

THE CLASSROOM TEACHER AS

ART COACH

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Universal Publishers/uPUBLISH.com

USA • 2005

ISBN: 1-58112-621-3

www.Universal-Publisher.com

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Preface

When children bang away on piano keys or experiment with musical instruments they have a musical experience. But not every arrangement of sounds they make is music. Learning to put sounds together in ways that do make music requires not just an experience but also structure, instruction and practice.

Children have many experiences with art projects and materials. But if they are to do more than “make noise,” they need instruction. Any teacher, even one with no experience in art, can acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to provide instruction.

The intent of this book is to:

1. identify the components of a good art unit;
2. present and explain items of information about each of the principles and elements of art;
3. identify grade levels at which children easily understand the “things to know;”
4. identify media particularly suited for working with individual principles and elements of art;
5. identify artists and styles appropriate for study with a particular medium, principle or element;
6. present ways of assembling art lessons;
7. present criteria for guiding art production and evaluation;
8. present a rubric for evaluating the artwork according to each criterion;
9. help the teacher become an art coach; and
10. present a strategy for teaching children to draw.

Please take time to read the whole book rather than merely look for activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I recognize all the students who attended St. Paul Lutheran School during my years of teaching for their hard work, cooperation, and beautiful art. Many thanks to those who agreed to let me use their work. And apologies to many more whose excellent work was not used.

CHAPTER ONE

COMPONENTS OF A GOOD ART LESSON

Many good programs and materials are available to help teachers provide students with an excellent art education. Many of the programs include elements of Discipline-Based Art Education, or DBAE, an approach first presented in 1987, in the *Journal of Aesthetics Education*, which added two disciplines to the traditional disciplines of art history and studio production. It added art criticism, involved with the meaning of art, and aesthetics, which deals with the nature of art and such questions as “What is art?”, “What makes it good?”

Even with the excellent materials, unless the teacher knows something about art, she may do little more than provide students with an art experience. What teachers need to know includes information on the elements and principles of art and how to put them together with other components to make a good lesson. Information on the components of a good art lesson are presented first. Information on the elements and principles is given in chapters three and four.

COMPONENTS OF A GOOD ART LESSON	
Vocabulary	Aesthetics
Elements and Principles	Creative Thinking and Problem Solving
Media and Techniques	Stimulus and Visual Aids
History and Criticism	Evaluation and Criteria
Theme or Subject Matter	Display

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary words are listed in each section on the elements and principles of art as well as in the glossary. Select appropriate words from one or more of the following areas:

- Elements and principles of art
- Art styles or movements
- Techniques
- Tools, materials and media

To help students learn words and their meanings, review orally during set up and/or clean up; use the words frequently during each class period; and give words and definitions to the students in writing.

ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF ART

The elements of art are basic to art just as numbers are basic to math and words to writing. They are manipulated in different ways to achieve different effects. The principles of art are guidelines governing pleasing or meaningful arrangements of the elements, similar to the rules governing pleasing combinations of musical notes and words. Some children discover how to use the elements and principles on their own at an early age, but all children can learn to observe and interpret what they see in attractive and meaningful ways.

THE ELEMENTS OF ART

The number and nature of the elements of art varies slightly from one design book to another. The following list is adequate for elementary students: **LINE, VALUE, SHAPE and FORM, COLOR, SPACE**. Each element is explained briefly below and in more detail in later chapters. Although each has varying levels of complexity, generally they become harder in the following order.

■ **Line** is basic to scribbling, the earliest marks a child makes. Very young children make lines with wonderful variations such as thick/thin, light/dark, straight/jagged/curved, and fuzzy/sharp. It comes naturally, at least until students learn to use a consistent line for handwriting. After learning good penmanship, students often need prompting to draw with varied line quality and must be encouraged to leave “searching” lines as part of the drawing.

■ **Value** involves the range from light to dark, white to black. Distributing a variety of values in different amount, in different parts of the page builds what is called a value structure and helps create unity in the picture. Value also helps create a center of interest because attention is attracted to areas of extreme contrast, where darkest meets lightest.

■ **Shape** can be frustrating for students because they want their drawings to “look right” but can’t remember enough details. Drawing from observation using photos or real objects provides the necessary information and helps students develop visual memory. But students also need to learn a strategy for observing and deciphering what they see. The strategy involves searching for relationships of size, shape, and position. With practice, students as well as teachers can learn to identify which of the three relationships is involved in order to avoid or correct inaccuracies. However, “mistakes” often make images very charming and not all should be “fixed”. Focusing on the principles of art while learning to draw helps students create attractive pictures so they fret less about images “looking right”.

Form is three-dimensional shape. Students of all ages can render forms in sculptural media. But most students below fifth grade are not ready to apply shading and foreshortening to represent form on paper.

■ **Color** excites children and many have an innate and beautiful way of using it. Unfortunately, students of all ages often ruin beautiful drawings when applying color. This happens because color has three properties: temperature (warm, cool), value (light, dark), and intensity (bright, dull). Dealing simultaneously with all three in order to create unity, balance, and emphasis is difficult. Students of all ages can learn to: balance value, temperature and intensity; repeat one color most often to create unity, create variations of the main colors; use one color least often for emphasis; and repeat colors in different amounts, in different parts of the page.

■ **Space** concerns are the most difficult because they involve rules for showing things “in front and behind” and “near and far; linear perspective; foreshortening; scale and modeling. The first things students need to learn about space include in front and behind, near and far, overlapping and foreshortening. All can be observed and used correctly with little more than instruction to compare size, shape and position.

Almost every 2-D project involves all the elements of art. However, it is necessary to focus on only one or two at a time, based on the following considerations:

■ **age, prior knowledge and experience** – Students with more knowledge and experience are capable of dealing with more criteria, and more difficult criteria. Older students without prior knowledge or experience should be instructed at the fourth grade level.

- **relevance to the media** – For example, using only black and white eliminates color criteria.
- **a plan to cover all age-appropriate information each school year, and**
- **relevance to the theme or subject matter** – For example, suppose the subject is Columbus Day. Students in grade five draw and paint the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria. Since drawing involves line and shape, emphasize line quality and drawing accurately by comparing size, shape and position. Placing the ships in the ocean involves space, namely showing things “near and far”. Students draw one of the ships up close and the others farther away by making the closer boat larger, more detailed, and lower on the page. The farther boats appear smaller, less detailed and closer to the horizon. When painting, don’t use the criteria for line quality because the line gets covered up. Instead, use color criteria: balance warm and cool colors, balance light and dark colors, and perhaps choose colors to show weather conditions.

