abc art, books, & creativity
arts learning in the classroom

LESSON 7

Sculpture

How do artists use forms and materials to construct meaning?

How do writers use various techniques to construct a text?

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will look at sculpture and explore the materials artists use to create sculptures. They will learn that sculpture is often meant to be viewed from multiple sides and that its forms change depending on the position of the viewer. Students will create a sculpture using paper and found objects.

LENGTH OF LESSON: Two 45-minute periods

KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT VISUAL ARTS AND WRITING

Visual Arts

- Sculpture is a three-dimensional work of art.
- Sculpture often invites the viewer to engage from multiple sides.
- The meaning of a sculpture is constructed or interpreted based on the perspective of the viewer.
- Artists use a wide variety of materials to create sculpture.

Writing

- The meaning of a written text changes depending on the perspective of the writer.
- The meaning of a written text is constructed or interpreted based on the perspective of the reader.
- Writers use a variety of techniques such as traits, format, literary elements, and character development to add dimension to a written text.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students will:

Visual Arts

- Identify sculpture as an artwork that exists in three dimensions
- Create a sculpture that is interesting from multiple sides
- Observe and discuss a variety of sculpture created from different materials

Writing (optional activities)

- Add text to a sculpture
- Rewrite a well-known story from a different perspective
- Given a scenario from the classroom, select a character or object to do a quick write

FOR THE TEACHER

Sculpture is an art form that has three dimensions: height, width, and depth. It is often meant to be viewed from all sides, and its meaning can be constructed and enhanced based on the perspective of the viewer. Sculptures can be created from almost anything—traditional materials, such as stone, wood, clay, and metal; other materials, such as plastic and paper; and found and recycled objects. The materials an artist chooses to create sculpture can help communicate the meaning of the artwork.

Some things to notice when looking at Frida Baranek's *Untitled*:

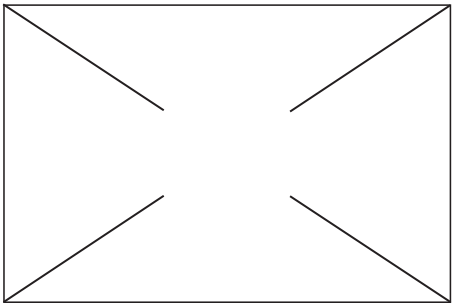
- **Shape and form:** The sculpture's dense central form is a circular mass of rusted iron wire. It is bisected with bent iron rods. The interweaving of wire and rods gives the sculpture a linear quality, almost as if it were drawn in space.
- **Materials:** Although *Untitled* looks like it could have been woven from sticks or grasses and might roll easily, it is actually made of iron wire and rods and weighs approximately 90 pounds. Baranek often uses industrial scrap, such as steel, wire, heavy metal sheets and tubes, and even airplane fuselage, to create delicate, nest-like objects that appear organic.
- **Process:** The sculpture was created using an additive process. Baranek uses heavy tools and foundry equipment to transform industrial waste into sculptures that look light and airy. Her works illustrate the idea that everything, even trash, can have meaning if reused and remade into something else.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Read about Frida Baranek on the ABC website.

SUPPLIES

- Student journals
- 12″ x 18″ construction paper, various colors, 1 sheet per student, pre-cut to look like this:



- Strips of construction paper 1″–2″ wide, cut with paper cutter, various colors
- Tacky glue
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Stapler
- Embellishments such as sticker dots, geometric stickers, feathers, sequins, buttons, etc. (optional)

VOCABULARY

Sculpture is an art form that has three dimensions: height, width, and depth.
Two-dimensional shapes can be measured in only two ways: height and width.
Three-dimensional forms can be measured in three ways: height, width, and depth.
A **shape** is an element of art with two-dimensions of measurement: height and width.
A **form** is an element of art with three dimensions for measurement: height, width, and depth.

