

“Lines Have Feelings Too! Expressing Emotions and Moods With Line and Color”
Lesson Developed by Mick Luehrman
Audience: 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Grade

Context and overview of this lesson: This lesson is designed for early in the school year and will serve to introduce the concept of line and the meaning that lines can convey. It would be followed by narrative drawing assignments that would utilize line and shape in drawings to tell a story. Students will review concepts of line quality (straight, curved, & angled), line character (thin, medium, thick), and be introduced to new terms (horizontal, vertical, & diagonal) that refer to line direction. Students will illustrate these line concepts by drawing them with crayon (pressing hard) and then using watercolor paints to finish the picture.

Goals: (these describe the general understandings that you want students to have)
TSW demonstrate an understanding of the variety of ways that lines differ.
TSW recognize that nonobjective lines can represent, suggest, and communicate emotions or feelings.
TSW demonstrate an understanding of the aspects of line quality, line character, and line direction

Objectives: (These are behavioral; they should describe what students will do.)

1. TSW will describe and identify the lines they see in their environment, as well as in works of art: straight, curved, & angled; thick & thin; horizontal, vertical, & diagonal; long & short (1.6, 1.9, 2.4, FA2, FA3, FA5).
2. TSW create a balanced design utilizing crayon and watercolor to make lines that illustrates the line-related concepts listed in objective #1. (1.10, 2.5, 3.2, FA1)
3. TSW interpret works of art by identifying the emotions or feelings suggested by specific lines in works by acclaimed artists, as well as work by their peers. (1.5, 2.4, 4.1, FA3, FA4).

Concepts:

Lines can vary in thickness, length, and direction
Lines can represent and symbolize ideas, feelings and emotions.
Lines can simulate movement.
Artists use many different types of lines to create works of art that communicate feelings and ideas without using words.

Materials:

Supply table located near the middle of the room.
Wax or oil pastel crayons
12 x 18 white sulfite drawing paper: 80 lb. preferred, at least 60 lb. for best results.
(Manila paper can also be used resulting in slightly more muted watercolor)
Watercolor paints (Prang or Crayola are good brand names to look for)
Wash brushes (an economy student grade brush)
Nametags for work
Newspapers to protect tables
Water containers

Teaching Resources:

Prints of art works that exemplify the art concepts listed above:
Self-portrait, by Kathe Kollwitz;
Composition #29, by Vassily Kandinsky.
(Other possible artists: Franz Kline, Van Gogh)
Visuals exemplifying concepts about line quality (Posters, flashcards, chalk-board or white-board)
Demonstration table or easel.

Vocabulary and definitions:

Line directions- Horizontal, Vertical, Diagonal

Line “families”- Straight, Curved, or Angled

Line width- Thick or thin

Line Length- Short, Long, Dashed, Dotted

Balance- visual weight (“when both sides of the art work look like they weigh the same, even if they aren’t exactly alike”). The teeter totter is an analogy for balance that they will understand.

Symbol- something that “stands for” something else

Lesson Procedures & Activities

Set:

- Students enter the classroom to find works of art by Kathy Kollwitz and Vassily Kandinsky displayed in the front of the room.
- Materials carefully arranged on the table for easy distribution later.

Stating Objectives in Age-Appropriate Language:

- “Today we are going to be art detectives and try to find all of the different kinds of lines that artists use. We will be finding out what lines can symbolize or remind us of, what they make us think about and feel.”
- “Then we’ll make our own designs using crayons and watercolor paints.”

Teacher Presents Concepts and Student Motivation:

- Use flash-cards, poster or the chalk board to illustrate Line families: straight, curved and angled.
- Play a game. Students stand up and use arm positions to respond when you mention these new terms: Vertical (put arms straight up in the air), Horizontal (hold arms out straight), Diagonal (tilt both arms to the left or right).
- Ask students to look around the room and find examples of these kinds of lines. (Check for Comprehension)
- Demonstrate how lines can vary in length, width (thickness), and direction. (Modeling)
- Ask students to gather on the floor up in front of the room, close to the works of art.
- Ask them to look at the lines in the Kathy Kollwitz self-portrait and describe the lines using the vocabulary they have just learned. *Guiding Questions:* “Do you see any lines that show movement--looks like it is moving? Why do you think the artist used these kinds of lines? What is the artist telling us about herself?”
- Ask students to think about their answer to the question, “Can a line can be like a feeling?”
- Students return to their seats.

