



Mondrian Trees

GRADE: 1

TIME: one session

Developed by Linda Pfisterer, Art Specialist



KIT INCLUDES:

- lesson plan
- book, Mondrian by Taschen
- 4 tree reproductions
- 1 biographical board
- 4 Mondrian reproductions
- project example

MATERIALS:

- 9x12 white construction paper
- 12x18 construction paper
- assorted colors
- paint brushes
- black oil pastels
- water color paint sets
- paper towel
- water cups

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students learn about Piet Mondrian who painted trees all his life in different styles. They then draw and paint a tree in the style of Piet Mondrian.

VOCABULARY:

vertical lines
horizontal lines
primary colors
realistic
abstract

ART ELEMENTS:

☒ Line
☐ Shape/Form
☒ Color
☐ Value
☐ Texture
☐ Space/Perspective

ART PRINCIPLES:

☐ Pattern
☐ Rhythm/movement
☐ Proportion/Scale
☐ Balance
☐ Unity
☐ Emphasis

RELATES TO:

Abstraction/
simplification

THEMES:
Trees

OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Students will recognize the primary colors from Mondrian's vertical and horizontal line paintings.
2. Students will distinguish between realistic paintings and abstract paintings of Mondrian's trees.
3. Students will draw and paint their own trees using the "Y" shape in the tree trunk and branches.

PREPARE

Before the lesson:

Gather materials and have paper towels precut about 12" long.
Make the lesson yourself before teaching.

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE:

Discuss the paintings of Piet Mondrian. As you show the students each board listed below, read or relate the included information.

BOARD 1: -- Piet Mondrian Biography Board

Piet Mondrian was from Holland, so we call him a Dutch artist. His name is pronounced **Peet MAWN dree Ahn**. (Let students pronounce it three times to help them remember.)

These photographs show him looking as a young man and as an older man. He is best known for his later paintings, which used straight black **vertical** and **horizontal lines**. Have the students make vertical lines and then horizontal lines with their hands. Mondrian liked to use three colors over and over. They are the **primary colors**. (Have students name colors: red, yellow, and blue.) These three colors mix all of the other colors. Display his most famous line and shape paintings.

BOARD 2: This board shows 4 paintings:

Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue – Mondrian is famous for making many paintings similar to this one. Sometimes there will be only one color, like yellow, with the white spaces between the horizontal and vertical lines.

Broadway Boogie-Woogie – Say this title out loud. What does the title remind you of?

Victory Boogie-Woogie – This painting is very similar to Broadway Boogie-Woogie, but is very different in one way. How are they different? (One has a diamond shape, and one is a square.) Can you name the colors Mondrian likes to use?

Composition with Yellow Lines – This painting is another example of Mondrian turning the canvas so the shape is a diamond instead of a square. Eventually other artists began turning their canvases.

BOARDS 3, 4, 5, 6: These boards are Mondrian's tree paintings. He began working very realistically and moved more and more toward abstraction as he aged.

Teach the Mondrian song now as a review of the vocabulary words.

Mondrian Song (to the tune of London Bridge)

Mondrian used lots of lines, lots of lines, lots of lines.

Mondrian used lots of lines in his paintings.

Black and white, red, yellow and blue -- black, white, red, yellow, blue.

Mondrian is famous for Abstract Paintings.

Choose four students to hold one of the four tree paintings in front of the class. Make sure the students are not holding the paintings in chronological order. Explain to the class that Mondrian started painting trees very "real" looking, but as he painted more, his paintings began to look less and less real. Eventually they were completely abstract and although they were called trees, they didn't look at all like trees. We need to arrange these tree paintings from real to abstract. Say to the

students, “Get your pointing finger ready, because when I am done describing a ‘real looking’ tree, I want you to point to it. “

1. Real looking trees--This painting uses the true colors of trees, and the shapes clearly look like trees. Now point. Move this student to the first position beginning the line.

2. Next most real tree--The colors are not so real looking, but the tree and the branches look very real. Now point. Move student next.

3. Beginning abstraction--In this painting you can still recognize the trunk of the tree, but it doesn't have much color. (It also has long, curving black lines filling the painting.) Now point. Move student next.

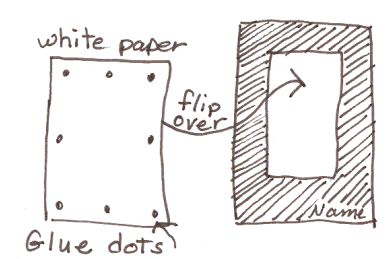
4. Abstract—The remaining painting is called apple tree. Does it look like a tree? In this painting the black line seems to make new shapes. Then the new shapes are filled in with different colors. Notice that an abstract painting often looks okay upside down or sideways.

CREATE:

Demonstrate the following steps.

1. Paper set-up: Choose colored background paper 12" x18" and glue the white 9"x12" on top with three dots of white glue on each side. Caution them not to make the glue dots too close to the edge or at the corner because the glue will squish out and make a mess when you push the paper down.

