

# Color Scramble

In the 1960's, Frank Stella became known for his minimal geometric paintings of concentric squares that used color to create visual movement. Each concentric square of color related to the next, whether they were harmonic or contrasting colors. The bands of color were separated by a strip of white canvas.



In this lesson plan, students “paint” with Color Tone Masking Tape, selecting three to five colors that represent a theme. The example shown here is called “Melon Scramble” — reflecting cantaloupe, honeydew and watermelon. Another idea is to take popular colors from a time period such as those shown in “50s Scramble.” By using colored tape for this project, students will be able to create a finished piece with crisp, clean edges, something that is difficult to achieve with paint.

**Grade Levels** 5-12

*Note: instructions and materials are based upon a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.*

## Preparation

1. Cut canvas sheets measuring between 12” x 16” and 12” x 12”. (The square can be larger than 12” x 12”, but this is the smallest size that will allow for six different tape colors.)
2. Students consider a theme for their project and select colors that represent that theme.

## Process

1. Determine the progression of colors for the project.
2. Measure 6” to the center of the canvas from all sides and place a 3/4” x 3/4” square of colored tape in the center.
3. Measure and check that the center piece of tape is a perfect square. If any of the sides are uneven, the lines will become progressively more crooked and out of square. (Since the canvas is primed, the tape can be repositioned as needed.)

## Materials

**Blick Studio® Canvas Pads**, 12” x 16”, 10-sheet pad (07400-1046); need one sheet per student, or **Blick® Canvas Panels**, 12” x 12” (07008-1212); need one per student

**Col-R-Tone™ System Masking Tape** 3/4” x 60-yd, 24-color package, (24122-1024); share one across class

**Blick® Plastic Ruler**, 12” (55403-1012); one per student

**Snippy® Scissors**, pointed, package of 12 (57040-2009); need one pair per student

4. Measure 1/4” around the sides of the center square and apply the next tape square. Cut the tape ends evenly and overlap them in the corners so they make a crisp, clean appearance.
5. Continue the color progression in concentric squares, leaving 1/4” of white canvas showing between each color.
6. Leave a 1/4” of white canvas as an outer border. If the last piece of tape is too wide, trim it to expose the white canvas border.

## Options

1. Create a “Double Scramble” using two canvas squares with opposite color progression. One will have the same center color as the other’s outer edge.
2. Back your canvas sheets with a board to provide a rigid backing.

## National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes.

**5-8** Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

**9-12** Students apply media, techniques and processes with sufficient skill, confidence and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks.

Content Standard #3 Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

**5-8** Students integrate visual, spatial and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks.

**9-12** Students apply subjects, symbols and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life.

Content Standard #4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

**5-8** Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures.

**9-12** Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times and places.