PRINCIPLES OF ART – COMPOSITION

The principles of art include balance, emphasis, unity, variety, rhythm and movement. They involve how the elements of art are composed to create attractive or meaningful pictures. Even simple and poorly drawn images look charming in well composed pictures. But it isn’t enough to tell students to create balance, emphasis, unity, variety, rhythm or movement. They must be instructed *how* to do it.

Detailed explanations of how to do it are given in Chapter Four. The few steps listed here are most important to a good composition. Every student, even first graders, can do these things. With practice using them effectively and creatively becomes second nature, but at first applying them takes conscious effort.

- **Repeat** things in different amounts in different parts of the page and change them a little so they are not boring. (This automatically helps create balance, unity and rhythm. When something in a picture “sticks out” repeating it camouflages it.)
- **Don’t put one big thing in the middle of the page.**
- **Don’t divide the page in half** horizontally, diagonally or vertically.
- **Don’t start and stop at the same level.** (Avoid stacking or lining up objects. Stagger them.)
- **Overlap.** (Show “in front” and “behind”.)
- **Let some things go off the edge of the page.**

Although these guidelines usually help create pleasing pictures, sometimes making every student apply them ruins work that is special *because* it doesn’t follow the “rules.” Breaking the rules may also be necessary to convey an idea. For example, it usually isn’t good to put one big thing in the middle of the page and surround it with little things. But putting a huge portrait in the center and surrounding it with little people might help indicate megalomania or a powerful, controlling personality.

TEACHING ABOUT THE PRINCIPLES AND ELEMENTS

Several activities are involved in teaching about the principles and elements.

Introduction – Introduce the information through one or more of the following activities:

- List the information or read it to students.
- Look at master art work and discuss use of the information in the work.
- Discuss use of the information in example work. Prepare at least two examples in which the information was *not* used and at least two in which the information was used. Ask students which picture they like better. Ask what they might do to the others to make them better. This is called a critique. Students must learn to perform self-critiques as they work.
- Use visual aids and other stimuli related to the information.
- Allow students to experiment in a practice activity before beginning the project.

Setting criteria – Set criteria for individual principles and elements to inform students how their work will be evaluated, help them develop a strategy for proceeding with their work, and give them hope of being successful.

Coaching students as they work – Help students determine whether or not their work meets the criteria. Make suggestions appropriate to each student’s ability and style and allow students to coach each other.

Follow up – Critique the work. Display work that meets the criteria. Display the criteria as well.

PRINCIPLES OF ART AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

This book is not about art therapy but a word is necessary here. Criteria that encourage children to draw large, use overlapping, refrain from stacking and let some things go off the edge of the page help them produce attractive art. But some children, because of social or psychological problems, just can't do one or more of those things. They use art to work through emotional problems, and, in spite of coaching, often produce poor work or work unrelated to the assignment. In such circumstances, befriend them, find something about their work to compliment, continue to coach and encourage them, accept their best efforts, and, if necessary, set individual criteria for grading their work. As students work through their personal problems and develop confidence and a sense of security their art begins to improve and address the criteria.

Don't be tempted to take on the role of art therapist without proper training. However, don't overlook disturbing or questionable imagery. Consult the school counselor, especially when the imagery is pervasive and/or violent.

MEDIA AND TECHNIQUES

Media are materials used to make art, such as crayon, pencil, charcoal, watercolor and tempera paint. Many media are suitable for use in the elementary art class. Each can be used in a variety of ways with a variety of tools, on a variety of surfaces, and in almost unlimited combinations with other media. Selection of media and materials is based the following considerations.

■ **Budget**

Obviously, an art program of high quality includes a broad range of materials, some of which require specialized tools and equipment, such as brayers for printmaking and a kiln for firing clay. The more limited the budget, the more need to rely on less expensive and readily available materials and on media that require few or no specialized tools.

Since budget constraints often limit the quality and quantity of supplies, many art teachers rely on fund raising projects for tools and materials they otherwise couldn't afford. One particularly appropriate project involves reproducing student art work on calendars, mugs and the like. Companies promoting such projects can be found on the Internet.

■ **Time**

Some media require more class time for distribution and clean up but when they cover faster and help complete the project sooner, they might be preferred.

■ **Desire for Variety**

Teachers fear students will complain of boredom when using the same materials repeatedly. Complaints of boredom usually stem from insecurity and can be solved by coaching, time and practice. When students learn to get the effects they want they feel successful. They seldom become bored with feeling successful.

■ **Unfamiliarity with the medium and techniques.**

The teacher becomes familiar with process as well as characteristics and pitfalls of materials by making examples for students. But sometimes, in the absence of hazards and potential dangers, using an untried process helps students practice the trial and error approach so important to development of skills in creative thinking and problem solving. When given the choice of doing an untried project or not doing it, students usually prefer to work through the process together, sharing discoveries, frustrations, and solutions.

Except for sophisticated or hazardous materials and tools, the media and techniques of art are much the same at every grade level, many of the skills and much of the knowledge are the same, and projects can be repeated with only slight variation. However, as students advance in age, they are expected to do the following:

- Try new ways of manipulating media.
- Develop skills in use of media.
- Use more information about the principles and elements of art and use it more creatively.

- Work and make artistic decisions and choices with less teacher guidance.
- Let their work reflect influence from other artists.
- Manipulate the principles and elements to create or enhance meaning in their work.
- Develop personal styles.
- Develop skills in critical analysis.

Supplies

Many supplies for art are common things, including, old newspapers and magazines, string, buttons, shells, objects for still life arrangements, and styrofoam egg cartons. Supplies purchased through catalogs usually are ordered for the entire school year even before schools starts. Ordering efficiently depends on knowing:

- the approximate number of students, and
- specifically which projects will be done.

This makes it necessary to plan art lessons for the year before ordering. If time is insufficient to plan adequately, at least order supplies for drawing and painting. It can take weeks for orders to be filled, especially at the beginning of the school year.