2. Sign your name: Write your name neatly with a pencil in the bottom right corner of the colored paper.



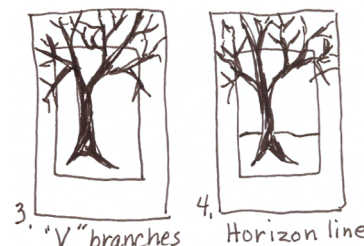
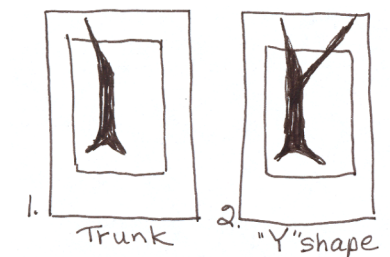
3. Draw the tree:

- Use a black oil pastel and draw the thick trunk of a tree, filling it in as you go.

- As you move up the trunk it should get thinner. Draw right off the top of the paper.

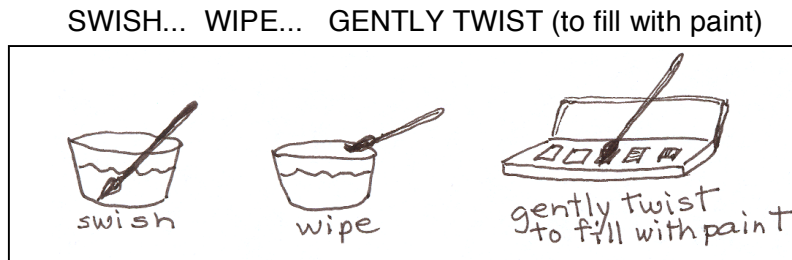
- Half way up the trunk, draw another thick branch up and off the paper. Notice that you have just made the letter “Y”. Continue to ‘branch’ more and more limbs, repeating the letter “Y” until the sky is filled with branches.

- Remember that Mondrian drew his trees in many ways. Yours can be as real or as abstract as you wish.



At this point let students draw their trees and the land line (horizon). Then demonstrate the following.

4. Use and care of brushes and watercolor paints: Demonstrate gentle use of brushes, always pulling them across the paint cakes or paper and never pushing them. Show them how to wash the brush, dab away the extra water and then fill with paint by using these words:



5. Painting of the many tree spaces: Begin painting with one color, filling in about 7 spaces between the branches, and also make a few brush strokes on the land. If you run out of paint, just add more water and more paint. Then clean your brush and get ready for a new color. Paint with the new color until it is evenly distributed on the sky and land. Then go on to the next color, and so on. Leave some white spaces if you wish—it often looks better. Let dry, then display on bulletin board using enclosed project explanation.

Clean-up tips: Have students rinse their brushes and squeeze out extra water with fingers. With students at this age, it's best if the teacher picks up the water cups. Students need to be shown how to carry their paint tray flat without tipping, to avoid having the paints mix or drip out.

SING THE MONDRIAN SONG WHILE CLEANING UP. Copy the sheet below for students to place on the back of their art.

	<p>**Color one section of this red, one blue, and one yellow, and it will look like a Mondrian abstract painting!</p>	<p>ARTIST: Piet Mondrian</p> <p>Today in ART you learned about an artist named Piet Mondrian. Say: Peet MAWN-Dree-AHN. He was a famous artist from Holland who changed his work a lot! He began by making things look very real, but by the end of his career, he made things look very simple by using just vertical and horizontal lines and primary colors. His work even influenced architecture. Many buildings were made to look like Mondrian paintings.</p> <p>You looked at TREES like Mondrian did earlier in his career and experimented with simple lines and colors. You painted an "ABSTRACT" tree. That means it looks different than it does in NATURE.</p>	
<p>Mondrian Song (Sing to London Bridge.)</p> <p>Mondrian used lots of lines, lots of lines, lots of lines.</p> <p>Mondrian used lots of lines in His paintings. Black and white, red, yellow, blue, black, white, red yel-low blue</p> <p>Mondrian is famous for Abstract Paintings.</p>	<p><i>Keep up the great work!</i></p>		

CLOSE:

ASSESSMENT: Students can display their paintings and tell the class if their tree looks realistic or abstract. Give reasons for the decision.

Teacher administered assessment tool

DN	OK	UP	Lesson_____ Teacher_____
			Grade_____ Date_____ Number of Students_____
			Using the thumbs up, ok, and down technique, ask your students the following questions and record their answers. (K=knowledge, S=skills, C= creativity, A=attitude, E=engagement)
			1. Did you find Mondrian's most realistic and most abstract trees? (K)
			2. Did you draw a "Y" shaped tree? (KSE)
			3. Can you name the primary colors? (K)
			4. Did paint the space between the tree branches many colors? (KSE)
			5. Do you feel you were able to add your own creative touch to your art? (C)
			6. Did you actively listen and follow directions? (A)
			7. Did you do your best during this lesson? (E)

Teacher self-critique

8. My teaching of this lesson:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
needed improvement was highly successful

9. What would I do differently next time?

ALIGNMENT:**Alignment of Standards:**

Art: A1,3,4; B5; C4,6
Science: D;

CREDITS:

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