



COLOUR AROUND THE WORLD – Cultural Symbolism, Design

Students research cultural meanings of primary and secondary colours, create a list of descriptive words for the colours, and create small, abstract designs to demonstrate a meaning for each colour.

Required Time
180 Minutes

Grade Level
Grade 4 to Grade 9

Subject
Language Arts
Social Studies
Visual Arts

Vocabulary
abstract art
cultural symbol
primary colours
secondary colours

Materials

Crayola Crayons - 96 Count
Crayola Construction Paper
Crayola Marker & Watercolour Paper - 11 cm x 11 cm (4.5" x 4.5") - 6 pieces per student
Crayola Glue Sticks
Crayola Fine Line Markers
Pencils

Shop Crayola
Products

Steps

Step One

1. RED has many different meanings depending on what part of the world you are in, for example,
 - the Western world – passion, drama, bravery
 - around the world – good luck, prosperity, purity, death
2. Create a design to represent one of these meanings.
 - use a small piece of white paper 11 cm x 11 cm
 - use lots of different shades of red
 - use only reds in your design, or reds as well as white and/or black
3. Use a larger piece of red construction paper 13 cm x 13 cm to mat your artwork.
4. Glue your design to the larger paper.
5. Use a fine line, black marker to write words on the red paper that describe different shades of red, and cultural meanings of red, framing your design on all 4 sides.



Step Two

1. BLUE has different meanings depending on what part of the world you are in, for example,
 - the Western world – truth, peace, stability, sadness
 - the Eastern world – joy, good luck, celebration
2. Create a design to represent one of these meanings.
 - use a small piece of white paper 11 cm x 11 cm
 - use lots of different shades of blue
 - use only blues in your design, or blues as well as white and/or black
3. Use a larger piece of blue construction paper 13 cm x 13 cm to mat your artwork.
4. Glue your design to the larger paper.
5. Use a fine line, black marker to write words on the blue paper that describe different shades of blue, and cultural meanings of blue, framing your design on all 4 sides.



Step Three

1. YELLOW has different meanings depending on what part of the world you are in, for example,
 - the Western world – happiness, imagination, creativity
 - the Eastern world – wisdom, glory, royalty
2. Create a design to represent one of these meanings.
 - use a small piece of white paper 11 cm x 11 cm
 - use lots of different shades of yellow
 - use only yellows in your design, or yellows as well as white and/or black
3. Use a larger piece of yellow construction paper 13 cm x 13 cm to mat your artwork.
4. Glue your design to the larger paper.
5. Use a fine line, black marker to write words on the yellow paper that describe different shades of yellow, and cultural meanings of yellow, framing your design on all 4 sides.



Step Four

1. ORANGE has different meanings depending on what part of the world you are in, for example,
 - the Western world – happiness, creativity, aggression
 - the Eastern world – love, happiness, good health
2. Create a design to represent one of these meanings.
 - use a small piece of white paper 11 cm x 11 cm
 - use lots of different shades of orange
 - use only oranges in your design, or oranges as well as white and/or black
3. Use a larger piece of orange construction paper 13 cm x 13 cm to mat your artwork.
4. Glue your design to the larger paper.
5. Use a fine line, black marker to write words on the orange paper that describe different shades of orange, and cultural meanings of orange, framing your design on all 4 sides.



Step Five

1. GREEN has different meanings depending on what part of the world you are in, for example,
 - the Western world – wisdom, trust, loyalty
 - the Eastern world – youth, new growth, sickness, deceit
2. Create a design to represent one of these meanings.
 - use a small piece of white paper 11 cm x 11 cm
 - use lots of different shades of green
 - use only greens in your design, or greens as well as white and/or black
3. Use a larger piece of green construction paper 13 cm x 13 cm to mat your artwork.
4. Glue your design to the larger paper.
5. Use a fine line, black marker to write words on the construction paper that describe different shades of green, and cultural meanings of green, framing your design on all 4 sides.



Step Six

1. PURPLE has different meanings depending on what part of the world you are in, for example,
 - the Western world – power, faith, nobility
 - Brazil and Thailand – death, mourning
2. Create a design to represent one of these meanings.
 - use a small piece of white paper 11 cm x 11 cm
 - use lots of different shades of purple
 - use only purples in your design, or purples as well as white and/or black
3. Use a larger piece of purple construction paper 13 cm x 13 cm to mat your artwork.
4. Glue your design to the larger paper.
5. Use a fine line, black marker to write words on the purple paper that describe different shades of purple, and cultural meanings of purple, framing your design on all 4 sides.



Step Seven

1. Glue or tape all 6 designs to a larger piece of paper. Try different arrangements before fastening them to the paper, for example,
 - *beside each other in a long, horizontal row of 6*
 - *in two rows of 3*
 - *in three rows of 2*
 - *beneath each other in a long, vertical row of 6*



Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- create a list of descriptive words for the primary and secondary colours;
- research cultural meanings of primary and secondary colours;
- create small, abstract designs that demonstrate a cultural meaning for each of the primary and secondary colours;
- demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity;
- support their ideas with evidence found in the works.