Listed below are supplies used in one year for approximately 150 students, in grades one through eight, meeting twice a week, doing the following types of projects: many drawing activities, crayon etching, rubbings, printmaking with styrofoam, tempera painting, pots and sculpture in clay, soap carving, watercolor, and a few cut paper activities. Older students also carved plaster, painted with acrylics, and printed with linoleum.

Drawing Supplies and Paper

ITEM	QUANTITY
copy paper for drawing	8 –10 reams
white sulphite drawing paper, 9"x12", for watercolor and small tempera paintings	5 reams
white oak tag, or thin railroad board, 9"x12", pkg 50 (or old file folders)	3 pkgs
ebony pencils Regular #2 pencils are fine for students in grades 1 – 5. Softer pencils like the ebony become important in value studies done by older students.	1+ /student
white chalk	2 boxes of 12
quart India Ink and little bottles for each student. Purchase pens and nibs for drawing with ink or use bamboo skewers. Skewers last longer when rinsed after use. If ink dries in the bamboo, the skewer loses absorbency and no longer works.	1
pink pearl erasers (Cut them in half. Keep track of them because they disappear fast.)	1/ student
kneaded erasers – useful for charcoal or pastel but not a necessity	1/ student
black water soluble markers to use with watercolor techniques. Purchase more for replacements when tips become dry or damaged.	1.5 /student
fine tipped colored markers, the largest and cheapest sets available	6 pkgs
chalk pastels	1/2 box/student
oil pastels	1/2 box/student
crayons – Collect old crayons and you may not need to buy any.	

About Paper

Soft paper includes construction paper and some cheap drawing papers. They are not good for drawing because they don't hold up to erasing and their absorbency makes them unsuitable for watercolor. But their rough surfaces make them good for chalk and oil pastels. They also work well for printmaking.

Hard paper holds up to erasing. One of the most useful and least expensive is plain old copy paper. But it is too smooth for chalk and charcoal and warps too much when wet to be useful for watercolor. White sulphite drawing paper is not quite as hard as copy paper but stands up well to erasing, has a slightly rough surface good for dusty media, and warps only a little when wet, making it suitable for drawing and watercolor. But some drawing papers lack the sizing, similar to a coat of glue on the surface, which allows students to manipulate watercolors to a certain degree before the paper becomes absorbent.

All paper is measured in pounds. The higher the number, the thicker the paper. White sulphite paper, 60 lb, is adequate for all students for all media, but the 80 lb. paper is a little better for watercolor.

Newsprint seldom is useful for good projects because high acid content causes it to turn yellow and brittle in only a couple years. Like newsprint, other materials that fit the budget for the elementary classroom are not archival. Construction paper tears very easily and colors fade rapidly when exposed to light. Watercolor and marking pens also fade when exposed to light. Work subject to fading must be protected from light if expected to last more than a few years. Protect it by keeping it in the dark or by matting it, framing it under glass and displaying it away from direct sun light.

Another concern is tape used to secure art work in mats. Acids in the tape and paper react over the years to form a yellow or brown stain. Because the materials are non-archival this can't be avoided, so put tape only at the edges of the paper where the mat will hide it.

About Pencils

Pencil lead is easily broken, not only at the tip, but inside as well. Interior breakage results from being dropped. The softer the lead, the more easily it breaks, often in so many places it becomes impossible to sharpen because the little segments keep falling out. Students don't connect dropping pencils and frustration over being stuck with one that can't be sharpened. They respond better when told to be careful not to drop pencils when they also know the reason why.

Painting Supplies

ITEM	QUANTITY
red tempera paint	7 pints
blue tempera paint	7 pints
turquoise tempera paint	7 pints
white tempera paint	10 pints
yellow tempera paint	10 pints
black tempera paint	10 pints
magenta tempera paint	1 or 2 pints
purple tempera paint	1 or 2 pints
brown butcher paper. Younger students paint pictures on 16"x20" pieces.	1 roll
pan of 8 watercolors –See more on watercolor in the section on color.	1/student
size 8 or larger camel hair brushes for doing larger washes in watercolor	4
white sulphite paper – 12"x18" (Cut to 12"x16" which is a common frame size.)	2+ sheets/student
brushes – bristle brushes in four sizes: the smallest round end and square end brushes, two larger square end brushes not wider than 1/2" (and some detail brushes)	4/student, one of each size
Canvas paper, heavy watercolor paper or mat board might be used by older students.	
laundry stain stick	1
polystyrene egg cartons for individual paint palettes	1+/student

Types of Brushes for Elementary Students

- **Bristle** brushes are stiff and work well with tempera and thicker paint. They tend to shed a lot at first and need “breaking in”. Bristles tend to break off with wear, so generally, brushes with longer bristles last longer. Some inexpensive bristle brushes sold at home improvement and hardware stores can be substituted for larger brushes.
- **Camel hair** brushes are soft, suitable for use with fluid media, like watercolor.
- **Round** brushes hold the hair or bristles in a round ferrule.
- **Flat** brushes hold the hair or bristles in a flat ferrule.
- **Long or short handled** – Longer handled brushes are for easel painting at arm’s length. Since most students paint while seated, short handled brushes are adequate.

Access to brushes in four sizes, with the largest about ½” wide allows students to paint both detailed and larger areas. Brushes are numbered to indicate size, but numbering is not consistent across manufacturers.

The first brush shown is a camel hair brush, useful for detail in tempera or watercolor painting. The other three are bristle brushes, the first two round and the other two flat. Notice the ferrules. The first two are deeply crimped into the handles. The two larger brushes, which are barely crimped and probably will fall apart after only a little use.

Good student grade brushes are a necessity. They prevent student frustration by making it easier to paint and use a wider range of techniques. They cost more initially but save money in the long run because they last longer, especially when properly cleaned and stored. Good brushes have the following characteristics:



- They are made of natural hair or bristles. Nylon or synthetic materials, unless of artist quality, simply don’t hold or spread the paint as well as natural bristles.
- The ferrule is crimped onto the handle rather than just glued to the end.
- The bristles or hair are firmly and deeply attached into the ferrule.
- They hold their shape. Bristles do not splay when properly stored.
- Hair brushes come to a point when wet and spring back a little when bent to the side.

