

Introductory Information:

- **Lesson Title:** Robert Indiana Letters of Life, Love & Laughter: A 4th Grade Lesson on Public Art in the Community and Positive & Negative Space
- **Grade level and class size:** 4th Grade, 25-27 students per class.
- **Length of class period:** 45-minute class periods, 6 class meetings
- **Lesson topic & description:** This lesson integrates previous art lessons about how art communicates a message and builds upon the student's knowledge of the elements & principles of design. This lesson integrates two block-letter making activities: the first is an exercise focusing specifically on the creation of block letters in 2-D, and the second activity is the final project, inspired by the artwork of Robert Indiana. This lesson presents a challenge to students, dealing with positive & negative space, while integrating the students' knowledge about shape, color, and texture. The first day of this lesson starts with a smart-board presentation introducing the artwork of Robert Indiana. Students will learn about how art can



express a message and the role of public art within a community space by viewing images of Robert Indiana's artwork in the smart-board presentation. Students use a pencil & paper, and then must apply their understanding of positive & negative space, in order to create a word of their choice in boxed-style letters (ex: their name or a minimum of 5 letters) similar to the style of Robert Indiana. This is done through students watching a teacher demonstration about how to draw box letters. Each student will also have an alphabet hand-out of boxed letters written on paper to use as a reference. Students will then be challenged to apply their knowledge of positive & negative space (from their 2-D sketches) to be used within the creation of their final project, a 3-D papier-mâché letter. Students will create a final piece of artwork similar to the style of Robert Indiana's letters artwork. The students will be able to convey what they learned through their final project, which will consist of an alphabet letter of their choice, covered in papier-mâché, and then painted and decorated with a variety of textures. Additionally, students will be able to identify artworks found in everyday life (such as advertisements) & artists, (such as Robert Indiana), who use art as a means for communicating a message to the surrounding community.



STAGE 1- DESIRED RESULTS

Stage 1. A: Enduring Understanding(s):

The students will understand that...

- Art can communicate a message.
- Communication is important to human life.
- Public art can communicate messages that make a difference in the surrounding community.



Stage 1. B: Essential Questions

- What counts as communication?
- How does art communicate a message?
- How do we describe art and the materials we use to make art?

Stage 1. C: Goals and Standards

- 1.1: Methods, Materials & Techniques. Use a variety of materials & media.
- 1.2: Create artworks in a variety of 2D & 3D media.
- 2.13: Elements & Principles of Design. *mass and volume as functions of color, size, perspective, negative space; visual and surface textures.*
- 2.4: Elements & Principles of Design. Explore the use of shapes & forms in 2D & 3D works. Identify simple shapes in artwork.
- 5.3: Critical Response. Describe similarities & differences in works.

The word "LOVE" is written in a large, bold, red, sans-serif font. The letters are thick and have a slightly irregular, hand-drawn appearance. The word is centered in the upper half of the image.

Robert Indiana born September 13, 1928 is an American art associated with the American Pop Art movement. Indiana uses distinctive imagery drawing on commercial art approaches blended with existentialism that gradually moved towards what Indiana calls 'structural poems'. Indiana's work often consists of bold, simple, iconic images, especially numbers and short words like "EAT", "HUG", and "LOVE". Arguably, his most important work is the famous 'LOVE' sculpture outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Stage 1. D: Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to define positive & negative space.
- Students will be able to identify the positive & negative space in both 2-D & 3-D artwork.
- Students will be able to identify the artwork of letters created by artist Robert Indiana.
- Students can apply their knowledge of positive & negative space to create their own work of art (a 3-D letter made out of cereal boxes & papier-mâché).

STAGE 2- ASSESMENT EVIDENCE

Stage 2. A: Performance Tasks as Evidence (Art Product)

- The fourth graders will create a sketch of their letter on paper, and then will transform their letter into a 3-D formation as their final piece of artwork. Their final piece of artwork will be the benchmark product and is the Robert Indiana-inspired 3-D papier-mâché letter, made up of cereal boxes covered with papier-mâché, paint, and pieces of textured material that match the painted color of the box letter.
- Students will be able to identify and choose simple shapes as positive & negative spaces, in order to create artwork.
- Students will be able to name the Artist, Robert Indiana, as being the inspiration behind their artwork created during art class.
- Students will be able to identify the similarities (alphabet letters) and differences (3-D letters versus 2-D letters) in the images of Robert Indiana’s artwork, during a smart-board presentation.
- Benchmark product will be a papier-mâché covered cereal box, cut into the shape of a letter of the English alphabet, painted with one color of acrylic paint, and consisting of at least five varying textures glued on top of the letter as decoration.



Stage 2. B: Other Evidence / Continuum of Assessment Strategies

- **Informal Checks:** Throughout the art lesson, the teacher will rotate through the classroom, helping students to make sure they continue to follow directions, and asking them to identify what parts of their art project consist of the negative and positive space. At the end of the art lesson, the teacher will ask students a review question about the art lesson or will ask students to identify the negative space within a letter drawn on the board, and the student’s answer be their “ticket” to go line up at the door, before leaving the classroom.
- **Observing:** Teacher watches students follow directions during the process of creation, as they use a variety of materials & media (papier-mâché, paint, textured materials), during the creation of their block letter artworks; offering assistance when needed.
- **Dialogue:** Teacher facilitates opening discussion about art communicating messages during a smart-board presentation on the first day. Students will view various artworks by Robert Indiana and will be able to identify what language is being used within the artwork (i.e.: Hebrew, English, Italian) and where the positive & negative space is located.

