



FEELING IS TO MOOD AS PAINTING IS TO PAPER

Subject Matter: Art - Mood and Feeling in Abstract Art

Grade Levels: 4-8 (targets students studying art and/or music)

Time Allotment: Two 60-minute class sessions

Master Teacher: Ken McCoy

Overview

This lesson provides students an introduction to the abstract art movement and terminology, and the opportunity to directly apply their learning in art pieces of their own. Students will explore Web pages displaying abstract art, selecting one on which to write a descriptive paragraph. Students will then paint while viewing clips from the video, “Art Start: Mood Painting” (20:00), to practice the concepts introduced. As a culminating activity, students will paint to music in an effort to evoke a certain mood and translate that mood into art.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify art from the abstract movement.
- Exhibit the use of composition, line, color and painting techniques in their own art.
- Appreciate the use of mood and feeling in art.

Oregon Standards Available at:

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/cifs>

The Arts - Aesthetics and Art Criticism

- Recognize and describe how technical, organizational and aesthetic elements contribute to the ideas, emotions and overall impact communicated by works of art.
- State preferences for works of art and reasons for preferences based on key artistic elements and principles used in producing the art.

The Arts - Historical and Cultural Perspectives

- Describe and explain distinguishing features of works of art and their historical and cultural contexts.

The Arts - Create, Present and Perform

- Create, present and/or perform a work of art, selecting and applying artistic elements and technical skills to achieve desired effect.
- Communicate verbally and in writing about one's own artwork.

Media Components

Video

Check the link at <http://www.opb.org/edmedia/trs/> to find access to the video(s) from unitedstreaming™ referenced in this lesson plan.

- “Art Start: Mood Painting” (20:00)
 - **Clip:** “Mood Painting is Abstract Art: Painting with Feelings” (03:44)
 - **Clip:** “Working with Tempera Paints to Create Texture Effects” (05:50)
 - **Clip:** “A Brief History of Abstract Expressionism” (01:24)
 - **Clip:** “Translating Feelings into Painting: Using Line, Texture, and Color” (07:53)

Web

- **Guggenheim Museum Collection**
An exhaustive collection of works, keyword searchable and complete with directories by artist, title, date, movement, medium and concept.
<http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artists.html>

Materials

Session I:

- 5 to 7 large sheets of paper per student for use in practicing concepts and completing finished pieces
- 1” paint brushes appropriate for use with tempera paints
- Pencil
- Enough tempera paint for the entire class to use, especially red, blue, yellow, white and black
- Paper plates for use as palettes to hold and mix paint
- Large cups of water for cleaning brushes while painting
- Selections of music to evoke different moods and the means to play them loud enough for the entire class to hear
- CD player, audio cassette player or computer to play selections of music
- A computer (or computers) with Internet connectivity, the Windows Media Player installed and downloads of the video clips listed above

Prep for Teachers

Acquire materials and equipment.

Download and preview the video clips, discovering helpful points to highlight for students during discussion and activities.

Acquire the means to play the video clip for the entire class at once (i.e., computer connected to a projector, computer and video converter connected to a TV, etc.). Acquire the free Window's Media Player to view clips.

Bookmark Web sites on each computer to be used. Prepare each computer to be used with the necessary plug-ins for Web sites used (especially the free Flash and Shockwave Players available at <http://www.macromedia.com/>).

When using media, provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction**, a specific task to complete and/or information to identify during or after viewing of video segments, Web sites or other multimedia elements.

Acquire a digital camera to use during student painting and mounting activities.

Introductory Activity

Explain to students that they will use an image from a Web site to do some descriptive writing. Have students acquire a piece of paper and a pencil. Students should follow your normal routine for a writing assignment, completing standard information for a writing piece they plan to turn in (name, date, class, etc.) and be guided by any expectations you may have for them. Have students work independently or with a partner to access the Internet. Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking them to view varied examples of abstract art from the Guggenheim Museum Collection Web site and select one image example about which to write a descriptive paragraph, including the artist, title of work and descriptions of color, movement and composition. In addition, students should include in their paragraph details as to how the piece makes them feel. The writing piece can be immediately turned in or taken home for proofreading, revision and completion.

Learning Activities

Session I

Step 1: Have students prepare to paint by completely clearing their desks and acquiring paint shirts/frocks. (4 minutes)

Step 2: Assign a team of responsible students to pass out materials and supplies. (4 minutes)

Step 3: During Steps 4 and 5, explain to students that the type of art they are viewing is abstract art, popularized in the early to mid 1900s by artists such as Kandinsky, de Kooning, Rauschenberg, Pollock, Klee, Picasso and Mondrian - and that abstract art is still very popular today. While many people appreciate and enjoy abstract art, many others do not. Ask students to discuss some of the reasons why people might like this style of art and why some may not. Responses may include: "It's fun ..." "It's colorful ..." "It's not like other types of art ..." "People don't understand it ..." "It doesn't look like anything ..." "It looks like anyone could do it ..." "It doesn't take any skill or creativity ..." etc. (10 minutes)

Step 4: Give your students a **Focus for Media Interaction** by having students follow along with the instructor in the video clip, "Working with Tempera Paints to Create Texture Effects" (05:50), from the video, "Art Start: Mood Painting" (20:00), in an effort to practice some painting techniques and to listen for the facts she gives and quotes she uses from other artists. **Play** the video clip.