Caring for Brushes

- Before storage rinse brushes well and squeeze them dry.
- Don’t twist or pull the bristles. Doing so causes them to break off or come out.
- Don’t let brushes sit in water very long.
 - ▶ The glue may soften allowing the bristles to fall out.
 - ▶ handles swell, eventually causing the ferrule to loosen, split or fall off.
- Store brushes *with the hair in the air* and, as first grader Jack Wimberley added, *with the tail in the pail*, to prevent them from drying in a curled over position. Trying to use a bent over brush is very frustrating. Also poorly cleaned brushes drain onto the bottom of the container and brushes put away upside down dry stuck in the goo!

Tempera Paint

Tempera should be opaque and able to cover underlying colors. Washable tempera, and even non-washable paints of some brands, are not. Purchase only red, magenta, yellow, turquoise, blue, white and black and require students to mix all other colors. Purchase more yellow and white since they are light and are used heavily in making other colors. Students waste less paint when they:

- rinse, squeeze and wipe brushes between colors.
- move quantities of paint to areas where they can be mixed, (instead of using the only yellow available to make green leaving no more yellow).
- start with the lighter color and add a little at a time of the darker color until the desired value is reached.

Palette

A good personal paint container for tempera paint is a styrofoam egg carton. With palette colors, red, yellow, blue, turquoise, black and white, in six sections, six other sections are available for mixing. Cartons can be stored for reuse. This enables students who spend a lot of time mixing special colors to use those colors in later class periods. To prevent mold from growing over a period of several days, spray disinfectant on each carton or layer of cartons before storage.

- Storage method 1 – Slip each carton into a plastic bag like newspapers come in on rainy days. Press (don't suck) the air from the bag and seal it with a twist-tie. Stack the cartons in a large box.
- Storage method 2 – Line a large box (a little larger than a box for copy paper) with a large plastic trash bag. Stack the cartons with aluminum foil between layers to keep the cartons from falling into one another. Then press air from the garbage bag and close it with a twist-tie.

Watercolor

More expensive brands contain less clay and binder (glue). This makes colors dissolve more readily as well as makes them more transparent the way watercolor should be. A good set of watercolors can last several years especially when refill pans are available for individual colors. The brushes in good sets are of adequate size, but larger brushes, size eight or higher, are needed occasionally for doing larger washes.

When the pans of color become contaminated with other colors, clean them by lightly brushing them with a loaded (very wet) brush to dissolve the contaminant. Then absorb the dirty water with a thirsty (squeezed out) brush until the pan is clear. Wiping dirty pans with a sponge, paper towel or brush wastes paint because it removes larger quantities of pigment and often rubs the mess in instead of lifting it off.

White sulphite drawing paper, 60 or 80 lb. weight, is suitable for student work. Like more expensive watercolor paper the surface has a sizing that allows for a certain amount of scrubbing and lifting before it becomes too absorbent. When painting, brush the paper as little as possible to make the sizing last. Plain copy paper can be used for small work, but wrinkles and warps badly. Newsprint and construction paper are as absorbent as blotters and so are unsuitable for watercolor.

Carving supplies

ITEM	QUANTITY
bath size Ivory soap – Buy just before use and store in an airtight container.	1+/student
metal nail file – Files shouldn't be very flexible or they don't last long. They can be used for crayon etching as well as soap carving.	1+/student

Printmaking

Water-soluble printers ink is made for printmaking, but transferring the ink from the plate to the paper without a printing press requires a lot of effort. A possible substitute is water-soluble screen ink mixed with media mixer of the same brand to increase transparency and extend it. Get extra containers for mixing and storing and experiment to find the consistency you like. Mixing unlike brands of art materials could cause a lumpy, unusable product because the various additives are not compatible. When mixing unlike brands experiment with small quantities first.

Tempera paint works but dries very quickly, so when using it, print fast. Apply it with a small trim roller, the type used in painting a wall. One brand of student acrylics also gives good results and can be removed even after it has dried. But most acrylics are unsuitable because they dry too quickly and, once dry, cannot be cleaned from brayers and other surfaces. Oil based inks and necessary solvents are health hazards and should not be used. Prints can be made with other materials, including drawing media. See more in the section on printmaking, beginning on page 161.

Printmaking Supplies

ITEM	QUANTITY
screen ink for use in monotypes – red	3 pts
blue	3 pts
black	3 pts
white	5 pts
yellow	5 pts
purple	2 pts
green	2 pts
brown	2 pts
material for the image – Smooth styrofoam meat trays, about 8"x10" can be prepared with only a pencil and are inexpensive. Order them through the school food service. Various other materials available for printmaking are more expensive and usually require additional equipment, namely gouges and handles. Order one handle and one set of cutters per student. The push cutters are extremely dangerous and require bench hooks for safe use. So buy only pull cutters.	1+/student Trays come 500 to a package.
media mixer	6 –12 pints
construction paper – pkg of 50 9"x12" If doing other projects with construction paper, order more.	4/each basic color, more red and black
4" soft rubber brayers	4 – 12
Plexiglas squares, 12"x12" for rolling ink	1/color of ink

Clay Supplies

ITEM	QUANTITY
kiln, kiln furniture, stilts, kiln wash, Enviro-vent, gloves or hot pads for handling hot ware, and for older kilns – 1 box of 05 junior cones	
white clay without grog that fires to cone 05 – Use white because red clay contains red iron oxide, which is the same as rust, and stains clothes.	5–10 lbs/student
large air-tight, rust proof container for re-slaking clay	1 or 2
plastic bags of various sizes for storing work in progress	1+/student
under glazes – Quantities and colors depend on the number and size of projects and student preferences. Students share colors.	1–3 jars/student
12"x18" heavy canvas or masonite, 1/8" thick, rough on one side, for work surfaces. For supporting and storing projects, get a variety of larger and smaller pieces of masonite. It is easier to store things on 1/4" thick masonite.	1+/student
clay tools – regular and jumbo paper clips, pencils or skewers, popsicle sticks, metal scrapers, ribbon tools, 3-M scrubbing pads of various roughness, sponges and water buckets, disinfectant for the water, a heat gun to speed drying of projects, and a variety of things to press into the clay for decoration	
colorless transparent glaze – cone 05–06 – lead free	1 gallon
Rolling pins or 18" lengths of straight 1"x2" for making slabs.	8
pairs of dowels, 18" each, in various diameters for making slabs.	8 pairs

