



Triangles and Circles and Squares, Oh My!

Shapes in Character Design



James Doyle, Laura Halstied

Published by K20 Center

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	Time Frame	90-120 Minutes
Subject	Visual Arts	Duration	1-2 Periods
Course	Any Secondary Course, Visual Arts		

Essential Question

How does shape inform character design?

Summary

In this visual arts lesson, students will design characters from shapes. After starting their designs, they will view videos from two professional artists on completing this exercise and iteration in character design. Once students have refined their characters, they will trade with other students who will offer suggestions. Finally, students will create a finished character and reflect on the lesson using Chat Stations.

Snapshot

Engage

Students draw three shapes and color each with one solid color.

Explore

Students write a Preflection, turn their shapes into characters, and watch a short video.

Explain

Students watch a video from a character artist and find its Point of Most Significance. Afterward, they Pass the Problem to another student for help with their designs.

Extend

Students use feedback from the previous step and further develop their character through the use of accessories. Optionally, students watch a career connection video about the work of an artist.

Evaluate

Students return to their Preflection writing, and then navigate Chat Stations to help them evaluate their experience.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Fine Arts: Visual Art (High School: Proficient (I)))

VA.CP.1 : Learn and use vocabulary and concepts related to visual arts.

I.VA.CP.1.1 : Use the elements of art (e.g., line, color, form, shape, texture, value, and space) and principles of design (e.g., rhythm, balance, contrast, movement, center of interest, and repetition) to develop multiple approaches to create art.

VA.P.1 : Utilize a variety of ideas and subject matter in creation of original works of visual art.

I.VA.P.1.1 : Document process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas and originality.

Attachments

- [Chat Stations Posters—Triangles and Circles and Squares - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Chat Stations Posters—Triangles and Circles and Squares - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Chat Stations Posters—Triangles and Circles and Squares.docx](#)
- [Chat Stations Posters—Triangles and Circles and Squares.pdf](#)
- [Chat Stations Questions—Triangles and Circles and Squares - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Chat Stations Questions—Triangles and Circles and Squares - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Chat Stations Questions—Triangles and Circles and Squares.docx](#)
- [Chat Stations Questions—Triangles and Circles and Squares.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Triangles and Circles and Squares.pptx](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Chat Stations Posters (attached)
- Chat Stations Questions (attached, one per student)
- Pencils
- Markers, pastels, or other coloring instruments
- Blank drawing paper
- Projector
- Speakers

5 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

Prior to the lesson, hang the attached **Chat Stations Posters** around the room. You will use these posters in the Evaluate activity.

Display **slide 3** from the attached **Lesson Slides**. Provide each student with a piece of copy paper and tools use for coloring. Have students each draw three different, contrasting shapes and fill each one with a solid, contrasting color. Start the timer on slide 3 and provide 5 minutes for students to complete the task.

Teacher's Note: Complexity Level

The grade and skill level of your class can determine the complexity of the exercise. For example, if you have an introductory class you might limit students to basic shapes like triangles, circles, and squares. If you have a more advanced class, you can have students create shapes from squiggles. Refer to the [Squiggles](#) strategy for details.

20 minutes

Explore

Move through **slides 4-5** and review the essential question and lesson objective with students. Move to **slide 6** and have students take out a piece of notebook paper. Using the [Preflection](#) strategy, tell students to write a response to the essential question:

How does shape inform character design?

Ask for volunteers to share their thoughts about the question. When they have finished, collect their papers for use later in the lesson.

Possible Student Responses

Student responses might include statements such as, "it helps define the character" or "it creates a solid foundation to build on." More basic responses might include answers such as, "it helps inspire" or direct responses to shapes such as, "circular is soft, and square is mean."

Move to **slide 7** and instruct students to turn each of the shapes that they drew into a different character. Suggest that they try to use the shapes in inventive ways. Are they faces? Bodies? Human-like? Creatures? Students are free to alter the proportions of the shape or the shade of the color, but each change should be drawn next to the previous version so it's clear how the character evolves. Tell students that they have 5 minutes to turn their shapes into characters and begin the timer on slide 7.

When time expires, display **slide 8** and show the [Drawing Shapes Into Faces!](#) video.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=FQd3h9tTMvk>

Display **slide 9**. Tell students that they have 10 more minutes to finish turning their shapes into characters, and then start the timer.

25 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 10** and show the video [ITERATION: An Essential Character Design Tool!](#)

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=KCF0-PBtHAA>

Move to **slide 11** and ask students to think about the [POMS: Point of Most Significance](#) from the video. Ask students to share their thoughts with a partner, and then ask for volunteers to share with the whole class.

Display **slide 12** and instruct students to do a variation of the [Pass the Problem](#) strategy. Instruct students to make a new iteration of one of their characters, and then have them exchange their artwork with another student. Each student will now draw a version of the character before them based upon the latest iteration and add a few lines of design feedback underneath. Instruct them to consider changing elements like texture, line thickness, and shade. They can also change the primary color used for the character if they think there is a better option.

Have students return their papers to the original owners and use the feedback from their peers to make another iteration of their characters. They don't have to keep this new iteration as their final product, but updating the character based on feedback gives them another perspective to consider.

10 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 13**. Tell students to add an accessory to each character using a different color. (They can also change the color of the character to better suit the accessory.) The accessory should tell viewers something else about the character. Remind students about the video on iteration and how each small change to the face greatly informed the final tone and expression of the character. How could a piece of clothing or jewelry or a held item do the same?

Display **slides 14** and **15** to provide examples for students of what the process of modifying their characters could look like.

15 minutes

Extend 2 (Optional ICAP)

Teacher's Note: Setting Up [Mentimeter](#)

Copy this [Mentimeter presentation](#) to your account. Copy the link of your new presentation to the slides for this lesson before using it.

After opening the link, select "Copy to your Account." To get the new link, select "Share," and then paste the link into the slides.

Optional Career Connection Activity

To further extend students' learning about art careers, show the [K20 ICAP - Triangles and Circles and Squares! Oh My!](#) video in which Lisa Barry discusses her job as an artist.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=25e-7Cuh-z0>

Have students navigate to the Mentimeter using your link and code. As they watch the ICAP video, have them write down ideas that they find interesting.

20 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 16**. Distribute students' Preflections responses from earlier in the lesson and have the students answer the essential question again now that they have practiced making characters from shapes. Ask for students to share their thoughts.

Move to **slide 17**. Pass out the attached **Chat Stations Questions** handout to each student. Have students find their previous partner and then combine with another pair to form groups of four.

Tell students to visit each of the [Chat Stations](#) as a group, discuss the question that appears on the poster at that station, and answer the question on their handout.

Resources

- Audity. (2021, August 5). Drawing shapes into faces! [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved June 7, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQd3h9tTMvk>
- Brookes Eggleston - Character Design Forge. (2021, June 6). Iteration: An essential character design tool! [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved June 7, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCF0-PBtHAA>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Chat stations. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/944>
- K20 Center. (2022, August 8). K20 ICAP - Triangles and circles and squares! Oh my! [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25e-7Cuh-z0>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mentimeter. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/645>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Pass the problem. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/151>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). POMS: Point of most significance. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/101>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Preflections. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/191>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Squiggles. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/936>