Unit 2: Reviewing The Elements of Art/Principles of Design

Content Area: **Fine Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **7 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

In alignment with the NJSLS-VPA standards, students will review and extend their understanding of the Elements of Art and Principles of Design. Building on foundational knowledge from Art 1, students will deepen their ability to intentionally apply visual concepts such as line, shape, color, form, texture, space, value, balance, contrast, emphasis, rhythm, movement, pattern, and unity within more complex compositions. Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art-making approaches to communicate meaning. Throughout this unit, students will further investigate how the Elements and Principles function together through purposeful artmaking, critique, and analysis of historical and contemporary artworks. Emphasis will be placed on intentional decision-making, compositional strength, and visual communication. Students will refine their ability to analyze artwork, articulate visual choices, and apply design principles to create successful and meaningful compositions.

Revised: August 2026

Standards

Information Literacy

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.5.12acc.Cr	Creating Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed. Artists and designers shape artistic investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative art-making goals.

	Explore
1.5.12acc.Cr1a	Individually and collaboratively formulate new creative problems based on student's existing artwork.
1.5.12acc.Cr2	Organizing and developing ideas.
	Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art-making approaches. Artists and designers balance experimentation and safety, freedom and responsibility, while developing and creating artworks. People create and interact with objects, places and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.
1.5.12acc.Cr2a	Through experimentation, practice and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.
1.5.12acc.Cr2b	Demonstrate awareness of ethical implications of making and distributing creative work.
1.5.12acc.Cr2c	Redesign an object, system, place, or design in response to contemporary issues.
1.5.12acc.Cr3	Refining and completing products.
	Artists and designers develop excellence through practice and constructive critique, reflecting on, revising and refining work over time.
	What role does persistence play in revising, refining and developing work? How do artists grow and become accomplished in art forms? How does collaboratively reflecting on a work help us experience it more completely?
1.5.12acc.Pr4	Selecting, analyzing, and interpreting work.
	Artists and other presenters consider various techniques, methods, venues, and criteria when analyzing, selecting and curating objects, artifacts and artworks for preservation and presentation.
	Artists, curators and others consider a variety of factors and methods including evolving technologies when preparing and refining artwork for display and or when deciding if and how to preserve and protect it.
1.5.12acc.Pr6a	Make, explain and justify connections between artists or artwork and social, cultural and political history.
	Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed through engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments. Visual arts influences understanding of and responses to the world.
	People gain insights into meanings of artworks by engaging in the process of art criticism.
	People evaluate art based on various criteria.
	Through artmaking, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge and experiences.
1.5.12acc.Cn10a	Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research and experimentation to explore other subjects through artmaking.
	People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.
1.5.12acc.Cn11b	Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural and historical contexts and make connections to global issues, including climate change.

Essential Questions

- How are the Elements of Art used in conjunction with the Principles of Design to create effective compositions?

- How does an artist intentionally use the Elements and Principles of Design to communicate meaning?
- What makes a composition visually successful?
- How do artists make decisions about structure, balance, and emphasis in their work?
- What conditions, attitudes, and behaviors support creativity and innovative thinking?
- What factors encourage or prevent artists from taking creative risks?
- How does collaboration and critique expand the creative process?
- How does understanding historical and cultural contexts influence design decisions?
- How can artists use design principles to respond to contemporary global issues like climate change?
- How do evolving technologies and digital tools change how we apply the Elements and Principles of Design?

Essential Understandings

- The Elements of Art are organized and structured through the Principles of Design to create meaning and visual impact.
- Artists intentionally or intuitively use the Elements and Principles to communicate ideas and emotions.
- Strong compositions rely on an understanding and application of visual design principles.
- The ability to recognize, analyze, and discuss the Elements and Principles is essential for artistic growth and critique.
- Creativity and innovative thinking develop through practice, reflection, and risk-taking.
- Artists and designers shape artistic investigations by following or breaking design conventions to achieve expressive goals.

Students Will Know

Students will be able to:

- Identify and define the Elements of Art and Principles of Design.
- Apply appropriate visual vocabulary including line, shape, color, form, texture, space, value, balance, contrast, emphasis, rhythm, movement, pattern, and unity.

- Analyze artworks using the Elements and Principles of Design.
- Create compositions that demonstrate intentional use of design principles.
- Explain how visual decisions support meaning in an artwork.
- Evaluate artwork using structured critique methods and rubrics.
- Demonstrate improved control of media through application of design concepts.
- Reflect on personal growth in composition and visual decision-making.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Fine Arts students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Evidence of progression may be demonstrated in divergent ways through the Artistic Process of Creating, Presenting/Producing, Connecting, and Responding.

Tasks will include:

- Experimenting with a wide range of types of balance
- Creating a resource with examples of balance
- Recording and comprehending important art terminologies and techniques associated with current and past units
- Participating in the art making process while applying design criteria and requirements
- Participating in formal and informal assessments
- Answering essential questions and meeting project objectives and deadlines

Learning Plan

- Preview and revisit essential questions throughout the unit to guide inquiry and reflection.
- Teacher-led presentations introducing or reviewing key concepts, supported by visual examples, videos, student work, and art historical references.
- Direct instruction and reinforcement of vocabulary related to Elements and Principles of Design.
- Guided analysis of artworks from diverse time periods and cultures using structured critique methods.
- Review of past student work to identify strengths in composition and design application.

- Teacher demonstrations of media techniques with emphasis on compositional planning.
- Sketchbook practice including thumbnails, composition studies, and design experiments.
- Student brainstorming and planning to explore multiple solutions before final compositions.
- Hands-on artmaking using a variety of media such as drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, and mixed media.
- Ongoing formative feedback through peer critique, teacher conferences, and self-assessment.
- Use of rubrics and structured reflection to evaluate composition and design effectiveness.
- Presentation and display of finished work within the classroom, school, and district spaces.
- A design-thinking project where students must redesign an everyday object or system in response to a contemporary issue (e.g., climate change or community needs), applying their knowledge of form, structure, and balance.

Materials

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Sketchbook, Various Pencils, Sharpies, Markers, Various Papers, Various Erasers, Mirrors, Blending Sticks, Charcoal, Graphite, Sharpeners, Colored Pencils, Oil Pastel, Chalk Pastels, YouTube Videos, Value Scales, magazines, glue, scissors, Watercolor, Watercolor paper, paint brush, ink, printing materials, chromebooks, ipads, Paint, Color Wheels, Drawing Pen, Rulers

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

Fine Arts Accommodations & Modifications