Other Supplies

ITEM	QUANTITY
heavy duty aluminum foil	3 pkgs
fine steel wool for buffing foil projects	1 pkg
dry rack or some way to store prints and paintings while they dry	
masking tape for papier mache	1/2 roll/student
straight edges and rulers of various lengths – Mini-blind slats or long pieces of matboard make temporary straight edges.	1/student
newspapers for protecting tables during messy projects and for papier mache	
file crate, manilla file folders, hanging file folder with label tags for picture file	
magazines of all sorts as sources for pictures to put in the picture file	
single hole punches	About 4
staplers (and staples)	About 4
mirrors	1/student
Scholastic Art magazines for art history	1/student
acetate, double stick tape, and railroad board for mats	
hair dryers	2 or 3
an iron	1 or 2
glue	1/student
pins and tacks	
scissors	1/student
Exacto or utility knives	About 6

Be aware of hazardous materials. Avoid solvents, petroleum based products, and materials containing lead or cadmium. Be aware also of breathing hazards inherent to dusty materials such as chalk and plaster of Paris. Caution children not to blow chalk dust from pictures, but rather to turn the paper on edge and tap it against the table. Clear away the resulting pile of dust with a damp paper towel. Be considerate of asthmatic students.

Be aware of materials that clog the drain. Don't put the following materials down the drain:

- *Plaster of Paris* – It hardens by chemical reaction underwater and forms a rock hard plug.
- *Clay* – Even a little at a time eventually accumulates like mud and slows or clogs the system.
- *Tempera paint* – Some brands, usually the more opaque ones, contain clay as filler.
- *Oil based products and solvents* – (As mentioned above, these should not be used in the classroom.) When mixed with water they form an emulsion that holds all kinds of particles. They are hazardous to the environment and should be disposed of as recommended for hazardous materials.

TECHNIQUES

Techniques involve using materials and tools to create a given effect. Elementary students do best when they discover their own techniques and observe techniques discovered by their peers. Discovery works well with drawing tools when students experiment with using the tip or the side; varying the pressure while drawing; pushing, pulling, rolling and twisting the drawing tool as it is moved across the paper; erasing; smudging; and other ways. Students experiment with paint by

using a loaded brush or a brush with practically no paint (dry brush); thinning the paint; scratching into wet paint; drawing with the brush; rolling the brush instead of drawing with it; and making a single stroke with a brush loaded with more than one color. Several techniques for watercolor are listed beginning on page 134.

HISTORY AND CRITICISM

ART HISTORY

Just as reading good literature enriches a child's writing, looking at good art enriches the child's art. Children should study art by men and women from many times, cultures and countries. When children know they will work on the same subject matter or in the same style as a famous artist, they are more interested in looking at and talking about the art work. They also learn and retain more information, their work is different and more exciting, and they develop a broader appreciation of all types of art.

Artists and cultures are so many, it is impossible to include them all, but the selection should be as broad as possible. Also study art in every day life, such as advertising, select frames of T.V. programs and movies, clothing and hair styles, furniture and building design, urban planning, and much more. Base selection of art for study on one or more of the following:

- theme and subject matter;
- relevance to another academic area;
- similarity to the medium the students will use;
- use of principles and elements of art;
- culture or historical period; and
- style of art, such as Cubism or Impressionism.

Sources for visuals and information about artists and art history include the following.

- city and school libraries
- Region Education Service Centers
- "Scholastic Art" magazine from Scholastic is an excellent resource for individual artists and art of various cultures. Written for high school, it is easily read by 5th grade students and the pictures can be used at all levels. Save the magazines and build an art history resource.
- Students' parents may have magazines or art exhibition catalogs to share.
- "School Arts" and "Arts and Activities" include master work, student work and ideas for projects.
- slides, posters and postcards from art museums
- art education curriculum materials available from art and educational supply catalogs
- Shorewood and other companies that make art reproductions
- Shorewood catalogs contain full color, post card size images of *all* their prints. Buy two catalogs in order to cut out and use pictures on both sides of the page.
- the catalog for *rent-free loan – videos and slide programs* from Department of Extension Programs National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565– Or visit www.nga.gov and find the catalog under educational resources.
- Art Deck and Art Rummy are card games found in various catalogs.
- a good art history book
- the Internet– search for art education and/or for a particular artist – Although URLs change, try <http://www.getty.edu/artsednet/> and <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/>
- used book stores

ART CRITICISM

Before invention of the camera the various purposes of Western art included:

- illustration – religious and other texts as well as myth and legend.
- advertising.
- recording images of actual events and persons.
- decoration.
- to be beautifully done and aesthetically pleasing.

With the invention of the camera, which could record detail more accurately and more quickly than the best artist, the purposes of art changed and sub-categories such as folk art, commercial art, and fine art became more distinct. Today, purposes of the fine artist include such things as:

- personal expression of feelings, opinions, desires, nightmares, etc.
- arousing the public to see familiar things in a new way.
- arousing the public to think about social, political, environmental and other concerns.
- trying to do something that hasn't been done before or to do an old thing in a new way.

Although some modern art is understandable only to the artist, art criticism provides a strategy for interpreting art. Steps for art criticism are outlined in Discipline-Based Art Education. The strategy below, a variation of those steps, is based on many classroom discussions at the elementary level.

- ▶ Name and describe what is in the work. (objects, colors, values, shapes)
- ▶ Describe how you think things are related – how they make you feel – what they remind you of. Also evaluate the use of color since color often is highly symbolic, for example, red = rage, danger, or passion.
- ▶ Form an opinion as to what the artist might be trying to communicate based on what is in the picture (or *not* in the picture) and on personal experience.
- ▶ Take into account the title of the work, information about the artist, his body of work, the style he used or historical conditions.

Some art teachers worry the steps in art criticism stifle imagination, because students sometimes talk about things like images they see in clouds. Imaginative responses often contribute to understanding and appreciation of the work but even when they don't it is easy to acknowledge and accept imaginative responses without damaging students or taking too big a detour from the critical process.

Art criticism requires ability to think abstractly and symbolically. Younger children can easily use the first two steps in art criticism, but finding meaning in the work is more easily accomplished by students in grades four and higher. Although each individual's response to a picture or sculpture is highly personal, the more universal meaning usually is one determined in light of the most visual and historical information.

