



Ocean Life Diorama

GRADE: 4 and up TIME: 1-2 sessions

Developed by Karen Stomberg



KIT INCLUDES:

- lesson plan with attachments:
 - hand-out
 - student response
 - bulletin board
- boards:
 - vocabulary (1)
 - sample habitat (2)
 - design principles (1)
 - ocean life (4)
 - procedure/example (1)
- class set of marine animal sheets

MATERIALS:

- oil pastels
- construction paper:
 - 12" x 18" black
 - assorted colors cut to: 3" X 4.5"
 - 6" X 4 5/8"
 - 3" X 9"
- scissors
- glue
- pencil
- ruler
- response/name sheet

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students look closely at photographs of life in tropical coral reefs or under Alaskan oceans. With inspiration from the photographs, students use oil pastels and construction paper to create an under ocean life diorama which includes fish or marine mammals in a habitat.

VOCABULARY:

emphasis/center of interest
rhythm/movement
space
diorama
coral
habitat

ART ELEMENTS:

☐ Line
☒ Shape/Form
☒ Color
☒ Value
☐ Texture
☒ Space/Perspective

ART PRINCIPLES:

☒ Pattern
☒ Rhythm/movement
☒ Proportion/Scale
☐ Balance
☐ Unity
☒ Emphasis

CONTENT CONNECTIONS:

Science:
Ocean habitats
Marine biology
Math:
Measuring
THEMES:
Environment
Habitats

OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: Students will:

- use photographs as resources for their artwork, like many artists and scientists do.
- create a diorama with large ocean creatures as the center of interest (for emphasis) and many overlapping layers to create a sense of depth (space) in the habitat.
- utilize repetition of small shapes to create a pattern and sense of rhythm/movement.
- articulate similarities and differences in (Alaskan) deep ocean life and tropical coral reef life.

PREPARE:

- Review lesson plan and make a sample before teaching students.
- Copy students response and lesson hand-outs.
- Cut construction paper to sizes listed above.
- Set up four-fold boards around the room on the floor or on grouped desks so students can sit closely around them to draw.

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE:

Teach students that artists frequently use photographs for reference when they are creating artwork. Careful observation is the best way to learn how something really looks—whether in a photo or “from life”. In this lesson, students will look at photographs of life on tropical ocean reefs and under Alaskan oceans and will draw from observation.

A. Display the two Sample habitat boards.

1. Point out the different underwater habitats:

- close-up of a tropical coral reef
- an Alaskan coral area

2. Have students look carefully at the photographs, then ask:

- What are some things that are similar in both areas that you can see?

There are plants, rocks, coral and fish in both habitats.

- What are some differences that you can see?

Colors may be brighter in a tropical ocean and the variety of life greater.

- What are some other similarities and differences that you know exist but that you may not see here?

B. Display the 3-fold design board and introduce these visual design principles that students will use in their project:

1. **emphasis/center of interest**

Emphasis means importance. In design it means making some things more important than others by making them larger, bolder, brighter or with more contrast to their surroundings.

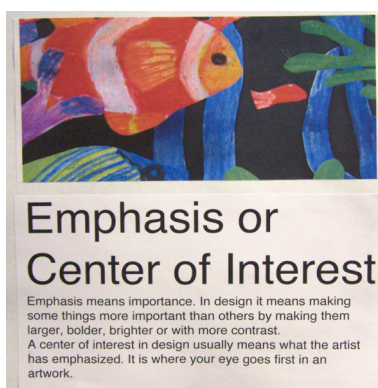
A center of interest in design usually means what the artist has emphasized. It is where your eye goes first in an artwork.

2. **rhythm/movement**

Rhythm can be suggested in visual art by repeating small shapes, colors or lines. Curves and diagonal lines increase the sense of movement.

3. **space**

One way to create the illusion of space or depth is by overlapping objects.

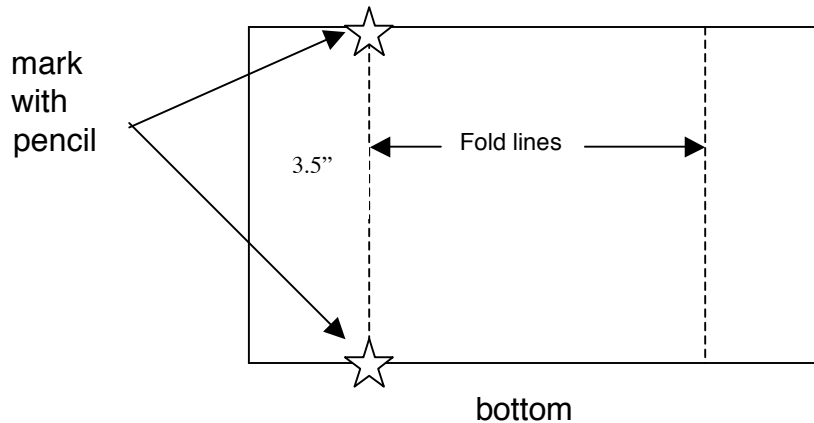


CREATE:

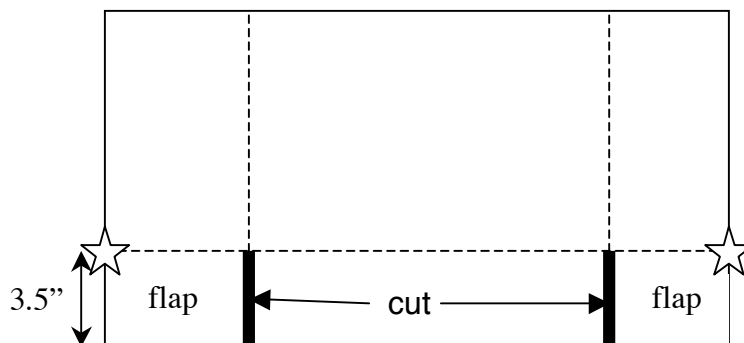
Students create a black paper box, open at the top, trim it to look like undersea habitat, then create one or more large ocean creatures with more habitat in layers.

1. Make diorama box.

- With a pencil and ruler, measure 3.5" in from both short sides of a 12" x 18" black paper. Mark at the top and bottom.



- Fold both sides into center. Make folds by lining marks on edge of desk and crease with fingers
- Mark 3.5" along bottom edge and fold.



- Cut 3.5" from bottom edge to fold to create flaps, as shown above.

- Glue flaps to underside of long fold to create a box with an open top.

- Trim the top of the diorama box to make it more interesting, like undersea habitat. It could be cut in a wave shape, or to look like rock or coral.



2. Make one or two large moving life-forms as the center of interest.

a. Students choose either tropical or Alaskan ocean life for their diorama then they choose one or two **moving** life-forms from that habitat to draw. These can be fish, marine mammals, crabs or whatever they see on the photo boards, the marine mammal/shark hand-out sheet or in other photographic resources you have in the classroom.

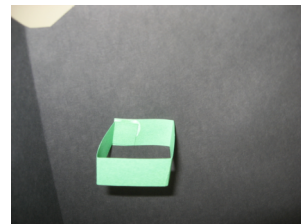


Draw with pencil on any color 4.5" x 6" paper. Use a light sketching technique. Extra lines won't matter—don't erase. The oil pastel will completely cover the color of the paper and the pencil lines!

b. Color the ocean critters before they are cut out. Put down a layer of white or peach oil pastel then add color. Layer with white again to blend color and give it a bright smooth look. Tissue can be used to blend and soften color. Use black oil pastel last—after all blending is done.



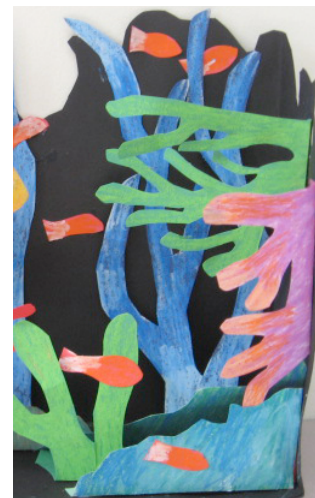
c. Cut out the critters and mount in the box. They can be glued directly to the back of the box, or mounted on a small strip of paper made into a ring. This can be glued to the box and will make the critters pop out.



3. Complete the habitat. Remember to repeat some cut lines and shapes to make a feeling of **rhythm and movement**. Make some shapes overlap others to create a sense of **space**. The more layers students add to their dioramas, the more 3D and interesting it will be.

a. Cut out layers of coral, rocks, seaweed, anemones, sponges, etc. to make the habitat.. Color these using the same oil pastel technique. Leave room at the side or bottom to make a fold-over tab for gluing pieces into habitat.

b. Finish with repeated small shapes or other interesting shapes for variety. Making a school of small bright fish to scatter throughout the diorama, shellfish, starfish or jellyfish will add interest.



CLOSE:

- Students complete their response/name sheet. Glue to bottom of diorama.
- Have students present their dioramas to the class. Ask the class to discuss whether each diorama portrays a tropical or Alaskan ocean and explain the clues that led them to their decision. Ask them where they see the center of interest and have them tell why.

Teacher administered assessment tool

DN.	OK	UP	Lesson_____ Teacher_____
			Grade_____ Date_____ Number of Students_____
			Using the thumbs up, ok, and down technique, ask your students the following questions and record their answers. (K=knowledge, S=skills, C= creativity, A=attitude, E=engagement)
			1. Could you tell me two things that can be found in both tropical and Alaskan oceans? (K)
			2. Could you tell me a way to create a sense of rhythm & movement in art? (K)
			3. Did you create a feeling of space and depth in your diorama by overlapping shapes? (K)
			4. Did you create a center of interest in your diorama? (S)
			5. Did you add an imaginative touch to your art? (C)
			6. Did you listen carefully and follow directions? (A)
			7. Did you work hard during this lesson? (E)

Teacher self-critique

8. My teaching of this lesson:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
needed improvement							was highly successful		

9. What would I do differently next time?

ALIGNMENT:**Alignment of Standards:**

Art: A1,2,3,4; B4; C2b,c,5;D6.
 English: A,D.
 Math: B4.
 Science: A,C.
 Geography: D

Alignment of GLE's:

Reading: R2.2, R2.6, W2.1.
 Math: M2.2
 Science: SA3, SC

CREDITS:

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