PAPER COLLAGE

Developed by Natasha Pristas
2019
**Grade Level**: Grades 3 and up

**Timeframe**: 3-4 days minimum, plus prep time for teacher prior to teaching

**Summary**: Students will be introduced to the concept of collage, learn basic color principles and vocabulary, learn technique for hand painting papers, and learn how to collage.

**Project choices**:
Easiest: cards (use card stock and pre-fold cards for students)
Medium: shoe portrait (use Canson watercolor paper, 140 lb)
More difficult: hand sewn 4 page journal (instructions below)

(other ideas: accordion book, self portraits, landscapes, alphabet, wood panels)

**Alaska State Arts Standards**
Create: A student should be able to imagine and develop artistic ideas and work
Present: A student should be able to interpret and share artistic work.
Respond: A student should be able to understand and evaluate how the arts convey meanings.
Connect: A student should be able to relate artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.

**Vocabulary**
Primary colors
Secondary colors
Tertiary colors
Analogous colors
Complementary colors
Abstract
Representational
Collage
Monochromatic
Materials

- Brown paper/newsprint for tables
- Sketch paper 50 lb. Teaching artist recommends Daler Rowney, 50 lb, 9 x 12 sketch paper for painting the paper that will be collaged. (Any higher weight, and the paper becomes hard to glue down).
- Canson Watercolor Paper 140 lb for adhering collage to. I use this for journals or portraits. For cards I use a lighter weight card stock.
- Cardstock
- Liquid acrylics--apple barrel brand is fine, recommend matte acrylics paints
- Brushes--often there are brush packs that are cheaper than buying single brushes. Look for one with larger brushes for painting papers and smaller brushes for applying glue.
- Jars for water to keep brushes from drying full of glue.
- Drying rack--I use an old retro-fitted clothes rack, but some classrooms may have paper drying racks. The paper takes up a lot of table or floor space, so having a rack or clothesline will be helpful.
- Scissors that actually cut. (Everybody deserves pointy fiskar scissors that work!)
- Stacks of old magazines to use when brushing glue on back of papers.
- Paper plates for glue
- Glue *** glue sticks might work for younger kids, but the paper tends to pop up over time. I recommend Modge Podge in matte finish for a local purchase, or Lineco neutral ph Adhesive (Amazon, Dick Blick)
- Heavy books, possibly, if someone’s collage is in danger of warping.
- Waxed paper to lay over damp collage before putting under heavy books.
- Thread or cord if making journals

START:

Introduce collage through stories

Read or look at some collage books: Eric Carle is a natural choice, but there are others!
Matisse did incredible collages, and there are kids’ story books about artists.

(https://www.amazon.com/Matisse%3A%20A%20Story%20of%20the%20artist/dp/0870709100)
Rather than books ON collage, I suggest sharing books that use collage for illustrations so students can see what a wide range of ideas are out there. Explore how realistic or not the cut outs are and how we can still recognize things even if the art isn’t 100% representational.

Instagram is a great place too (Tracey English) https://www.instagram.com/traceyenglish/?hl=en
https://www.instagram.com/tashpristas/?hl=en

Color Theory
Depending on the age and experience of the students, this can be a 5 minute review or a longer activity. Students should walk away with basic understanding of the color wheel and basic vocabulary: primary colors, secondary colors, analogous and complementary colors.

NEXT
Paint the Paper!

Prep for teacher: have several sheets of paper painted and dry for students to touch and inspect. Set up stations. Cover tables with brown paper. Set out paint combinations, cheap brushes, and paints.

Demo for students: Teacher paints several pieces of paper using liquid acrylic: some with a single color, some with colors that “go” (usually analogous colors) together, and some colors that create mud on the paper. Teacher points out that some colors work together (for example, green and yellow) while others make mud (green, blue and orange! Anything with brown!) When might they need bright vs muddy colors? Show the textures that different bristles make in the paint. Show the movement in the texture--are they going to depict waves? Wind? Texture might help with that. Show how some pages have multiple colors and how that can convey a different mood or movement in comparison with papers with a single color. (This demo can incorporate any color theory or vocabulary from the previous lesson.)
Explain to students that painting the paper is a sharing project. No one will end up with the exact paper they painted. The point is to create a large supply of colorful papers that the students will then choose pieces from for their projects. Explain why you’ve assigned kids to paint stations with limited palettes (to avoid too many muddy brown pages) and then set them to work. Kids paint paper and then ferry them to the area you’ve designated for drying.

NEXT

Introduce the project you’ve chosen. The collage technique will remain the same (See below). Your project choice might depend on the age of students or on extended activities related to topics and content you are teaching in class.

Teacher prep: have several finished projects so students can see what they are doing. I’d show more than one example of any project so students won’t be tempted to copy. They’ll see several ways to fill a journal or depict a landscape. The project could be directed (depict your shoe) or open (make a card for family or friend) or connected to content being taught (animals, flora, geography)

Students sketch out, write about, talk over what their designs will be. It doesn’t have to be written in stone, but if students have something tangible down, then they can continue to build on their idea in the next period. (5-10 minutes?)

Demo the project:
Regardless of the project, your technique will remain the same:

Materials needed to start collaging
Brown paper over tables if you want.
Stack of painted papers
Scissors
Blank piece of paper to lay out design on
Item to be collaged (journal? Folded card?)
An old magazine
Paper plate with a SMALL puddle of glue when ready to collage!
Brush
Jar to put brush in when not using it.

Teacher cuts out some shapes and glues them down. Trouble shoot:

- Show students how to put their cut outs face down on a magazine page before brushing the back with a light layer of glue. When the catalog page is full of messy glue outlines, just turn the page.

- Teacher demos gluing down cut outs onto project (card, journal, etc)

- Show students what happens when cut outs shift or move--the image changes a bit.

- Show a way to build off of “mistakes” if students are unhappy with how something is glued down.

- Show students what happens when a light yellow is collaged over a dark purple (it’ll show through).

- Show students how really large cut outs may curl or bubble with glue. Is there a way to cut several pieces to make up a large shape?

NEXT

Hand back students’ ideas about what they want to create.
Students collect supplies needed to start collaging.

Students cut out shapes, parts of shapes, and lay them out on their blank paper or directly on their “good” paper.

Students glue images down.

** no one’s collage will come out exactly as they’ve planned. Mistakes happen with glue and fingers and scissors. If students sneeze, their design will be altered. When students
lay out a design and then go to glue it down, inevitably the design will change a bit. Unless teachers have a way of protecting things, students should cut and glue the same day. If they want to add details later they can, but the paper does not come back up!

4 page journal
Canson watercolor paper 140 pound, 11 x15 inches
Cut each page into two pieces, 5.5 x 15, fold in half
Poke two holes in the fold line.
Thread with yard or heavy cord. Tie.

Card
Cut 8.5 x 11 card stock pages in half, fold.

Shoe Portrait
Cut Canson watercolor paper to desired size.
(Waxed paper to put over damp collage
Books to weight down collage if necessary)