

Art as Story: Leaf Person Collage



Grade: Kindergarten

Medium: Collage – Mixed Media

Learning Objective: students will:

- Observe how art can tell a story
- Use collage to represent a person/animal
- Use good craftsmanship
- Learn art vocabulary

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Elements of Art

Shape: a two-dimensional (flat), limited to height and width. A two-dimensional (flat) area enclosed by a line: **geometric** (symmetrical, except for circles and hearts, straight edged) or **organic** (with irregular, curved edges). This lesson uses organic shapes.

Texture: actual texture is how something feels when touched.

Principles of Design

Balance: A way of combining elements to add a feeling of equilibrium to a work of art. Major types are symmetrical and asymmetrical. This lesson will focus on **symmetrical**, in which elements are repeated on both sides of an imaginary vertical line bisecting the space in a ‘mirror’ image.

Additional Vocabulary

Collage: a way of making a work of art by gluing different objects and materials to a surface.

Craftsmanship: A way of working that includes following directions, demonstrates neatness and the proper use of tools.

Portrait: works of art recording the likenesses of humans or animals.

Materials & Supplies

- Pencils
- Tag board or #110 card stock
- Liquid glue in paper cups
- Sponge brushes
- Googly eyes
- An assortment of leaves of various shapes, colors, and sizes
- *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert

Context (History and/or Artists)

Lois Ehlert lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She has created many popular picture books. Ehlert grew up painting and sculpting. Even in her early years, she always erased her drawings and was never satisfied. Her favorite art technique was and still is cutting and pasting. This method is called collage—the process of cutting out pieces of paper, fabric, or objects and gluing them to a backing.

Leaf Man, published in 2005, features illustrations made from actual fall leaves and die-cut pages on every spread reveal gorgeous landscape vista. Here is a playful, whimsical, and evocative book that celebrates the natural world and rich imaginative life of children.

Leaf Man is a story that follows a bunch of leaves as they are blown over the landscape. The leaves start out in the shape of a man and reassemble into different images as they are blown about. Look for the hidden pictures formed by the leaves as they reconfigure along their journey!

Advanced Preparation

- 24 hours prior to the lesson gather leaves of many different types. Be sure to get a mix of many shapes, colors and sizes of various leaves.
- Use leaves within 24 hours of collection to keep them from drying out.
- If you want to preserve the Leaf Man Portraits apply a dilute solution of glue mix (recipe under Tips and Tricks below) to compositions within three hours of lesson.

Tips & Tricks

This lesson is best done in the fall of Kindergarten year as one of the first art lessons. Leaves are readily available. Kindergarten students can all be successful at this lesson.

- **Dilute white school glue to Seal Art Works once glued down:** Mix 3 parts white school glue + 1-part water. Brush over all leaves and let dry as soon as student's finish lesson.
- To keep leaves from drying out overnight (or however long the leaves will be stored before use), the leaves can be stored in layers with slightly damp paper towels.

Discussion Points

- Post vocabulary and briefly review it. Keep it simple. Use these words as often as possible throughout the lesson.
- Read *Leaf Man*. Occasionally stop reading and ask students what they see in the pictures? (leaves, acorns, seed pods). Can they find hidden pictures? (Yes, the leaves and seed pods make a picture of a person.). Ask them to find portraits (pictures of people/animals).
- Ask: If you were to make a picture of yourself with leaves how would you do that? Have them think about the parts of person: arms, legs, head, body, facial features. What shape leaves would work? Does each side of the person need to have the same shapes? (yes, because people's bodies are symmetrical: each side is balanced – with the same number and shapes of parts on both sides. If there's only 1 part, like a head, nose, or a belly button, it's in the middle.

Reflection Point (Assessment of Learning Objectives)

Students will:

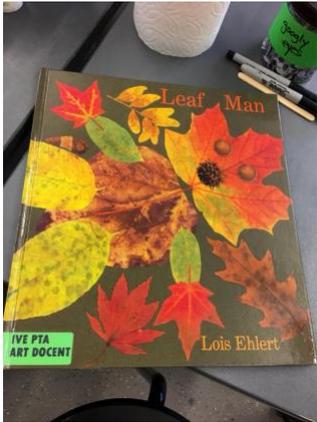
- Observe how art can tell a story
- Use collage to represent a person/animal
- Use good craftsmanship
- Learn art vocabulary



Instructions for Lesson

1. Read *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert. Have students identify the different animals (characters) and locations (settings) the leaf man sees on his journey.
2. Demonstrate how to try different leaves to be different body parts. When you have decided on the leaves you need, show them how to use the sponge brush to apply a light layer of glue to the back of each leaf. Lay leaves flat and press gently.
3. Distribute paper and trays of leaves of various shapes and colors.
4. Ask students to create their own leaf people or animals. This can be as structured or as loose as needed. Challenge them to create something unique with a certain number or type of leaves, or let them be freely inspired without restrictions. Either way, encourage students to keep leaves whole as much as possible (use overlapping) and try a few different arrangements of leaves before gluing. **DO NOT HAND OUT GLUE UNTIL NEXT STEP.**
5. Once students are happy with their leaf creations they should begin gluing.
6. Position googly eyes as the last step. An adult can apply 2 glue drops directly from the bottle to which students add the eyes.

Examples:



References and Attributions

Lesson written by Angie Warren, from Issaquah Valley Elementary's PTA Art Docent Program. *Leaf Man*. Author: *Lois Ehlert*. Publisher: Orlando, Florida : Harcourt, Inc., [2005] ©2005; <http://www.kidssoup.com/craft-and-resource/story-time-leaf-man>.

Notes for Educators

21st Century Thinking Skills

Thinking flexibly, persisting, creating, innovating, taking responsible risks, reflecting, observing, making connections, visualizing, sequencing, comparing/contrasting, predicting, determining main idea, finding evidence, problem solving, decision making, evaluating.

WA State Learning Standards

(VA:Cr1.1.K) a. Engage in exploration and imaginative play with materials.

(VA:Cr1.2.K) a. Engage collaboratively in creative art-making in response to an artistic problem.

(VA:Cr2.1.K) a. Through experimentation, build skills in various media and approaches to art-making.

(VA:Cr2.3.K) a. Create art that represents natural and constructed environments.

(VA:Cr3.1.K) a. Explain the process of making art while creating.

(VA:Re7.1.K) a. Identify uses of art within one's personal environment. This happens if you view art as a story-telling device.

(VA:Re7.2.K) a. Describe what an image represents.

(VA:Re8.1.K) a. Interpret art by identifying subject matter and describing relevant details.

(VA:Cn11.1.K) a. Identify a purpose of an artwork.

Arts Integration Opportunities

Science: observe why leaves change colors, how veins keep a tree alive.

Math: pattern with leaves.