

# Drawing with Scissors



**Grade:** 2nd Grade

**Medium:** Paper, collage

**Learning Objective:** Students will use positive and negative shapes to create an abstract piece of artwork in the style of Henri Matisse.

**Author:** Inspired by Henri Matisse and many art teachers!

## Elements of Art

**Color:** the visible range of reflected light.

**Line:** the flat path of a dot through space used by artists to control the viewer's eye movement; a long narrow mark or stroke made on or in a surface; a thin mark made by a pencil, pen, or brush.

**Shape:** a two-dimensional (flat) area enclosed by a line. **Geometric** shapes are based on mathematical principles, such as a square/cube, circle/sphere, triangle/cone, or pyramid. **Organic** shapes are irregular, often curving or rounded, and more informal than geometric shapes.

## Principles of Design

**Balance:** the arrangement of elements that makes individual parts of a composition appear equally important; an arrangement of the elements to create an equal distribution of visual weight throughout the format or composition.

**Contrast:** a technique that shows differences in the elements of visual arts in an artwork, such as smooth/rough textures, light/dark colors, or thick/thin lines.

**Movement:** the use of the elements of visual arts to draw a viewer's eye from one point to another in an artwork.

**Variety:** the use of the elements of visual arts to create differences in an artwork for visual interest.

## Additional Vocabulary

**Complementary colors:** colors that are opposite one another on the color wheel, such as yellow/violet, blue/orange, and red/green. When placed side by side, these colors complement each other or make each color stand out.

**Positive and negative space:** Positive space is the actual space taken up by the line, shape, or form. Negative space is the empty space surrounding a shape, figure, or form in a two- or three-dimensional artwork. In this lesson the positive space is the shape you will cut out and the negative space is the “left over” after you cut the shape out.

### **Materials & Supplies**

- Background paper 8 ½ by 11 inches (one color for a uniform look or 3 choices (black, blue, and green) for variety)
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Colorful cardstock cut into different size squares and rectangles. Colors should be bright like Matisse examples and contrast with background color(s)
- Pencils or black markers for signing the artwork

### **Context (History and/or Artists)**

Henri Matisse was a painter for most of his artistic life but developed a technique in his later years that he called, “drawing with scissors” to create beautiful paper cut-outs. Instead of using a pencil to begin these works of art, he started with scissors, cutting brightly colored paper to see where his creativity led him. He then arranged the positive and negative paper cutout shapes to his liking.

### **Advanced Preparation**

Select the background paper; cut colorful squares and rectangles in a variety of sizes and colors. Display a few examples of Matisse’s work to inspire students. If there is time to read *Henri’s Scissors* by Jeanette Winter or *Matisse’s Garden* by Samantha Friedman, either of these books adds literary, visual context, and storytelling.

### **Tips & Tricks**

- Trays for each table group are helpful. Make sure each table group has a variety of paper squares and rectangles cut in a mix of sizes and colors.
- Tell the students they can only use scissors to create their artwork. No pencils!

### **Discussion Points**

If time allows, read *Henri’s Scissors* by Jeanette Winter or *Matisse’s Garden* by Samantha Friedman, then to the class then show one or two of Matisse’s cut paper art pieces. Point out organic shapes and geometric shapes. Point out wavy lines, zig-zag lines, diagonal edges and curved edges. Point out how important the contrast of colors is. If you put a blue shape on a blue background, you won’t see the blue shape. When they choose their background paper, have them think about the color choices that they will layer on top. Make sure the colors pop out instead of blend in. Talk about contrasting & complementary colors.

### **Reflection Point (Assessment of Learning Objectives)**

- Students have cut shapes using scissors without drawing them first with a pencil.
- Students have created a composition which used contrasting colors and a variety of shapes (geometric & organic) in a purposeful way.
- Students can use the vocabulary of contrast, line, variety, shape, color and balance to describe what they saw in their classroom gallery.

### **Instructions for Lesson**

1. Begin by reading one of the books about Matisse or showing a slide show with examples of his artwork, specifically his cut paper artwork.
2. Demonstrate how to “draw with scissors,” cutting a variety of shapes, swirls, wavy shapes, zig-zag shapes, abstract and organic shapes (different leaf-like shapes are good examples).
3. Show how with each shape you cut out, there is a positive shape and a negative shape (the leftover cutout).
4. Demonstrate how to arrange a piece of art by using both your cut positive and negative shapes. Move the shapes around a variety of different ways showing how the artwork can look very different based on how you organize the artwork. Point out complementary colors, balance and variety in your demonstration.
5. Have students choose a background color.
6. Have the students begin “drawing with scissors” and creating their artwork.
7. Save 5 minutes at the end of class to have an “art walk”. Have the class clean up scraps, scissors, etc. Have the class put their artwork on their desk. Have students walk around silently to look at their classmates’ artworks. Back at their seats, have students respond or share what they notice about their classmates’ artwork (using the vocabulary of contrast, line, variety, shape, color and balance). Using phrases like, “I saw . . .” or “I noticed . . .” with a description.

### **Examples:**





## References and Attributions

*Dynamic Art Projects for Children: Includes Step-by-Step Instructions and Photographs*, Logan, Denise M., Crystal Productions, 2005.

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## Notes for Educators

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thinking Skills

Problem solving – determining where to place the shapes.

Evaluation – judging using which positive and negative shapes to use and why.

Comparing and contrasting – using variety of colors and shapes in the artwork.

### Washington State Learning Standards

(VA:Cr1.2.2) Investigate, plan, and make. Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interest, questions, and curiosity.

(VA:Cr3.1.2) Reflect, refine, and continue. Discuss and reflect with peers about choices made in creating artwork.

(VA:Re.9.1.2) Interpret. Use learned vocabulary to express preferences about artwork.

### Arts Integration Opportunities

Literacy connection.