

Collagraph Printmaking

Lesson Overview: Students will create a print inspired by animals. They will discuss the use of positive and negative space in printmaking and will use cardboard to create the printing plate.

Grade Level: 4th Grade

Subject(s): Visual Arts, Science

*this lesson could be used in combination with a science lesson on animal conservation of endangered/ protected species.

Duration: Two 60 minute sessions (includes 15 to 20 minutes for viewing the artwork)

* add in time to research endangered/protected species if you are including the science components.

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to

- Balance positive and negative space in a composition.
- Create a printing plate and successfully pull a print from it.
- Compare their collagraph prints to the similar technique that Jessie Wilber used in her printmaking.
- *Identify animals that are protected species in our state and why conservation is important for these animals.

Questions for Viewing: First, always take a few moments to really look at the artwork.

VTS Questions

- What do you think is going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What else do you see in this picture?

Additional Questions

- How do you think this was made? With paint, pencil?
- Does anyone know what negative space is in art?
 - Do you see negative space in this magpie detail?
- What is the weather like?
- What are the birds doing?
- What sounds might you hear if you were in this place?

Art Vocabulary:

- **Negative Space:** The space around and between the main subject. Using negative space in a composition can help enhance and identify the focal point.
- **Positive Space:** The main subject or main area of interest. If there is too much positive space, the focal point may get lost.
- **Collagraph Print:** A basic method of printmaking using a board with materials glued onto it to form a relief surface.

Science Vocabulary:

- **Magpie:** The Black-billed Magpie is medium-sized and boldly patterned. They are mostly black, with contrasting white scapulars, white belly, iridescent metallic blue-green wings and tail, and large white markings on primaries, with a white patch on wing when wing is extended.



Magpies in the Snowstorm, 1986, Jessie Wilber, Serigraph (Screen Print) 25 x 20", Museum purchase with Montana Cultural Trust Fund (1989.4)



*notice how the face of this magpie was made using negative space.

Materials

- Cardboard (6" x 8" for the printing plate and scraps for creating their design)
- Colored construction paper 8" x 10"
- Elmer's glue
- Printing ink (They come in a variety of colors. 4, 5oz tubes would be plenty for a class of 20.)
<https://www.dickblick.com/products/blick-water-soluble-block-printing-inks/>
- Brayers (4 or 5 students can take turns printing)
<https://www.dickblick.com/items/40118-1004/>
- Inking plates (Acrylic plexiglass sheets work well to roll out the ink.) <https://www.dickblick.com/items/18973-1009/>
- Pencils for sketching

Setting up your classroom for printmaking:

- It is easiest to set up your classroom for printing in inking stations by color. This way students can easily share and take turns printing.
- Each station should have a brayer, an inking plate and a colored ink.
- After inking up their plates, students can take their plates back to their desk or table to print.
- Put newspaper or paper under each station and under where they will print. This makes clean up much easier.
- Have the students wear old clothes or an apron. Everyone should roll up their sleeves.
- When printing, it is easier to place the plate on top of the paper to get borders that are even. Then rub the back of the plate to transfer the ink to the paper.
- Don't worry too much if the ink gets on a place on the printing plate that you didn't intend; that is part of the beauty of print making.

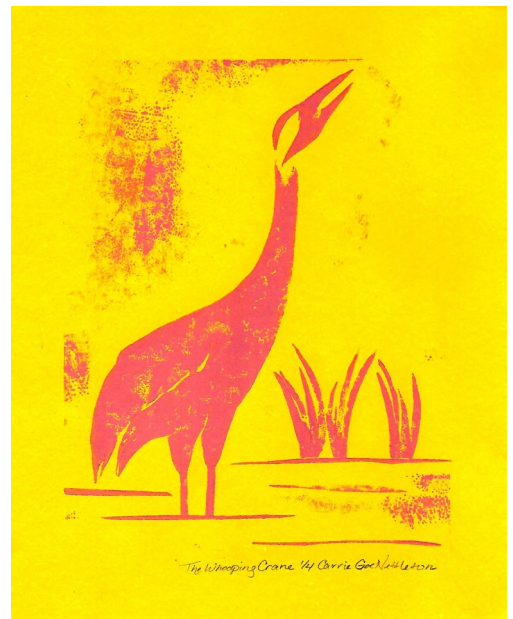


Procedure: First watch a video of the process here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrSYZeFAIfY>

