

Title: *Painting Music and Listening to Art*

Schedule: School Year 2015-2016
K-5 Fall/Winter/Spring

Set-up/prep = 20 minutes
Presentation & Art activity: 1 hour, 15 minutes

Artist: **Wassily Kandinsky** - Moscow, Russia, 1866-1944

Kandinsky is widely credited with making the world's first abstract paintings. He was trained at University to be a lawyer and taught law until the age of 30, when he changed careers and became an artist. Kandinsky had also learned to play the piano and was an accomplished cellist. He believed that an abstract composition of colors and shapes could be just as powerful and emotional as a painting of an amazing landscape, a battle scene, or even a piece of music. Kandinsky had *synesthesia* (sih-nuhs-thee-zhuh) - a harmless genetic condition where one sense triggers a different sense, allowing for example, **to hear colors, see music**, taste words, or smell numbers.

Description: Students will be introduced to Wassily Kandinsky and his first pieces of abstract art. They will learn about how he "painted music and listened to art" without focusing on objects or subjects. Students will have the opportunity to create their own abstract art using watercolors to paint only colors and shapes as they listen to music.

Materials & Space: For this lesson: CPL will provide the children's storybook titled, The Noisy Paint Box, for reading to the class along with a short 5-slide power point, and 3 poster board prints.

Poster board prints: *Untitled - First Abstraction* 1910
Blue Comb, 1917
Without Title, 1912-13

For the Art project: each student will need a piece of cardboard for table cover, one sheet watercolor paper, one sheet slightly smaller Japanese masa paper, 1 watercolor paint tray, 3 various width paint brushes, a paper towel, a clean-water cup, a glue stick, and one 18" strip of thin black string. There should also be a shared white glue bottle per table.

Big Idea: Painting doesn't need a particular subject or objects – shapes and colors alone can be art!

Student Learning Assessment

Learning Objectives <i>What I want my students to know and be able to do.</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>What I will observe in my students – traits that can be seen and/or heard.</i>
1. Learn about the life and art of Wassily Kandinsky and the definition of abstract art.	1. Students will be able to tell their parents who Wassily Kandinsky was, why he was an important artist, and what abstract means in art.
2. To know art is a visual language for storytelling – even when it is only shapes & colors.	2. When students look at a painting, students can describe the story or feelings the art invokes for them – during discussion.
3. To know and use free-flowing water color and line to <i>suggest</i> but not <i>define</i> images.	3. Students paint nondistinct shapes and associate colors freely without being concerned about realistic images – seen in project.
4. To practice how I can respond to music with my art. (paint the emotions that the music makes you feel.)	4. Students can describe feelings evoked by colors and music – in discussion after listening and viewing the pp and observed in choices during the art project. Students can state what they were feeling when asked to describe their interpretation of music listened to in their painting.
5. To recognize or realize that as our world advances/changes with science and discoveries, so does art and music.	5. Students can a.) list things and types of music that did not exist before they were born (ie: rap music), b.) site differences between their parents'/grandparents' "world" and theirs (ie: technology), and c.) talk about new discoveries or changes they are learning about through other subjects in school (ie: Pluto is no longer considered a planet).

Vocabulary: (see Supplement to Kandinsky Learning Plan)

Abstract

Atonal

Expression

Impression, improvisation, and composition = three musical terms that Kandinsky gave to name his paintings.

State Standards:

Component 1.1: Understands and applies arts concepts and vocabulary.

Component 1.2: Develops arts skills and techniques.

Component 1.3: Understands and applies arts genres and styles of various artists, cultures, and times.

Component 2.1: Applies a creative process to the arts.

Component 2.3: Applies a responding process to an arts performance and/or presentation of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Component 3.1: Uses the arts to express feelings and present ideas in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Component 3.3: Develops personal aesthetic criteria to communicate artistic choices in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Component 4.1: Demonstrates and analyzes the connections among the arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts).

Component 4.4: Understands how the arts influence and reflect cultures/civilization, place, and time.

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective #1:

Objective: Learn about the life and art of Wassily Kandinsky and the definition of abstract art.

Criteria: Students will be able to tell their parents who Wassily Kandinsky was, why he was an important artist, and what abstract means in art.

Process: during review at end of lesson & project.

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective #2:

Objective: To know art is a visual language for storytelling – even when it is only shapes & colors.

Criteria: When students look at a painting, students can describe the story or feelings the art invokes for them.

Process: during discussion at power point.

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective #3:

Objective: To know and use free-flowing water color and line to *suggest* but not *define* images.

Criteria: Students paint non-distinct shapes and associate colors freely without being concerned about realistic images.

Process: seen in art project.

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective #4:

Objective: To practice how I can respond to music with my art. (paint the emotions that the music makes me feel.)

Criteria: Students can describe feelings evoked by colors and music. Students can state what they were feeling when asked to describe their interpretation of music listened to in their painting.

Process: – in discussion after listening and viewing power point, and during the art project. Perhaps also review at end of lesson & project (if time allows).

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective #5:

Objective: To recognize or realize that as our world advances/changes with science and discoveries, so does art and music.

Criteria: Students can a.) list things and types of music that did not exist before they were born (ie: rap music), b.) site differences between their parents'/grandparents' "world" and theirs (ie: technology), and c.) talk about new discoveries or changes they are learning about through other subjects in school (ie: Pluto is no longer considered a planet).

Process: in discussion after viewing power point or at end of class time.