Stage 2. C: Criteria

- Participation in smart-board activities
- Classroom interaction during the art-creation process
- Attention to teacher's directions during the clean-up process
- Review question at the end of the art lesson (ie: students' "ticket" to leave)
- Final Products
 - Fully covered 3-D boxed letter, painted a single color of tempera paint, with five varying textures attached to the final surface of the letter. The textures must match the color of the letter's painted surface.
 - A 2-D sketch of their boxed letter, created on the first day, and required in order to start their papier-mâché.



STAGE 3- LEARNING PLAN

Stage 3. A: Materials and Equipment

White drawing paper (for 2-D sketch of letter), black markers, pencils, strips of newspaper, Watered-down glue mixture, paper-mache, bowls for paper mache mixture, scissors, masking tape, fadeless paper (to cover tables), tempera paint, textures & decorations



Stage 3. B: Vocabulary

...Positive space, negative space, public art, collaborative art, pop art, shape, color, art materials, paper mache, texture, communication, messages

Paper Mache: Process by which newspaper is formed into a sculptural object using special hardening glue.

Stage 3. C: Visual Image Resources



Robert Indiana Letters & Message Images (see above), photos of public art, smart-board presentation about Robert Indiana's artwork

Stage 3. D: Text, media and web resources:

- MASS DOE curriculum frameworks
- Google image searches: <http://www.google.com/images?q=robert+indiana&oe=utf-8&rls=org>
- Wikipedia article: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Indiana
- Artcyclopedia website: http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/indiana_robert.html

Stage 3. E: Learning Activities & Instruction:

DAY 1:

- Teacher will introduce the lesson through a smart-board presentation about Robert Indiana.
- Teacher will ask students what the meaning of “positive & negative space” is.
- Students will view both 2-D & 3-D images of Robert Indiana’s artwork and discuss public art.
- Teacher will ask the students to describe how to create letters from boxes.
- Teacher will show images of Robert Indiana’s artwork and public art places & environments where his work is exhibited.
- Teacher will ask students to guess what language is being used in the artwork of letters.
- Students will create a sketch of their name or a 4-lettered word from using box-shapes.
- Teacher will ask students review questions about positive & negative space and/or Robert Indiana at the end of class.
- Students will provide an answer about positive & negative space and/or Robert Indiana in exchange for their “ticket” to line-up at door.



DAY 2:

- Teacher will review the lesson about Robert Indiana’s artwork from the class before, by asking students if they remember what the words “positive & negative space” means.
- Students will identify the negative space in letters drawn on the board, as an exercise at the beginning of class, to refresh everyone’s memory & to show what they learned.
- Teacher will ask the students to choose a particular letter they want to create into a 3-D form, in the style of Robert Indiana’s work.
- Teacher will pass a hand-out to students that they may use as a guide to determine what the negative space of their letter will be when they cut out their cereal box.
- Students will describe what “positive & negative space” means.
- Students will identify similarities and differences within Robert Indiana’s 2-D & 3-D artwork.
- Teacher will demonstrate the art creation process that the students will partake in: “1st: select which letter you will work on, 2nd: trace your cereal box on your paper, 3rd: begin drawing the negative space within your box’s perimeter in order to create your chosen letter of the alphabet, 4th: Cut out & glue your 2-D letter onto your cereal box, 5th: cut out the negative space of your *now* 3-D letter on your cereal box.

DAY 3:

- Teacher will demonstrate how students will use paper mache (newspaper strips & glue mixture) to cover their cereal boxes on all sides in order to create a hardened outer shell of their 3-D letter.
- Students will dip strips of newspaper into paper mache glue mixture and lay on their cereal box surface in order to create 3-D forms of their letter.
- Students will clean up as directed by the teacher.



DAY 4:

- Teacher will remind students that their goal is to cover the entire outside of the cereal box with paper mache.
- Teacher will review what occurred in the previous class, and go over important terminology & vocabulary words.
- Students will dip strips of newspaper into paper mache glue mixture and lay on their cereal box surface in order to create 3-D forms of their letter. Students will complete & fully cover all sides of their letter with paper mache on this day.
- Students will clean up as directed by the teacher.

DAY 5:

- Students will listen to the teacher's instructions, watch the teacher demonstration, and then return to their chairs.
- Students will follow teacher's instructions, by using a paintbrush & tempera paint to cover their entire paper mached letter with the color of their choice. Students will paint the negative space of their 3-D letter the complimentary color of the positive space that they selected for painting the entire outside of the letter.
- Students will add textures and decorations with glue to the surface of their 3-D letter form, the decorations must match the color they chose to paint the positive space of their letter with.
- Teacher will ask review questions at the end of the class to test students' knowledge about new terminology & vocabulary learned, as well as to assess whether students remember who Robert Indiana is and why his artwork of letters is important.
- Students will answer teacher questions in order to receive their "ticket" to line up at the door at end of class.