Sculpture

An **additive sculpture** is created by constructing, building, or fastening materials together.
A **subtractive sculpture** is created by carving, trimming, or removing material to reveal or render the desired form.
Found objects are things from the world around us—natural or manufactured—that can be used to create a work of art.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN: OBSERVE, CREATE, AND REFLECT

Observe: Quick Write

Before beginning the lesson, show Frida Baranek's *Untitled* to students. Give them a few minutes to respond to the image. Use any of the following prompts:

- What do you think about when you look at this sculpture?
- If this sculpture were alive, where would it live?
- If this sculpture made a noise, what would it sound like?

Introduction

Introduce sculpture to your students. Ask them if they have seen any sculptures before. If so, ask students to describe the sculptures and what it was like to see them. Tell them that sculpture is a **three-dimensional** art form that, unlike a painting or drawing, can be measured in three ways: height, width, and depth. It is often meant to be seen from multiple sides. A sculpture's form changes depending on the position of the viewer. There are two ways to make sculpture: by building or constructing (**additive** sculpture) or by carving or removing (**subtractive** sculpture). Sculptures can be made from almost any material. The materials an artist chooses to create a sculpture can help communicate the meaning of the sculpture.

Observe: Look and Discuss

Ask students to look closely at Baranek's *Untitled* and begin describing and interpreting what they see. Visual Thinking Strategies (vtshome.org) is a highly effective method for facilitating productive conversations about art with your students and introducing new vocabulary in a meaningful way. Following the conclusion of this initial exploration of the work, you may wish to revisit certain concepts in more depth using some of the questions below.

- What do you see? What else do you see or notice about this sculpture?
- What are the main **forms** or **shapes** in this sculpture?
- What materials do you think the artist used to make the sculpture?
- Is it **additive** or **subtractive**? How can you tell?
- If you could touch the sculpture, what do you think it would feel like? What materials do you think were used to make the sculpture? Has the artist used **found objects**? How can you tell?
- What would it look like from another viewpoint, such as from the side or above?
- How big do you think it is? How heavy? Does it look easy to move?
- What do you think about when you look at this sculpture?
- Is this a realistic or abstract sculpture?
- What words would you use to describe this sculpture? What title would you give it?
- How is looking at sculpture different from looking at **two-dimensional** art, like paintings? ⇢

Now give students more information about the sculpture. Tell them that it is made from iron wire the artist salvaged from industrial scrap. It is nearly four-feet tall and more than six-feet deep (43″ x 39″ x 75″) and weighs almost 90 pounds. Ask students:

- Does this information change your interpretation of the sculpture? If so, how?
- What do you think the artist wants to communicate? How do the materials help convey the meaning of the sculpture?
- What do you think it would be like to see this sculpture in person?
- How would the sculpture's meaning change if it were carved from stone, made from a natural material like grass, or created with a new material that the artist bought at a store?
- If you could add words to this sculpture, what words would you add? Where would you place them?
- Would adding words change the meaning of the artwork? How?

Create: Paper Sculpture Hats

- Have students choose a 12″x 18″ piece of pre-cut construction paper. Supply each student with pencil, scissors, and some tacky glue, set out on small paper plates or a square of tagboard; supply each table with a selection of paper strips.
- With the paper on the desk, bend the long sides up towards the center, and cross the triangular tips on one side. Staple to secure. With the hat on the head of the student, cross the triangular tips on the other side, take the hat off, and staple. The hat should have an oval base that goes around the head with two triangular flaps sticking out to each side.
- Download the Paper Folding Techniques worksheet and share it with students. Use strips of construction paper to demonstrate various paper folding and cutting techniques so that students can manipulate and build forms for their sculpture hats. Demonstrate how to glue the strips to their hat bases.
- Finally, have students divide each of the triangular flaps on their hats into five sections by cutting four lines towards the center of the hat (being careful not to cut all the way through, or running into the original cuts). Encourage them to cut different types of lines: zigzag, curvy, and wavy. Once the sections are cut, they can manipulate the strips in any way—curling, accordion folding, and then gluing the strips together up and over the top of the hat to give it height.