Presentation Instructions:

1. Begin by reading the book ***The Noisy Paint Box***. Please be sure to read the **3 quotes** from Kandinsky found in italics on the inside covers.

For K-2: If you think the more exotic colors described in the end pages would be better replaced with simpler, more familiar colors – please refer to the color definitions in the *Supplement to Kandinsky Lesson Plan* and use those instead.

2. Then turn on the power point to the first slide and read this to the students:

3. “On Monday, Jan. 2, 1911, at half past 7 in the evening, Wassily Kandinsky attended a concert at a hotel ballroom in Munich. The next day he painted it.”

Explain that the music Mr. Kandinsky had listened to was **very new – even strange sounding**. It was called “atonal music” = without melody or form. This music was groundbreaking for his time - he was trying to make sense of the new type of music.

4. Let’s close our eyes and listen to what it sounded like. While you are listening, try to imagine the music as a painting in your mind’s eye. What colors do you see? What shapes or images do you see? How is the music making you feel?

5. Play slide #2 of power point for 90 seconds – listening to Arnold Schoenberg’s String Quartet No. 2. You will only see a slide of a quartet of musicians.

6. When the music stops, pause the power point and ask the kids to answer those earlier questions:
What colors did you see in your mind’s eye?
What shapes or images did you see?
How did the music make you feel?

7. Now let’s take a look at what Mr. Kandinsky painted the next day after he heard this new music. Move to slide #3: Kandinsky’s painting that corresponds to the musical selection. Tell them Wassily Kandinsky was one of the **first abstract painters**: painting with only colors and shapes – not specific real-life images. This kind of painting was brand new – some people thought it strange not to paint “things”. His abstract paintings were groundbreaking for his time.

Also explain that Kandinsky had synesthesia and really did see colors when he heard music and visa versa.

8. Ask the children how the painting makes them feel. Engage them in discussion and take comments from students before moving on.

9. Slide #4: Kandinsky wasn’t trying to paint a picture of “real things”, he was painting his feelings, he was **painting music and how it made him feel**. Kandinsky often responded directly to music that he heard by painting it. Discuss with the children the differences between the realistic painting on the left and the abstract painting on the right.

10. Now share the three poster board prints and discuss with children what they see and feel. Explain that Kandinsky often named his abstract art with titles from musical forms like Improvisation, Impression, and Composition. He named the paintings he considered the most accomplished "Composition". He only named ten of his paintings this way.

11. Now let's try to paint music like Mr. Kandinsky!

Art activity: "Let's Paint Music!"

1. Ask students to write their name on one side of the watercolor paper and set it aside. Explain that it will be used at the end of our project. For K-2: Instructors could choose to keep the watercolor paper and pass it out when the painting is complete.
2. Instruct the students to **randomly** tear the Japanese masa paper into 3 to 5 large pieces (~4"x3" or for K-2: "bigger than their hand") – don't worry about the rough edges and don't tear for uniform shapes. **Tear the pieces of paper in a size big enough to paint on.**
3. Tell the students that they are going to be listening to music. They are to use the various sized paintbrushes to cover the **rough** side of the 3 to 5 masa paper pieces with colors and shapes that they see in their mind's eye while listening to the music. Encourage them to paint the colors and shapes that they feel!
4. You may want to review how to use watercolors: ie: clean brush between colors, don't use too much water, try to use all the shapes of brushes for variety. Tell students that when one piece of torn masa is complete, set it aside and move on to another torn piece until all their pieces are painted. The butcher paper is a protector so that students can paint completely to the edges.
5. Begin the music slide in the power point. (Slide #5) Encourage them to paint the colors and shapes that they see in their mind's eye while listening to the music.
6. Walk around and monitor the students. Remind them to fill the entire piece of each "scrap" in the pile according to how they would PAINT THIS MUSIC as they listen.
7. Watch out for students who may use too much water. The torn pieces need to be fairly dry, at least not puddling, when this task is over.
8. When music is finished or students are done painting the torn pieces, ask them to arrange the torn pieces on the top side of the watercolor paper in ways that appeal to them. (name side down – do not have name showing)
9. Tell the students to arrange the pieces on their paper. **Try rearranging the pieces.** This is to encourage the students to try different layouts before making their final decision.

10. When the student is satisfied with the arrangement of the torn pieces onto the watercolor “frame” – use the glue sticks to gently glue down the edges of the torn pieces onto the watercolor paper.

11. Now ask the students to layout the black string on top of the papers in such a way as to emphasize a particular shape, line, or color in their painting. They may use the black string to outline shapes or colors or to delineate their painting in some creative way.

12. When they are satisfied with where the string is placed, have them squeeze a **tiny, thin** line of white glue all along the edge of the rope. They can use their finger to roll the string onto the glue line as they go or when done making the glue line.

13. Lastly, ask the students to title their work with a musical name. This could be from a song they know (ie: “ABC123”) or it can have musical words in it (ie: Jazzy 1). Students in grades 2-5 should write the title in a lower corner of the watercolor paper – NOT on top of the painted pieces! Students K-1 will need adult assistants to go around the room and ask each child what their title is and write it for them.

14. If enough time remains, engage students in a walk-around to see each others’ work.

15. Before you or the students leave, ask them some review questions:

Who is today’s artist?

What was Wassily Kandinsky famous for?

What does abstract mean?

Do paintings always have to be of “things”?

For older kids, what is synesthesia?

What devices exist today for viewing art or listening to music that did not exist when Kandinsky was alive? (computers and other technology)

DAILY NOTES: