

Surrealist Specimens Game



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Technical drawings take an unexpected adventure with the help of collaboration — and chance.

Surrealism is an artistic and literary movement that emerged in the mid-1920s and continued through the 1960s. Surrealist artists believed that art should be free from rational thought. They were heavily influenced by psychoanalysis and the groundbreaking theories of Dr. Sigmund Freud, specifically his ideas about the conflict between the conscious and unconscious mind. The movement was defined by the use of fantastical imagery and unexpected juxtaposition, aiming to capture and express unconscious thoughts and dreams.

To unleash their imaginations, Surrealists created parlor games and artistic techniques designed to inspire creativity. These methods aimed to liberate the mind from preconceived ideas, often producing strange and dreamlike imagery. One popular collaborative game was "Exquisite Corpse," while techniques like frottage (pencil rubbings) and automatic drawing were also central to Surrealist art. Collage was another key technique, enabling artists to quickly generate new compositions by combining random, ready-made images.

This collaborative game, inspired by Salvador Dali's botanical prints, combines reproductions of technical drawings, action phrases, and elements of chance to create a multimedia collage. It relies on technical drawing skills, creative composition, imagination, and humor, resulting in a hilariously bizarre Surrealist narrative.



Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Materials (required)

[Blick Studio Pigment Liners](#), assorted sizes, set of 3, (81775-2039); share one set per student

[Strathmore 300 Series Bristol Sheet](#), smooth, 22-1/2" x 28-1/2", 100 lb (13316-1042); need two sheets

[Paper Accents Cardmaker's Choice Cardstock Pack](#), 8-1-2" x 11", 50 sheets, 100 lb (14205-1021); need two packages

[Blick Studio Watercolor Paper by Fabriano](#), cold press, 9-1/2" x 13" pkg of 20 sheets, 140 lb (10080-1021); one sheet per student

[Tombow Dual Brush Pens](#), choose from an assortment of sets and colors, (21334-); share a set of 10 colors between four students

[Blick Studio Artists' Colored Pencils](#), assorted colors, set of 36 (22063-0369); share one set between four students

[Royal & Langnickel Essentials Watercolor Pan Set](#), assorted pearlescent colors, set of 28 (86343-1009); share one set between four students

[Royal & Langnickel Essentials Gouache Paint](#), assorted colors, set of 12 plus 2 brushes (00911-1009); share one set between four students

[Richeson Plastic Palette Tray](#), 5 slanted wells, 6 round wells, (03425-1005); one per student

[Royal & Langnickel Big Kid's Choice Brush Class Pack](#), short handle, assorted sizes, set of 90 (06046-4072); share one class pack across class

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Preparation

1. Cut the 22-1/2" x 28-1/2" Strathmore 300 Series Bristol Sheet into sixteen 5" x 7" pieces. Each student will need one piece.

Process

1. Preface the collage game by stating:
 - 1) There are no winners and no losers.
 - 2) There is no "wrong" way to interpret and depict the action phase chosen.
 - 3) Thinking "outside the box" is encouraged. The images selected can be used to create any aspect of the collage. They can become characters to illustrate the phrase, or they can be used to fill background space.
2. On a slip of paper, each student will write an action phrase, or use the provided list. The more modifiers that can be added the better. For example, "going for a walk" will work, but the more descriptive "going for a walk in the woods during fall" will provide the student who selects the phrase more to work with when creating their collage. Fold the paper so the phase cannot be seen, and collect all phrases in a bowl.
3. On a 5" x 7" sheet of Strathmore 300 Series Bristol Board, use Blick Pigment Liners to illustrate a technical drawing of a natural specimen such as an animal, insect, fruit, vegetable, or botanical. Encourage students to select a diverse range of specimens to enhance the variety available for game play. While dimensions will vary by specimen, the drawing should fill the page to within 1" top and bottom and/or to within 1/2" on the sides.
4. Make one photocopy, enlarged by 20%, of each specimen drawing on Cardmaker's Choice Cardstock. The cardstock will provide a superior surface for coloring the print in later steps.
5. Make two photocopies, reduced by 20%, of each specimen drawing on cardstock. Up to four images may be copied at once.
6. Place the enlarged copies in one pile and the reduced copies in another next to the action phases previously collected in a bowl. Each student will blindly select one enlarged drawing, two reduced drawings, and one phrase. Original drawings can be returned to students but should not be used as part of their collage.
7. On a sheet of Blick Studio Watercolor Paper by Fabriano, incorporate the selected drawings into a multimedia collage illustrating the action phrase chosen. Use a variety of media, such as Blick Pigment Liners, colored pencil, marker, watercolor, and gouache.

Example Action Phrases:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Having dinner at a restaurant | 8) Mowing the lawn | 15) Mailing a package |
| 2) Going for a walk in the woods | 9) Reading a book | 16) Buying groceries |
| 3) Having a birthday party | 10) Drawing a picture | 17) Changing a lightbulb |
| 4) Studying for a test | 11) Baking cookies | 18) Eating an ice cream cone |
| 5) Running away from a monster | 12) Cleaning the house | 19) Playing a card game |
| 6) Walking a dog in the park | 13) Driving a car | |
| 7) Planting a garden | 14) Packing for a trip | |



Step 1: Make a technical drawing of a specimen.



Step 2: Select the random inputs—two reduced copies, one enlarged copy, and an action phrase.



Step 3: Build the collage.

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National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work

Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

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