EXAMPLE DISCUSSION – "THE SCREAM" by Edvard Munch

Descriptions of the picture by fifth grade students has included:

- a man screaming or a scared woman standing on a bridge
- two men in old-time clothes walking away
- clouds, mountains, a village, a cliff, boats on the lake

Reactions to the work often become fanciful. To keep from squelching creativity and imagination, acknowledge students' contributions, but ask them to point out specific things in the picture that provide bases for what they said. Also tell students *what an artist leaves out of the work is just as important as what is included*. Student suggestions as to why the figure is screaming include the following:



- “The man is screaming because the two guys just robbed him.” “The woman is screaming because the two men just took her purse.” (Ask students who offer such responses if the men look as though they are trying to run away, if the men have any weapons, if the men are paying any attention at all to the screamer, or the screamer to the men.)
- “Someone is threatening him with a weapon.” “He sees a horrible car wreck.” (Ask for evidence.)
- When students are familiar with the work of Kathe Kollwitz, another Expressionist, they suggest bombs and instruments of war are involved. Again, ask for visual evidence.

Eventually students tire of suggesting why the figure is screaming and someone usually suggests the guy is screaming for no reason at all – he’s just crazy, or he’s had all he can take. When students disagree whether or not the figure is screaming someone usually compares the repeated lines in the background to ripples spreading when a pebble is tossed in a pond, saying they represent sound waves. Of course, once they know the title, all students acknowledge the figure is screaming. Disagreement over whether the figure is man, woman or ghost usually is resolved when no evidence can support any of the three and students decide it is not important who is screaming but the picture is about the act of screaming or the feeling of screaming.

Art criticism would not be complete without information concerning Munch, his work, the characteristics of Expressionism, and what Munch had to say about the Scream:

“I was walking along a path with two friends. The sun was setting. I felt a breath of melancholy. Suddenly the sky turned blood-red. I stopped and leant against the railing, deathly tired looking out across flaming clouds that hung like blood and a sword over the deep blue fjord and town. My friends walked on. I stood there trembling with anxiety and I felt a great, infinite scream pass through nature.”

THEME / SUBJECT MATTER

Subject matter and theme involve the content of the picture. Subject matter refers to specific images, such as dogs, buildings, flowers, mountains, and the like. It is divided into categories, such as still life, figure, portraiture, landscape, architecture, interiors, and animal life. A good art education encourages students to use imagery from a wide range of categories. Requiring students to work within a category allows more freedom of choice than requiring them to work with specific subject matter. For example, landscape could include deserts, mountains, farm land, waterfalls.

Themes involve related ideas often expressed with totally different images. Examples of themes include “My Best Birthday Party,” “Green is Gorgeous,” “When Cows Fly,” “What Makes Me Giggle,” and “Autumn.”

Themes and subject matter may be assigned or chosen by the student. In either case finding visual reference material and brainstorming ideas help students get started. Most students appreciate the freedom to choose their own themes or subject matter. Many select the same ones repeatedly, sometimes over a period of years, and it is delightful to watch the growth and changes in their work.

The classroom teacher can make themes and subject matter serve double duty and save class time by teaching art concepts, skills and information in projects arising in other academic areas, holidays or special events. In doing so, she helps students understand that information learned in one area can enrich learning or activity in another area.

The art specialist often finds students using subject matter from other curricular areas when they choose their own. The specialist and classroom teacher may work together on themes or subject matter for a special art project. Sometimes, however, art classes, which usually don’t meet every day, have difficulty keeping pace with what is going on in the other area. Planning a joint project well in advance helps keep problems to a minimum.

When students choose their own subject matter, sometimes their choices are very revealing of feelings and events in their personal lives. The images can be disturbing. The teacher’s reaction, perhaps dictated by school policy, is to put a stop to it. But the work is a cry for help and the students need to discuss it with someone who can help, perhaps the teacher, the school counselor, the administration and/or the parents. Don’t ignore imagery that makes you uneasy.

AESTHETICS

Aesthetics concerns the nature of art and what is pleasing. The nature of art has changed with the invention of the camera and many people think today's art is ugly. Children need exposure to many types of art, through films, slides, books and trips to museums and galleries to help broaden their aesthetic appreciation of all types of art. They can learn to judge the attractiveness of works of art on different bases according to the kind of art it is. Seeing and discussing new types of art is most effective when combined with the experience of producing it. Students always appreciate Jackson Pollock's work more after they've dribbled and dripped themselves. Before the experience they may say, "There's nothing to that. My little brother could do it!" During the experience they consider the same concepts and concerns as Pollock. They like some of their finished pieces better than others, indicating development of "a new aesthetic." Often they want to see Pollock's work again after the project and are able to see, judge, and appreciate it in a new way.

Aesthetics is philosophical and asks questions such as:

- What is art?
- Why did people make it? Do the reasons they made it determine whether or not it is good?
- If I think something is good and you don't, does that make it good, or bad?
- If a lot of people don't like it, is it bad? (When French Impressionist work was being done, almost everyone thought it was bad. Today it is very much liked by most people. Was it bad then and good now? If so, how did it get to be good? Was it always good? If so, why didn't more people like it sooner?)
- On what basis is it decided whether work is good or bad? Who decides what the basis will be?

Setting criteria and displaying work that meets the criteria promotes a broader appreciation of what is art and a greater understanding of what art is. As students realize good work can involve a very wide range of imagery, (and lack of imagery) produced at widely differing skill levels, they grow beyond appreciating only realistic work.

CREATIVE THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Art class is a natural place to develop creative thinking and skills in problem solving. Many decisions go into making attractive or meaningful pictures and when each decision involves many alternative solutions, students have opportunities to think creatively and solve problems. Helping students develop these skills is not hard but does require a little thought and effort.

Asking Questions Rather than Lecturing

Asking the right questions can stimulate thinking as well as encourage good listening skills. Students of all ages are less likely to listen attentively to the teacher than they are to listen to each other. They definitely prefer to hear themselves talk. Lead them to think through for themselves and deliver to one another much of the information they need by asking for a solution to a problem rather than telling the solution.

For example, the teacher can tell students leaving watercolor paper unpainted is the only way to get white or she can ask questions. She can say, "The criteria include the following: Make some white things, some dark things and some light things. You see there's no white watercolor. So how can you make white things and light things without white paint?"

Possible responses include "Draw with white crayon," "Paint with just water," and "Don't paint what you want white. Just leave it white." All answers may be acceptable and students will have done some thinking. Once students start working and someone asks how to make pink, instead of giving the answer, say, "It's one of the colors in the pan, made lighter." Ask the student how to make colors lighter (answer - thin it more with water). Say, "Pick the one you think will work and try it on scrap paper. If it doesn't work, try thinning it more or less, or try a different color."

