



# UNCONVENTIONAL MOSAICS LESSON PLAN

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## GOALS

Thrive Collective provides project-based learning that teaches both art and life skills. To the extent possible, every lesson plan provides three clear goals—artistic learning, project participation and applicable life lesson. For this project, the goals include the following:

1. Artistic learning - This class will teach students how to utilize everyday objects to create mosaic paintings.
2. Project Participation - By the end of the class, students will learn what a mosaic is and accomplish recreating classic works of art out of found objects.
3. Applicable life lesson - Students will be introduced to how the art skill relates to life outside the classroom through reimagining what is an art material. Students may think they are restricted by the supplies they have access to around them, but this lesson expands what is possible for students to use creatively. It challenges students to look at objects in creative ways and put them together into a larger, cohesive picture, thus developing problem solving skills that apply to other areas.

## MATERIALS

Pencil, blank paper  
Fabric (shirts, pants, socks, etc)  
Beads/Toys  
Crayons  
Magazines/Construction Paper  
Plastic cups, bottle caps  
Candy/food  
Any objects with varying shades of colors

## EXPECTATIONS

This project can be done with any age group. The lesson helps students to look at their surroundings as an endless supply for creativity rather than not having access to classic art supplies. Along with a greater sense of color understanding, students will learn to think outside of the box and problem solve for what materials will best embody different shapes and colors in the paintings or images they replicate in their mosaic.



## WHAT TO SHOW

The following are examples to show students under each step to give them a visual in order to inspire their own creativity:

Step 1 links:

[Turquoise mosaic](#)

[Peace sign](#)

[Letter S made out of toys](#)

[Marilyn Monroe](#)

[Rubberband N](#)

[Jimi Hendrix](#)

[Pixel art](#)

Step 2 links:

[Bird made out of bottle caps](#)

[Watermelon made out of bottle caps](#)

[Patrick Star made out of M&Ms](#)

Not every student identifies as an artist or enthusiastically embraces an art project, so do not feel frustrated if students choose not to engage with a particular lesson. Hopefully, in time, you will be able to present less interested students with various opportunities to engage with the process and add value with their creative input. Many students will need a boost in confidence to feel like they have the ability to be creative and successful in conveying their thoughts through art. Showing a masterpiece beyond their skill level can be discouraging and convey the message that this level of finish is to be expected. Using simple drawings and shapes within their skill level to demonstrate work will benefit them more. Similarly, using examples that are too simple will fail to engage the student and result in losing their interest. Choose age-appropriate examples and demonstrations to use that meet them at their level.

## WHAT TO TELL

This project is about having fun and letting loose. It is important to note that this lesson specifically calls for students to replicate compositions that they can follow (e.g., a van Gogh painting or a picture of a fish), taking off the pressure to create an entirely new image with the objects that they have available. Encourage resourcefulness and make sure to take part in gathering a lot of seemingly random objects to show that anything has value. It is also important students break the image down into larger color blocks, making the project more accessible to everyone. Depending on the students, encourage them to take notice of more subtle colors in the picture.

The more students explore possibilities and create interesting solutions for what can compose the image, the more freedom the students will feel in creating and problem solving in general. There is no one solution, but the more silly the better.



## CLASS OUTLINE (30-50 Minutes)

### PROJECT: Object Mosaics

#### OBJECTIVE

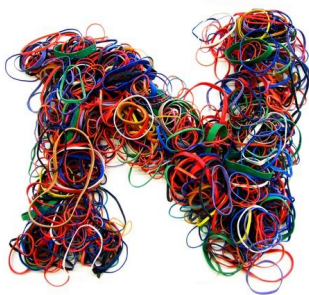
Students will practice creating colorful mosaics with alternative everyday objects as their material source.

- Introduce/remind students what a mosaic is and what it looks like
- Students will start to break down the larger picture and practice making shapes with objects based on their color
- Students will build critical thinking, problem solving, and flexibility while also increasing their sense of color and space.

#### STEP 1: INTRODUCTION (5-10 minutes)

##### DEMO

Ask if anyone knows what a mosaic is or if they have ever seen one in person. Follow up with referencing the images students would see in the subway system around New York City if they are unsure. Explain to students that a mosaic is a picture or pattern produced by arranging together small colored pieces of hard material, such as stone, tile or glass. Start off by showing a variety of images made from objects students can easily find at home. Discuss what items they can see being used in each piece. Once students have been shown the examples below, select materials and demonstrate creating a simple shape out of similar color objects.





## CLASS WORK

Have students choose three different basic shapes (e.g., a star, circle, first letter of their name). Have them play with the scale and color composition of each shape. Have them also play with how they place each object—putting objects spread out, next to one another, and overlapping. If students have multiple types of materials, encourage them to blend different types together in the same image.

## GROUP CHECK-IN / PRESENTATIONS

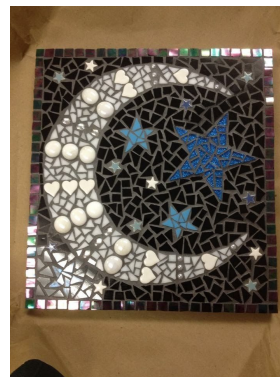
Ask students what changing the placement of the objects does to the image. Follow up with asking them how mixing colors and different size objects affect what they are making and which do they like better. Encourage them to explore as much as possible with what they have available and to try different arrangements.

*Note: Depending on the age group, point out how the size and amount of each object will affect the overall image. Showing how to create lines or direction of motion by placing the image can give a lot of leeway to students in customizing what they are making.*

## STEP 2: PROJECT (5-10 minutes)

### DEMO

Building off of creating basic shapes, students will now create three color compositions. Choose a photo to break down with the students. Draw on top of the picture to show the larger areas of color that would be needed to recreate the image. On paper, map out the drawing. Make sure to show that depending on how you arrange the materials, the image will look different due to spacing, shadows, and the linear direction of the object. Remind them to have fun with the materials. The more obscure the better.





## CLASS WORK

Have the students choose one of the four images shown as examples. Once they have selected their image, have them map out larger areas of color with a pencil and paper. After it is mapped out, fill in each area. Remind them that they can choose to place the objects close, overlapping, or spaced out to create different line qualities.

## GROUP CHECK-IN / PRESENTATIONS

Remind them to have fun with the materials and play with the colors they are using in the mosaic. Ask what is difficult about the task and what is easy. Have them present their image to the class.

*Note: Students may not have every color or large enough quantities for some really complicated images. Remember that mixing the media is key and that cut paper works well. They can also substitute colors as long as an image itself gets created.*

## STEP 3: PROJECT (15-20 minutes)

### DEMO

Demonstrate applying the same principals that students already practiced on a slightly more complicated image. This step is less about exactly replicating an image, but drawing inspiration from it and adding personal touches as well. Show your image to the class. As before, figure out the larger sections of colors and then map out the general composition.



## CLASS WORK

Present three options for students to choose from to draw inspiration. Students can create their own composition at this point using the techniques they learned in the previous two steps. Be sure students utilize more than three colors. Encourage students to make art at any scale that they have space to accommodate in their environment.



## **GROUP CHECK-IN / PRESENTATIONS**

Once done with the art, have students show their project to the class. Lead the discussion by asking the following questions:

- What other materials could have been great to use?
- Why would certain materials be better for different parts of the mosaic?
- How would that change how we read the art?
- What would happen if they chose to animate their artwork?
- What other possibilities are there for using objects found at home to create scenes?

In conclusion, remind students that looking at objects in different ways and putting them into a larger picture helps them find creative solutions in other areas of life.