



Title: Neighborhood collage

Artist: Romare Bearden - 1911-1988

Romare Bearden was an African-American internationally recognized for his lifelong work as a collage artist. His work told many captivating and inspiring stories to draw attention to social realism and to celebrate the African-American experience.

Bearden's most famous works are created by collage. Collage comes from the French word *coller*, "to gum or stick something together." His work was created by gluing fragments of paper, fabric, scraps, photographs, drawings, and images in magazines and newspapers to a flat surface. In addition, he used watercolors, oil paints, and inks to make his collages. He enjoyed many art forms and styles including African, Asian and European art.

Romare Bearden was born in Charlotte, North Carolina. He moved to Harlem in New York City when he was a young child and grew up there in the midst of the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance (1919-1929), was a period in American cultural history when Black artists felt a need to contribute their African heritage and pride in a positive way to the visual, performing and literary arts. Harlem became the center of this artistic rebirth during the 1920's when Romare Bearden was a young artist. Bearden often associated with the likes of author and poet, Langston Hughes, and musicians, Fats Waller and Duke Ellington. From the 1940's through the 1980's, Romare Bearden became a presence in American art. He had many successful exhibitions at premier art galleries throughout the United States.

Romare Bearden captured many wonderful images from his childhood memories and images of the meaningful people and places throughout his life. His work is rich with narrative details about black community life-public and private. Romare Bearden had an amazing ability to unify the mixed media of his work through experimentation, in order to communicate universal themes with profound artistic value.

Vocabulary

Collage: The definition of collage is "an abstract form of art in which photographs, pieces of paper, newspaper cuttings, string, etc. are placed in juxtaposition and glued to the pictorial surface; such a work of art" Although it is considered an "abstract form of art", the materials used are symbolic and textual representations of recognizable objects. When placed next to each other, however, these representations may lose their autonomous meaning by creating a new, collective experience.

Color: An aspect of how we see light, helps us to tell otherwise identical objects apart

Shape: Created when a line meets itself; geometric or organic

Texture: actual texture is the way something feels to the touch, implied texture creates the feeling of an object

Composition Techniques

Overlapping shapes - Students overlap shapes to create depth, emphasis, and provide a focal point. Background items should be placed first, followed by middle, and lastly foreground details.

Going off the page - Students may tend to center everything in the middle of their page, leaving a blue border-like space around the page. Breaking up this negative space creates more visual dynamism. "Visual dynamism" is a less subjective way to say, "interesting."

Making their piece big - For Grades 3-5, every shape they cut out should be as big as two of their fingers put together. Encourage students to think in terms of big shapes that represent an idea, rather than fixating on cutting out small clothing or facial details.

Emphasis: Placing a warm color next to a cool color is one way to create contrast in a collage. Contrast is a way to create emphasis.

Teaching Tip: How this Unit Uses Shape:

This unit uses shape to help students think about how they cut and place their paper to create a collage. Students cut shapes no smaller than two fingers together; they create geometric shapes and organic shapes. Use big shapes that fill the page; have shapes go off the page; and overlap shapes to create emphasis.

COACHING TIP: SAFE AND EFFECTIVE SCISSOR USE

If necessary, help students use scissors safely and effectively with the following suggested dialogue:

"Let's practice using our scissors to cut out shapes for collage. (Students pick up scissors.) Scissors are like alligators: Your thumb is like the alligator's eye. Always keep your thumb pointed toward the ceiling because alligators don't want to be upside down. Watch how I cut my paper." (Demonstrate while students watch.)

"Like an alligator, open the mouth of the scissors wide and place the paper in the very back of the alligator's mouth. Don't make big chomps, because it's hard to control the line you are making with your scissors. Instead, make small little bites, not closing your scissor

blades and keeping the paper in the back of the alligator's mouth. I am creating shapes by drawing with my scissors. When I want to turn, I turn my paper, not my alligator mouth. This way I don't accidentally cut my other hand."

Materials: 9 X12' blue paper, colored papers, scrapbook papers, newspaper, fabric scraps, photocopied images

Depending on the layout of the classroom, it might be helpful to have different stations for all the materials (fabric in one area, colored paper in another, etc). Consider limiting the number of students at each station, for example, "There can only be three students at a station at a time. If you see three people at a station already, you will have to wait or choose another station."

- Let students know that we are going to make a small street scene/neighborhood collage on our sheet of paper; we will then put all the papers together to create a bigger street scene.

First, have students add a road or street at the bottom of the page, grey strips of paper will be provided.

Next, have the students begin assembling the buildings in their street scene with the colored half sheets and the paper scraps (remind them that the background needs to be in place before adding smaller details):

- Ask the students what kind of building they are going to make. Choose a color or texture for you building, cut out the building shape; they can add a roof or a sign.
- Instruct students to compose their buildings before they begin gluing,

Progress check: Hand out glue sticks once students have a plan and their shapes are cut out.

- Remind students to glue the background first and then move to foreground.
- Remind students to put glue on their small shapes, not the large background paper.
- Remind students about what they can add, porches, a chimney, signs flags, etc.

Once the students have a composition with buildings, windows streets, etc. invite them to select photocopied images, and fabric to add to their work to create detail.

If there is time, have the students assemble their street scenes together to make a neighborhood. Perhaps use hallways, or a wall in the classroom. Classroom teachers may opt to do this as an activity after the lesson.

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. Observe the collages of Romare Bearden to learn about his style and his history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize key concepts in collage, including how collection and multimedia can be a type of portraiture
2. Identify how heritage and culture play a part in the creative process, and how art can be a reflection of self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about and identify the Harlem Renaissance and Bearden’s contribution to the art world as a prominent African American
3. Practicing artistic skills by creating a collage with a variety of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate age-appropriate skills and safety in designing and constructing a multimedia collage using scissors
4. Create an original collage of a familiar place in order to better understand how we relate to our environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a working understanding of environment and how it interacts with self-reflection Recognize how every person’s interaction with the same environment can be different by connecting all collages and creating a neighborhood

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective 1

Objective: Observe the collages of Romare Bearden to learn about his style and history

WA Arts Standards Learning Component: 1.1, 1.3, and 4.3

Criteria: Recognize key concepts in collage, including how collection and multimedia can be a type of portraiture, specifically in landscape collage.

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective 2

Objective: Identify how heritage and culture play a part in the creative process and how art can be a reflection of self

WA Arts Standards Learning Component: 4.3, 4.4, and 1.3

Criteria: Learn about and identify the Harlem Renaissance and Bearden's contribution to the artwork as a prominent African American

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective 3

Objective: Practice artistic skills by creating a collage with a variety of materials

WA Arts Standards Learning Component: 1.1, 2.1, and 3.1

Criteria: Demonstrate age-appropriate skills and safety in designing and construction a multimedia collage using scissors

Formative Assessment Checkpoint for Objective 4

Objective: Create an original collage of a familiar place in order to better understand how we relate to our environment

WA Arts Standards Learning Component: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2

Criteria: Demonstrate a working understanding of environment and how it interacts with self-reflection; recognize how every person's interaction with the same environment can be different by connecting all collages and creating a neighborhood

State Standards:

1.1 Understands and applies visual art concepts and vocabulary

1.2 Develops visual arts skills and techniques

1.3 Understands and applies visual arts genres and styles of various artists, cultures, and times

2.1 Applies a creative process to visual arts

2.2 Applies a performance and/or presentation process to visual arts

3.1 Uses visual art to express feelings and present ideas

4.3 Understand how the arts impact and reflect personal choices throughout life

4.4 Understand how the arts influence and reflect cultures/civilization, place, and time