Form and Meaning

- Tell students they are now going to add at least ten manipulated strips of paper to their hats, referring to the paper-folding handout or inventing their own techniques of paper manipulation.
- Ask students to think about what they want their sculpture to express: Will it be a formal exploration of line, shape, color, or other elements of art in and of themselves? Will it represent a specific idea, person, or theme? What lines, shapes, and colors would best convey their subject?
- Encourage them to keep in mind that sculptures are meant to be viewed from multiple sides and have three dimensions. How will their hat look from different angles?
- Once the hats are constructed, pass out any embellishments if you are using them. Have students think about adding embellishments to contribute to their design rather than overpowering it.

Reflect

When students have finished their sculpture hats, have everyone model their creations. Give students a few minutes to walk around and look at each other's hats. Then, have pairs of students look closely at each other's sculptures and write down their observations. What do they see? What are the main forms? How does it work from different points of view? What might it be about? Have partners share their ideas with each other and write or sketch any new ideas from this exchange in their journals.

Students may also respond to any of the following prompts:

- What questions do you have about sculpture now that you didn't have before?
- What questions would you like to ask artist Frida Baranek?
- Sculpture is _____.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Visual Arts and Writing

- Ask students to use art vocabulary words to write about someone else's sculpture and/or to describe a sculpture they would like to make.
- Have describe, by writing or drawing, how Frida Baranek's *Untitled* might look from another perspective, such as an ant's or a bird's point of view.
- Ask students to make a sketch of a sculpture they would like to create.

Science

Using Baranek's sculpture as an example, have students create a sculpture using a variety of recyclable "found" items brought from home such as popsicle sticks, twist ties, thread spools, foil, bottle caps, newspapers, candy wrappers, or cereal-box cardboard. Pretend the sculpture is being designed and built as a memorial to an event or a person. How does the student's sculpture show visitors the importance of the person or event?

Mathematics

- Assemble simple plane shapes to construct a sculpture form. Talk about two- and three-dimensional aspects of the parts of the sculpture and the final work. Ask students to look for cubes, spheres, and cylinders in different sculptures. Have them think about balance and proportion and encourage them to use words like perpendicular and parallel, as well as the proper names for geometric shapes. Compare the use of these shapes in art and in math.
- Adding numbers together is a process called addition and taking numbers away from each other, subtraction. An additive sculpture is created by modeling or by fastening materials together. Subtractive sculpture involves removing materials from the sculpture by carving. Promote the use of these words when students discuss how they created a sculptural work.

