



EVERGREEN

Teacher's Corner Lesson Plans

*Helping Teachers and Students Make the Most of
their Outdoor Classroom*

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Inspired by Litter*†

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Grade level: 4

Provincial curriculum links: Ontario

Subject: Visual Arts

Keywords: collage, found materials

Description

To introduce the concepts of human impacts and re-using in the context of art-making, participants will practice the technique of collage by using schoolyard litter and natural debris as their material.

Curriculum Framework

Topic: Collage

Strand: Creative Work, Knowledge of Elements

Specific Lesson Goals:

- Produce two and three-dimensional works of art that communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas for specific purposes and to specific audiences;
- Solve artistic problems in their art work, using the elements of design specified for this grade;
- Explain how the elements of design are organized in a work of art to communicate feelings and convey ideas;
- State their preference for a specific artwork chosen from among several on a similar theme, and to defend their choice with reference to their own interests and experience and to the artist's use of the various elements of design

* This exercise is adapted from *Teaching in the Outdoor Classroom*, Evergreen/TDSB Summer Institute, 2007, 82 pages.

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Preparation

Preparation Time:

- 15 minutes

Length of lesson:

- 40-80 minutes

Resources required:

- Cartridge or construction paper (1 sheet per student, size and colour their choice)
- scissors (1 per student)
- glue stick or white glue (1 per 2-3 students)
- a selection of drawing tools
- staplers (2-3 for the class to share.)
- Reproductions of collages that use found materials such as eco-artists Tony Cragg, Herman de Vries, Nita Leland, Kurt Schwitters

Procedure

1. Review your rules for working outside. Take class to an outdoor setting (eg. the schoolyard or a local park.) Divide them into groups of 3-4.
2. Ask them to put on their detective hats to investigate how humans have had an impact on the place. What evidence of human involvement can be found? Give 5 minutes to work as a group to list the human impacts that they find.
3. Ask the groups to share the evidence on their lists. Accept a broad range of responses, including impacts such as litter, asphalt or sidewalks, gardens, planted trees. Discuss concept that human impacts can range from positive to negative, and that each of us has a choice in how we impact our environment.
4. Instruct the class to gather some of the evidence they found to take back to the classroom. Review the rules of harvesting of plant material so as not to permanently damage any plants or insects. Return to the classroom.
5. Explain that they will be using their found materials (the evidence) to make a collage that illustrates the human impact of the outdoor site they were just in. Ask students to define the word *collage* (a French word for cut and paste.)
6. Show them a few examples of eco-artists who have used found materials to make collages. Ask students to guess how the artist made each work and what message they were trying to convey. What elements of design did they use to get their ideas across? Which collage is their favourite and why?

7. Provide instructions for creating their own collage; demonstrate that they can attach items to the paper base with glue, staples or by weaving it into slits in the base. Encourage them to cut the found materials into more interesting shapes and layer them together. Note that everything doesn't need to lie flat; some items can stick out from the base.
8. Emphasize they need to select an idea to communicate about the human impact on the place they just visited, and to select found materials (both natural and human-made) to support their idea. If desired, they can add words to their collage to help get their point across. Note that some students may need to return to the site (if possible) to collect more materials to support their idea.
9. If assessing their work, be clear about the criteria that you will use for their assessment before they begin (provide rubric or checklist for them to refer to.)
10. Ask them to run their central idea by you before they start to glue or staple their materials to the base. Provide adequate time to finish the collages.
11. When complete, provide an opportunity for some students to share their finished artworks with the class to discuss their successes and challenges. Create a display to share the collages with others in the school.

Discussion and Questions

- Discuss how humans impact their environment. In what ways do we have positive impacts, and in what ways do we have negative ones? What can we do to heighten our positive impacts and lessen our negative ones?
- Explore art-making that encourages positive human impacts. Introduce eco-artists to the class and discuss the ways in which they use their creativity to shift human impacts from the negative to the positive.

Student Assessment and Evaluation

A rubric, checklist or rating scale could be used to assess both the process of collage (for group work, staying on task, for following instructions on the technique) and the collage itself (for completion, inclusion of a central idea, use of the elements of design to support the idea, etc.)

Enrichment and Extension Activities

- Relate to the literacy activity "*Web Word Poetry*" by using their chosen word as the central idea; the word can become an integral part of the collage design. Exhibit the collages as part of an Earth Day event that asks viewers to consider their impact on the earth. Plan an positive event, such as a tree planting, that encourages students and their families to become actively involved in positive impact activities.

- Compile the collages into a class or individual book about human impacts in their community.
- Take it 3D. Use trash found in the school yard over the course of a few weeks to create a sculpture for the front hall of the school to demonstrate to other classes the impact of their actions.

References/Resources

MaryAnn Kohl & Cindy Gainer. *Good Earth Art: Environmental Art for Kids*. Bright Ring Pub.,1991.

Luxbacher, Irene. *The Jumbo Book of Outdoor Art*. Kids Can Press, 2006.

Brommer, Gerald. [*The Art of Collage*](#). Davis, 1978.

Nature Collages: <http://www.nitaleland.com/project/naturecollage.htm>