



Lesson 4: Collage, Part 1

Time: minimum 45 minutes
Grades: adaptable to grades K-4

Objectives

Students will:

- learn what a work of collage is
- become familiar with artists who used collage
- begin the process of making their own collage artwork.

Materials

- canvas (ours were hexagon-shaped)
- paint
- brushes
- water, containers

Vocabulary

- collage
- background

Resources

- Eric Carle: <https://eric-carle.com/>
- Hannah Höch: <https://www.moma.org/artists/2675>
- Romare Bearden: <https://beardenfoundation.org/learn/>
- Jesse Treece: <https://www.instagram.com/jesstreececollage/>

Lesson Plan

1. What Is Collage?

- Review previous land use planning lesson and the request to think about what their ideal environment would look like. We are going to be making an artwork to show this place using a technique called **collage**. The word “collage” comes from the French word “to paste.” Collage is done by gluing different materials (e.g., paper, photographs, fabric) to a flat surface.
- Show examples of famous collage artists. We start with Eric Carle, as his work usually is familiar to students. We emphasize looking closely at how his animals (say, the hungry caterpillar) are made using multiple cut-out shapes from painter paper. We do similar technical discussions with the other artists and explore symbols and meanings in the example artworks.

2. Activity

- The first step of the students’ artworks is painting the **background** (the area behind the main object). Show images of artworks that make it easy to distinguish the background from the collaged images (Eric Carle has some good ones).
- To help with color choice, we ask students to close their eyes and imagine a favorite place in nature (e.g., forest, beach). You can ask for additional details like time of day, season. We list

these on the board. We then ask students to brainstorm what colors they associate with each environment (e.g., beach = yellow, orange, pink, aqua blue) and write these down. This is a great opportunity to talk about warm/cool colors.

- Students pick three colors related to the place they imagined and then use them to paint the canvas. Suggestions for the activity:
 - Emphasize students are not painting a specific object; they are only painting an abstract background.
 - Try to limit the number of colors used; lots of colors often ends up as a muddy gray.
 - Students can experiment with types of brush strokes, drip or spatter painting, texturizing paint, or accent marks.

3. Conclusion & Preview

- Ask students to continue thinking about what their ideal environment looks like.
- In the next lesson, students will work on depicting this place using collage.



Students working on first step of mixed-media collage – painting background according to selected color scheme.