Extensions

Have students:

- do further research for colours black, grey, white and brown;
- create a digital survey to discover the favourite colours among their peers, and graph the results;
- analyse the use of specific colours in clothing, videos and book illustrations;
- write colour haiku poetry and create a class book of poems.

Prepare

1. Prior to this lesson you may want to have your students do the **Lines Worksheet** available on this website. (Downloads - LinesWorksheet.pdf)
- Or have them do the **Lines! Lines! Lines!** lesson available on this website.
2. Pre-cut the drawing paper into squares 11 cm x 11 cm (4.5" x 4.5") - enough for each student to have 6 pieces.
3. Pre-cut the primary and secondary colours of construction paper into squares 13 cm x 13 cm (5" x 5") - enough for each student to have 1 piece of each colour.
4. Download and display the Line and Colour **posters** available on this website.
5. Read and add to the summary list - *Colour Around The World* - (Downloads - CulturalColour.pdf)
6. Provide time for students to research cultural meanings for each of the primary and secondary colours.
7. Create a chart of descriptive names for each of the primary and secondary colours. Encourage students to keep adding to the list of names over several weeks.
8. Gather and sort a variety of paint chips to add to the descriptive names chart.
9. Gather, and make available, books about colour and cultures, for example, *Whoever You Are*, by Mem Fox, and Leslie Staub; *All the Colors of the Earth*, by Sheila Hamanaka; *Color - Messages & Meanings: A PANTONE Color Resource*, by Leatrice Eiseman; and *Secret Language of Color: Science, Nature, History, Culture, Beauty of Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, & Violet*, by Joann Eckstut, and Arielle Eckstut.
10. Download the image of the abstract painting, *Sounds Assembling*, 1928, by Canadian artist **Bertram Brooker** from the Internet.

Introduction

1. Ask students to share their favourite colours and what they found out about their various meanings.
2. Discuss how culture influences the meaning of colours and why it is important to know this information.
3. View and discuss *Sounds Assembling*, by **Bertram Brooker**. Ask students:
 - *What do you think is happening here?*
 - *What do you see that makes you say that?*
 - *What do you notice about Brooker's use of colour, shape and line?*
 - *How do the lines, shapes and colours contribute to the meaning of the painting?*
4. Identify the style of the painting - *abstract*, and discuss how the style is able to communicate a message. Talk about how and why different people might get different messages from the painting.
5. Introduce the challenge.

Activities

The Challenge

1. Create a list of descriptive words for the primary and secondary colours.
2. Research cultural meanings of primary and secondary colours.
3. Create small, abstract designs that demonstrate a cultural meaning for each of the primary and secondary colours.
4. Demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.
5. Support your ideas with evidence found in the works.

The Process

1. Make sure everyone understands the challenge.
2. Establish success criteria with your students, for example, I know I am successful when:
 - *each design includes cultural meanings for the colour*

- each design includes descriptive words for the colour
 - each design uses various shades of a specific colour
 - each design is created in the abstract style
 - each design is carefully glued to matching construction paper
 - lettering is easy to read
 - all 6 designs are carefully glued to one larger piece of paper
 - paper is in good condition
3. Encourage students to think about how they can use colours, lines and shapes to communicate a specific meaning for their colour.
 4. Guide students through the steps outlined in this lesson plan.
 5. Observe students as they work.
 6. Provide individual assistance and encouragement.

Sharing

1. When all the designs are complete ask students to take turns sharing their work in small groups. Have students first tell what they think an individual design is communicating. Remind them to support their ideas with evidence found in the work. Ask them, *"What do you see that makes you say that?"*
2. Once students have said what they think, have the artist say what he/she intended.
3. During the discussion include references to:
 - *contrast - How has the use of different shades of a colour created contrast? How does this help to communicate the intended meaning?*
 - *line and shape - How have specific lines and shapes created a feeling or idea?*
 - *creativity - How does the design reflect the uniqueness of the artist?*
4. When all the groups have finished sharing, have students do a walk about to view all the designs in the class.
5. Ask a few volunteers to share what they learned.
6. Display the designs in the classroom for several weeks.

Assessment

1. Observe students as they work - thoughtful focus, discriminating, seeking more information, elaborating, experimenting.
2. Observe students as they discuss their designs - speaks with a clear voice, looks at audience while speaking, holds artwork to the side, provides accurate information, answers questions from the audience effectively.
3. Observe students as they listen - looks at presenter, asks effective questions, supports ideas with evidence found in the artwork.
4. Use a checklist to track progress. (Downloads - Colour_tracking.pdf)
5. Have students use the self-assessment form to evaluate their work. (Downloads - Colour_self-assessment.pdf)