Activity #1: Lines representing feelings

- Ask table helpers to give each student four pieces of paper (4.5” by 6”) and a pencil. Put name on back of each.
- Ask students to think about and then draw what a “sleepy” line might look like on one piece,
... an angry or busy line? ... a surprised line? ... a happy line?
- Explain that they are making symbols (state definition & write on the board)—these symbols will be lines that remind us of feelings and ideas.
- Have students write the “feeling word” on the back of each paper, then turn them back over.
- Ask students to be detectives looking at the lines their classmates have made, and try to decide which lines represent each of the feelings (designate one table the “sleepy” table, another the “angry” table, etc., then let the students move around and sort the lines.
- Guide students to look at each table of line drawings together to see how they grouped and interpreted the lines. Ask them to compare the lines on each table to look at how they are alike. Encourage use of line concept vocabulary listed earlier.
- If a line is on the “wrong” table, hold it up & give the group another chance to try and get it “right.”

- Students pick up their “feeling” lines and place under their chairs to take with them after class.

Activity #2: Crayon Resist Line designs (this may need to be done in the next art period)

- Students return to the front of the room to the demonstration table.
- Explain to students that you want them to use the different kinds of lines they have learned about to create a design. It doesn’t have to be a picture, it can just be an interesting collection of lines that they arrange on their paper in order to fill and use the space.
- Demonstrate how to press down hard with the crayons, explaining that this is an important step so that watercolor paint can be used later. The following can be emphasized as suggestions:
 - Think about what kind of feeling or feelings you want your lines and design to suggest.
 - Make crayon lines that go all the way across paper from side to side, top to bottom.
 - Press down hard to make colors intense (bright).
 - Choose your colors to match your idea—you can even try including white.
 - Suggest using each color 3 or more times for different lines to make design unified (looks like one design instead of many).
 - Spread lines out to use all the space and keep the picture balanced.
 - Put feeling and energy into making lines but don’t have to scribble.
 - Use many of the kinds of lines learned.
- Explain that the design or drawing can be balanced by the way they way they choose to place their lines within the space of the paper. *“Does one side seem heavier?”*
- Demonstrate how to use watercolors:
 - Adding drops of water to soften the colors you plan to use.
 - Using lots of water so that the paint brush will “glide” over the paper.
 - Using the lid of the paint box as a mixing area if needed.
 - Proper brush techniques to avoid “bad hair day” for the brush. Gently brush over the watercolor pan, like “petting your dog.”
 - Show that they can choose to cover all the remaining space with color, or use multiple colors and “echo” the crayon lines with paint lines.
- Ask students to return to their seats one table at a time with table helpers for the day getting 12 X 18 paper and crayons for their tables—also a full sheet of newspaper to protect table in work area.
- Students begin their designs.
- Teacher circulates, encouraging perseverance and creative solutions to the problem, proper use of tools, asking questions about lines or the feelings suggested to check for comprehension. Comments and questions made by the teacher during this time can be made to both individuals and the group. These should serve to reinforce the lesson objectives for all. Keep teaching!
- When students believe they are finished with work, they must raise their hand and check with the teacher before putting work on the drying rack. During this one-on-one exchange, if necessary, the teacher sensitively encourages perseverance and attention to the objectives for the lesson if it is felt that the child has not fulfilled these. Effort should be made to give praise to each child for positive aspects of their work: expressiveness of line, thought and creativity, craftsmanship, etc.
- After checking with the teacher, early finishers should attach name tags to their work, clean up their areas and then proceed in an orderly way to previously established free time art activities that are self-directed: free drawing, use of collage materials, art puzzles & games, or looking at art books and magazines from the art room library.

Closure:

When a majority of students are finished, have students display their work in the front of the room. Gather them together on the floor in front of the work; then conduct a critique during which students are asked to point out and describe the kind of lines that they see in their peer's works. Also ask them to interpret the feelings or moods that the art works suggest to them (symbolize). Display the completed work of every student in the class in one location in the school.

Assessment:

Did the student participate in the discussion, pointing out line qualities and types found in the environment and the artist's works they examined?

Was the student successful in interpreting their classmates' line symbols?

Did students utilize a variety of line qualities and types in their resist designs?
(see vocabulary section for list of line concepts)

Is the student's design balanced?

Did the student use the art tools and media in an effective and appropriate manner?

Intense crayon color applied firmly.

Watercolor and brushes used to accentuate and/or elaborate on crayon line quality

All tools and media handled appropriately according to demonstration.

Cleanup of area and tools completed.

How effective was the instructional method employed? What could be done to improve the lesson next time?