- **Day 1 - Designing the printing plate:** Begin by taking a long moment to really look at the artwork, then discuss the questions for Jessie Wilber's print *Magpies in the Snowstorm*, Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS).
- Students will then research an animal that is on the conservation list. (They could focus just on the animals that are in the state of Montana. <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/species/speciesOfConcern/>)
- Once they have identified the animal that they are going to focus on, they can draw out a sketch of how they want their print to look with a photo of the animal for reference.
 - Keep in mind that everything that they are drawing and cutting out will be reversed when printed.
 - Make sure the most important parts of the print are large, in this case, the animal. This makes printing easier.
- Once they design what they want their piece to look like, students will start cutting out the pieces that they want to be elevated (refer to example above - the white parts are the pieces that are elevated and will eventually be inked).
- The 6" x 8" inch piece of cardboard will be their backing.
- Once the students have finished cutting out all their pieces they will glue the pieces to the 6" x 8" piece of cardboard. (This is their printing plate.)
- **Day 2 - Printing your design:**
 - Any students who have not finished their design must do so before printing.
 - Set up each printing station with a different ink color. Students should choose one color to print with. Printing with more than one color when the inks are still wet will mix the inks together.
 - Before each student begins to roll out the ink, have them choose a paper color and place it on their desk so that it will be ready after they have rolled out the ink.
 - When rolling out the printing plate, it should make a noise as if it was sticky. (see video) Too much ink and you will lose the details of the design. Too little ink on the printing plate won't transfer ink.

- Once the ink is rolled out on the inking plate, use the brayer to roll out the ink on the student's printing plate being sure to cover all of the raised parts with ink.
- Student will take the printing plate back to their spot and place the plate face down on top of the construction paper that they chose. Rub the back of the printing plate until the ink has fully transferred.
 - It may take a few prints before the student gets one that is well transferred. They can experiment with different colors of paper to see which they like the most.
- Once they have finished printing, students should title and sign their work.
 - If they have more than one print that they like, they should also number the print. The first number is the number of the print itself. The second number is the number of overall prints the artist has printed of that image (i.e. 1/4).
- Once everyone is finished, bring them back together to view their artwork and that of Jessie Wilber's. Ask the following questions:
 - Now that you have an understanding of printmaking, do you notice anything new in *Magpies in a Snow Storm*?
 - How are your prints similar and different from the print by Jessie Wilber?



Artwork Example: *The Whooping Crane*

**Please note that this is just an example of the lesson. Students should always be encouraged to create and complete their own artwork.*

Other Resources :

- Collagraph Printmaking Demo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrsYZeFAIfY>
- Magpie Resources courtesy of the Billings Audubon Society
 - Blog post from Montana Audubon: <https://mtaudubon.org/2012/12/black-billed-magpie/#:~:text=In%20Montana%2C%20they%20will%20use,%3B%20crows%2C%20ravens%20and%20jays.&text=But%20the%20same%20cannot%20be,who%20occupy%20habitat%20alongside%20magpies.>
 - Cornell Lab of Ornithology is one of the gold standards of online bird information (species details, habitat, range, etc.): https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-billed_Magpie/overview
 - Resource from Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/magpies/default.html>
 - Fun field note from Montana public radio: <https://www.mtpr.org/post/black-billed-magpies-common-uncommonly-smart>

National Visual Arts Standards:

- VA:Cr.2.1.4a: Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches.
- VA:Cr.2.2.4a: When making works of art, utilize and care for materials, tools, and equipment in a manner that prevents danger to oneself and others.
- VA:Re.7.1.4a: Compare responses to a work of art before and after working in similar media.

Montana Visual Arts Standards:

- Anchor Standard #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Apply research to art-making for the purpose of communicating about constructed environments.
- Anchor Standard #7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. compare components of visual imagery.

* You could also integrate this Art lesson with a Science lesson on animal conservation of endangered/ protected species.

Assessment:

	1	2	3	4
Printmaking Technique	Student does not pull a print from their printing plate.	Student pulls a print from their printing plate but does not attempt to create more than one.	Successfully uses printmaking techniques and pulls a quality print from their printing plate.	Successfully uses printmaking techniques and pulls multiple quality prints from their printing plate.
Elements and Principles of Art	Does not demonstrate positive and negative space in their print.	Begins to show understanding of positive and negative space in their print.	Successfully balances positive and negative space in their print.	Successfully balances positive and negative space in their print which enhances their overall composition.
Craftsmanship (handling of ink and printing on paper)	Does not demonstrate quality craftsmanship through appropriate use of and care for materials.	Occasionally demonstrates quality craftsmanship through appropriate use of and care for materials.	Demonstrates quality craftsmanship through appropriate use of and care for materials.	Demonstrates exceptional craftsmanship through appropriate use of and care for materials
Expression	Does not create a work of art that demonstrates unique idea or style.	Creates a work of art is uniquely their own idea but which ineffectively uses technique of the medium.	Creates a work of art is uniquely their own idea and style.	Creates a work of art is uniquely their own idea and style which effectively uses technique of the medium.
Comparing Visual Imagery	Provides information about their own work but does not compare it to others.	Compares <i>some</i> obvious similarities and differences between own their work and others.	Compares obvious similarities and differences between own their work and others.	Compares obvious and subtle similarities and differences between own their work and others.

- Visual Art Model Cornerstone Assessment <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/Visual%20Arts%20MCAs/Visual%20Arts%20MCAs%20Corrected%20%23's/VA,%20MCA,%205th%20Grade,%20Arial,%205-9-14.pdf>