During demonstrations, before lecturing, remember to ask questions such as "What do you think will happen if...?" "How do you think I can do this?" "How do you think this was done?" "What do you think might happen if you don't do this part?" Questions vary with subject matter, the intent of the lesson, and the amount of time available. But the more you ask questions instead of simply lecture, the more information students remember and the more they become involved in thinking.

Phrasing Questions and Responding to Answers

Sometimes a question has only one correct answer. However, approaches to finding it squelch the daring of many students for at least two reasons. Students often are expected to give answers after reflecting only a matter of seconds. Instead of encouraging students to think about what they already know that might lead them to the answer, it encourages the majority of students to let the responsibility for answering and learning rest on somebody else.

Students are also squelched when the teacher says, "no" to their wrong answers. Once a student gets this response, he may give up trying and let his brain go idle. One *needs* wrong answers. They are basic to deductive reasoning and the trial and error approach so important to learning. Students must practice forming hypotheses, learn how to support them and learn when to abandon them. The teacher needs answers, right and wrong, to help her assess the levels of learning and student attention. If students hesitate to offer answers for fear they are wrong, everybody loses.

Even when there is only one correct answer or solution, the teacher encourages more students to participate in the search by including the phrase "do you think" in the question. "What do you think will happen if...?"; "How do you think I can find out...?"; and "Now why do you suppose that happened?" Phrases such as "you think" and "suppose" open the door to thought more than asking the same question without them. However, students won't continue to "think" or "suppose" if they aren't rewarded with some positive comment even though their answers are not "right". Positive comments for incomplete answers might include:

- "That helps point us in the right direction."
- "You're helping us get there."

If the information is thoughtful but doesn't apply, say:

- "That's good thinking."
- "I can tell your answer is based on things we've already learned."
- "I'm so glad you are willing to volunteer."
- "I'm glad you reminded us of that."

Sometimes students make remarks obviously intended to be offensive or disruptive. They must be told to offer only constructive comments. The manner in which the teacher responds to students' answers must convey acceptance, not necessarily of the answer, but of the student and the willingness to speak. So take care with tone of voice, facial expression and body language.

When asking questions use both *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* questions, which don't usually involve hypotheses, and *how*, *why* and "what if" questions which usually do. Whatever the type of questions, phrase them so children are encouraged to think, guess, or suppose. *Give students time to think, guess and suppose.* Then phrase responses to their answers to convey tolerance and acceptance of the effort, and to guide children as they continue searching for answers and solutions. The process takes a little longer but is well worth the time because it helps children dare to "find out"; learn strategies for searching or experimenting, incorporate and build on the input of other students, and encourages them to continue the struggle until they succeed.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Problem solving is of two sorts. One involves meeting criteria concerning the principles and elements of art. Three problems that, when solved, do the most to unify and balance a picture are: use overlapping, let some things go off the edge of the page, and repeat things in different amounts in different parts of the page. All kinds of choices are involved in complying and students must consider how each choice will affect the finished picture. The process of solving problems can be called "playing what if": "What if I put this here? Will it overlap in a way that looks stacked on top of something else? Will it be too different and stick out?" "What if I make it so big? Will I run out of room?" This sort of problem solving can occur only in creative art projects, not during practice activities or when using a reproduced image or copying the teacher's example.

Willingness to rearranging and "edit" art work depends on the amount of time already invested, a wish to avoid disaster, and availability of time and materials for starting over. Experimentation with composition, value structure and color harmonies

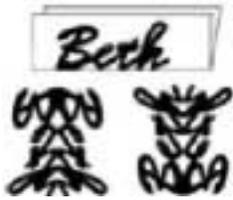
while a work is in progress is risky business, since it is difficult, if not impossible, to put the work back the way it was if the experiment flops. A few projects are great for experimentation because flops are of little or no consequence. They include:

- rubbings from collograph plates, linoleum blocks or nature (The image is easily repeated.)
- printmaking, coloring each print differently (The image is easily repeated.)
- computer imagery (Work can be saved at various stages and commands can be undone.)

Another type of problem solving involves deciding how to achieve a desired effect based on available tools and materials. When allowed to experiment with tools and materials in a practice activity students become familiar with the effects they can get before they start the project. Teachers often prohibit experimentation with tools and materials for fear of what some students may do. When tools and materials are not dangerous, it may be enough to identify the limits of experimentation and set consequences for non-compliance *before* distributing the tools and to follow through consistently with consequences. Listing specific ways *not* to use tools prompts creativity as students come up with additional ways not listed. However, that type of creativity is undesirable so it is better to tell students to use tools and materials safely, only in ways that help complete the project and in no other way.

Some Creative Projects

□ Student's Name (4–8)



To do this project students must be able to write in cursive. Younger students could simply crayon the name and talk about symmetry, pattern, use of repeated colors and negative shapes. Older students might develop a creature and place it in an imaginary environment, solving problems related to value, color, or pattern. The project can be done in many media, including colored pencils, markers, tempera paint, crayon scratch, crayon resist, watercolor, pastels, prints, and rubbings.

Write the name.

- ▶ Fold a piece of paper in half.
- ▶ Using a broad, square writing instrument such as a large marker, flattened end of a piece of chalk, or two pencils at the same time, write the name on the fold in cursive. Or write it in “cloud” letters. Be sure the connection between each letter is thick enough so letters won't come apart when the name is cut out.
- ▶ Cut out the name. Two of the many ways of continuing this project are described below.

Turn the name into an imaginary insect.

- ▶ Turn the name sideways, right side up or upside down. Try to see an imaginary insect in the symmetrical squiggles.
- ▶ Either use the name “as is” or distort the letters (stretch some out, shorten or fatten others) to enhance the shape of the critter, and, if necessary, re-draw and cut it out again.

Criteria

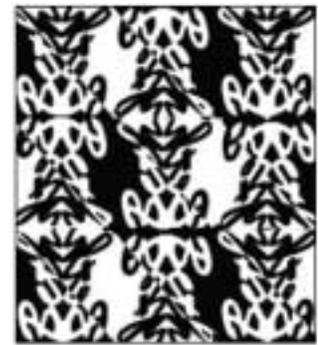
- ✓ Trace it onto clean paper.
- ✓ Make an environment for the critter.
- ✓ Write the name in at least three sizes to make bugs of different sizes.
- ✓ Color with crayon, balancing warm/cool, light/dark.