Step 5: Students should put their work from Step 4 aside to dry and prepare a fresh piece of paper. As they do so, ask for responses regarding the facts and quotes the video instructor used, asking questions such as: "What is field painting?" "What did they once add to paint as a binder to make it stick to the canvas?" "What kind of paint are they using in the video?" etc. (3 minutes)

Step 6: Ask students if they've ever played make-believe. Of course, most, if not all, have. Next, ask them if they ever imagine hearing anything when they do. As soon as music is mentioned, capitalize on that response by announcing that students will now paint to different types of music that should allow them to imagine different kinds of mood and feelings, and that they will attempt to creatively translate that mood and feeling into their paintings using the various techniques they learned about in the previous video clip. Students should be encouraged to respond to the music - if the music changes, so should their painting. Announce to students that they will need to begin and complete their paintings before the music is over. (5 minutes)

Step 7: Have students stand at their desks to paint so they can better respond to the music and so that they will have their seat and space under their desks to set paintings aside to dry. During Steps 8-11, take the opportunity to capture student work with a digital camera.

Step 8: On the back of their first sheet, using their pencil, have students write their name and date, and mark the sheet as "Piece #1." Give your students a **Focus for Media Interaction** by

asking them to listen to the first selection of music, responding to it by painting what they hear or the mood they feel. Ask students to wait for your signal before painting. **Play** the first selection of music, allowing for the music to clearly establish its mood. Signal students to begin. Move around the room checking for progress and silently encouraging students in their efforts. When the selection is completed, allow students to set aside their work to dry. (4 minutes)

Step 9: On the back of their second sheet, using their pencil, have students write their name and date, and mark the sheet as “Piece #2.” Give your students a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking them to listen to the next selection of music, responding to it by painting what they hear or the mood they feel. Ask students to wait for your signal before painting. **Play** the selection of music, allowing for the music to clearly establish its mood. Signal students to begin. Move around the room checking for progress and silently encouraging students in their efforts. When the selection is completed, allow students to set aside their work to dry. (4 minutes)

Step 10: On the back of their third sheet, using their pencil, have students write their name and date, and mark the sheet as “Piece #3.” Give your students a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking them to listen to the next selection of music, responding to it by painting what they hear or the mood they feel. Ask students to wait for your signal before painting. **Play** the selection of music, allowing for the music to clearly establish its mood. Signal students to begin. Move around the room checking for progress and silently encouraging students in their efforts. When the selection is completed, allow students to set aside their work to dry. (4 minutes)

Step 11: On the back of their fourth sheet, using their pencil, have students write their name and date, and mark the sheet as “Piece #4.” Give your students a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking them to listen to the final selection of music, responding to it by painting what they hear or the mood they feel. Ask students to wait for your signal before painting. **Play** the selection of music, allowing for the music to clearly establish its mood. Signal students to begin. Move around the room checking for progress and silently encouraging students in their efforts. When the selection is completed, allow students to set aside their work to dry. (4 minutes)

Step 12: Allow student work to dry completely and collect.

Session II

Step 1: Redistribute student work and allow students to view and share their work. (2 minutes)

Step 2: Display, in order, the titles of the musical selections used in the first session. Using a pencil, have students transfer these titles onto the backs of their paintings. (2 minutes)

Step 3: Encourage students to select their favorite piece, based on criteria such as their individual aesthetic taste, intent, feelings, memories, execution of techniques, etc. (2 minutes)

During Steps 4-6, take the opportunity to capture student work with a digital camera.

Step 4: Have students pre-write a descriptive paper specific to their selected piece, detailing their intent, use of color, line, composition and style. Expressed in their writing should be the feelings they experienced and the mood they intended to translate to their paintings. (20 minutes)

Step 5: Have each student pair up with a classmate, each taking turns reading aloud their writing pieces while partners view their artwork. As students read, they should be encouraged to identify errors in structure, grammar and spelling. During the reading, students should make notes of issues they want to address following this sharing opportunity. (10 minutes)

Step 6: Have students rewrite their descriptive pieces, paying attention to the notes they made on their pre-writing during the peer-sharing opportunity. The intention here is that students will have very few mistakes and the piece be written neatly enough to turn in for credit and display. (20 minutes)

Step 7: As students complete their writing pieces, have them carefully paperclip their writing pieces to their artwork and turn in. (1 minute)

Culminating Activity

Students mount their selected painting and writing pieces together on oversized black construction paper for display, first in the classroom for general discussion and later in a common school area. During this session, digital photos of students working and close-ups of selected paintings should be taken for newsletter and/or Web site efforts. As students work, display other pieces from the Guggenheim Web site, allowing students to discuss. Encourage students to use terms they learned from the lesson and to speak in terms of feeling and mood, possibly mentioning pieces of music of which the work reminds them. Following display of student work, laminate the mounted pieces back to back and bind (possibly using a series of “O” rings or large comb binding), creating a class book. Using student writing and digital pictures, a Web site of the student efforts can easily be created.

Cross-Curricular Extensions

Language Arts

- Students can create a critical guide to abstract art, defining its role in the art movement, informing others how best to view abstract art and promoting local galleries or museums that have abstract collections.
- Students can pick an artist of the abstract art movement and write a research paper on their life and art.

History and Social Studies

- Students may find it interesting to compare and contrast abstract art of different time periods, different cultures and different artists.

Community Connections

- Invite a local artist who paints in the abstract art style to speak to the class about their art.
- Invite a local gallery owner to speak to the class about both the popularity and negative opinions of abstract art and artists.
- Follow the online auction of a piece of abstract art using eBay (<http://www.ebay.com/>) or Sotheby's Auction House (<http://search.sothebys.com/liveauctions/>).