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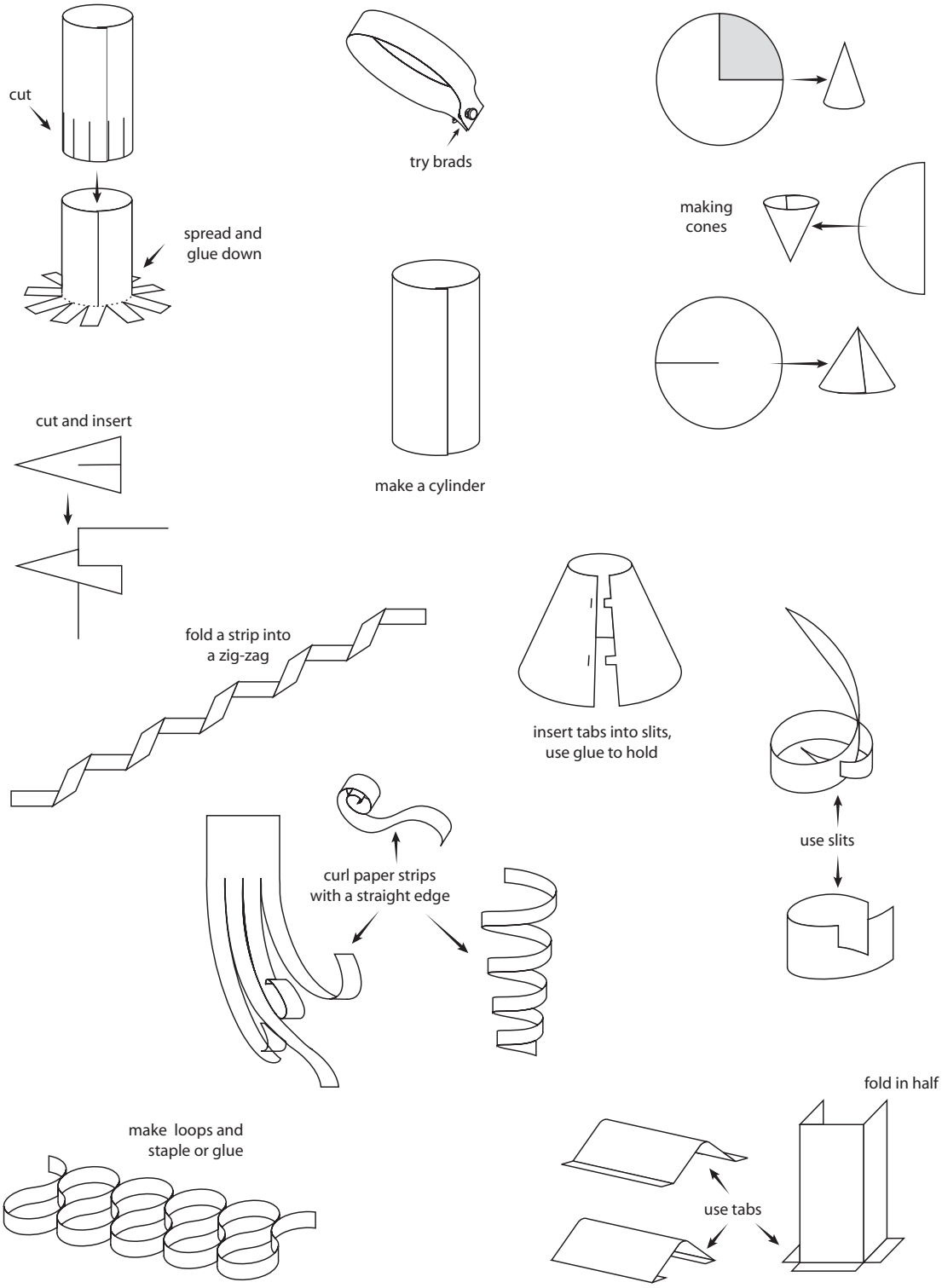
Paper Folding Techniques



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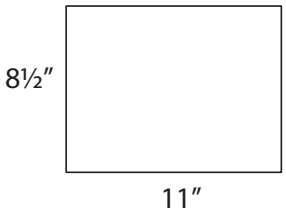
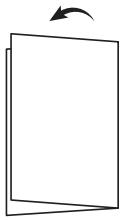
Pop Up

For the paper:

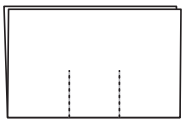
One 8½″ x 11″ sheet of paper



Fold paper in half widthwise.

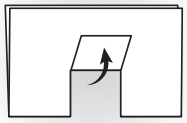


Draw two parallel lines that are the same length (2″ to 3″) towards the folded edge of the paper.

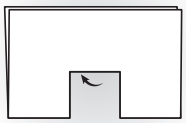


Cut along both lines starting at the folded edge.

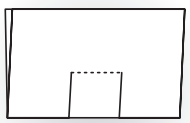
Fold the cut flap towards you, and make a straight crease at the fold.



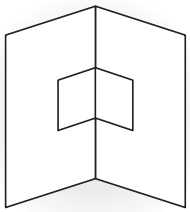
Then fold the flap back, away from you, and press the fold again.



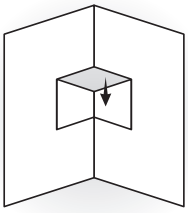
Unfold the flap, putting it in its original position.



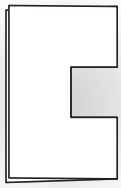
Open the paper like a tent,



and push the flap through to the other side.



Close the paper in half and press the folds.



Open; the box pops up!