Use the name as a motif to create a pattern.

- ▶ Repeatedly trace around the cutout name on a clean sheet of paper. Make them touch. Place some right side up, some upside down in a pattern, until the page is filled.
- ▶ Crayon (or use other color media) in warm and cool colors. Sometimes color the name cool and the background warm, and sometimes do it the opposite way.

► **Other possibilities:**

- Instead of warm/cool colors, use only black and white, or only complimentary colors.
- Apply a free choice of colors balancing warm/cool, light/dark, bright/dull.
- Crayon using only primary colors or other limited palettes of color.
- Print in black and white or color using styrofoam or linoleum block.



■ **Word Shapes (4–8)**

- Write the names of various living creatures, animals, birds or reptiles on slips of paper. Don't include worms, snakes or caterpillars. Each student takes two and chooses one.
- Using a photo from the picture file, draw the silhouette of the creature. The creature can be drawn expressively or simplified like a cartoon, but don't trace from the photo.
- After drawing fill the silhouette to the edges with letters spelling the name. Distort or simplify the shape of the animal or letters to make them fit together. Use capitals, lower case, or a combination.

Criteria

- ✓ Draw the silhouette in enough detail to make it recognizable.
- ✓ Fill the silhouette with letters all the way to the edges.
- ✓ Make the word readable.
- ✓ Erase all edges of the silhouette not made by letters.



Callie Shelton Gr. 6



Travis Viduarri Gr. 6



Vanessa Autrey Gr. 5



Krista Achterberg Gr. 6

The project also can be done using one or more animals to shape each letter. Problems to solve include how to use limbs, torsos, heads and necks to form each letter. Criteria include making an interesting animal shape, making each animal recognizable and forming each letter with the fewest possible animals. For either method, students work out solutions on practice paper, then trace the drawing in ink on clean paper. Enlarge small drawings on a copier before tracing.



Jessica Sextion Gr. 6



Rachel Seeger Gr. 6



Melissa Bettencourt Gr. 6



Kristi Ramming Gr. 6

ART HISTORY

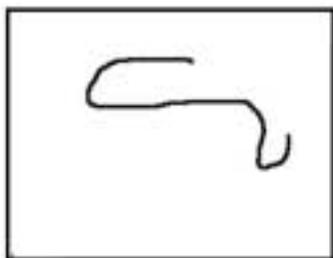
Archimboldo – arranged fruit, vegetables, birds, animals and fish to create portraits.

■ **Squiggles (1–8)**

Draw a line of any sort. Students use their own lines, or trade them. The problem is to use the line to create an image or picture. Trace the same squiggle onto another paper and create two different images. Look at the paper from every side to find the start of an image.

Criteria

- ✓ Create an interesting composition and fill the page well.
- ✓ Add whatever is necessary to the squiggle, but use all of it.
- ✓ Develop at least two ideas.



Instead of beginning with a squiggle, trace a line or edge from the work of a master artist. If each student uses a line from a different artist, compare and discuss the types of line used by each one.

■ **Tessellations (1–8) (See page 152.)**



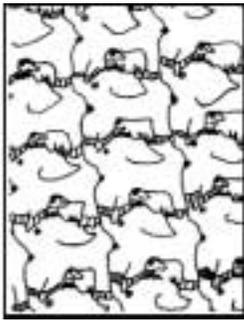
Brooke Mohajer Gr. 8



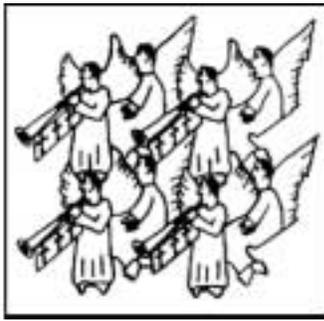
Callie Shelton Gr. 7



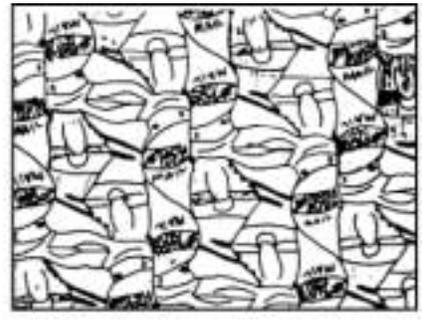
Kim Hargrove Gr. 7



Tacha Johnson Gr. 7



Doug Caballero Gr. 7



Ingrid Svihla Gr. 8

ART HISTORY

- ✪ M.C. Escher
- ✪ geometric mosaics

■ **Assembling Found Objects** (1–8)

When assembling objects, consider the safety and efficiency of materials used to join them.

ART HISTORY

- ✪ Picasso – bull’s head of a bicycle seat and handlebars; “Baboon” with a toy car
- ✪ Pop artist Marisol created boxy images of people.

■ **Silhouettes** (1–8)

- Using projected light students make shadow animals and figures with their hands.
- Make paper puppets in the Japanese tradition.
- Cooperate to create scenes with cut paper.

■ **Painting Hands** (1–8)

Experiment with different hand positions to make animal and other shapes. Paint the “animals” with washable tempera paint. Use props such as plastic eyes. Photograph the creations before washing them off. (See “Hanimals,” and “Humands” by Mario Mariotti, Green Tiger Press, Inc., CA, 1982, ISBN 0-914676-90-3)



Kiah Denson Gr. 4



Jonathan Rehbein Gr. 5

■ **Draw From Detailed Descriptions** (1–8)

Read a story, poem or other descriptive writing to the class. Students illustrate their mental images of the object or scene. The drawing can be colored with any of a wide variety of media. Select criteria from line, value, composition and color.

ART HISTORY

- ✪ Durer, (who is said to have drawn his rhinos from a description, rather than observation)

■ **Signs, Posters, Book Covers, Etc.** (1–8)

Producing well composed signs, posters and book covers requires planning the layout of text and images. Using the following guidelines, work out the design on paper of the same size and transfer it to the good paper for coloring.

Don't confuse readers.

DO Make the poster easy to read. Don't use more words than necessary.

- ▶ When using more than one line of words, group words into phrases or “idea units”
- ▶ If necessary to save room, make unimportant words smaller than the rest.