrical. An asymmetrical design is formed when color, objects or texture are added on one side and not on the other in the same positioning.

Grade Levels 5-8

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

Process

1. Each student selects one sheet of colored construction paper and 1 sheet of gold. The colored sheet is for the animal and the gold for the background. Fold the colored sheet in half vertically or horizontally.
2. Beginning at the fold, lightly sketch one half of the animal or insect. Include a border. Encourage students to make their creations fanciful including as many heads, horns, ears, fins, tails, etc as desired. Remind them that they will be on both sides of the animal.
3. Beginning at the fold, cut out the border and animal. Save the scraps for the negative design on the back of the gold paper.
4. Measure and mark the center of the gold construction paper where the middle of the paper is. This helps to center the symmetrical animal.
5. Unfold the cut-out parts and arrange them on the background paper.
6. Determine the positioning of the animal piece. Glue all parts including the border.
7. Turn the sheet over and glue the remaining parts to the back of the gold paper.
8. Keep the original side of the paper the symmetrical image. Add more embellishments to the back for an asymmetrical design.

Options

- Add symmetrical pencil designs to decorate the animals with scales, feathers and other colorful texture
- The concepts in this lesson plan, symmetrical, asymmetrical, positive and negative shapes can be



Materials

- [Blick Construction Paper 80-lb \(11409-1003\)](#) 50-sheet assortment 9" x 12", need one sheet per student
- [Blick Construction Paper Gold \(11409-4073\)](#) package of fifty 9" x 12", need one sheet per student
- [Blick Multi Purpose Glue Stick White 1.27-oz \(23872-1032\)](#) package of 12-sticks, need one stick per student
- [Snippy Scissors, Pointed \(57040-2009\)](#), package of 12, need one per student
- [Blick Economy Graphite Pencils \(20302-2009\)](#) need one per student
- [Blick Plastic Ruler, 12" \(55403-1012\)](#) share 12 across classroom

Options, continued

divided into other lesson plans rich in principles and elements of design.

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National Standards

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

K-4 Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

5-8 Students select media, techniques and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices