

# Positive & Negative Space

In this exercise, students will explore the relationship between positive and negative space. One can not exist without the other. This lesson demonstrates that all spaces within a work of art have their own unique shape. If the main image is removed from a work, the negative spaces are left. The shapes of the negative spaces are determined by the shapes of the positive spaces.

## Grade Levels K-8

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

## Process

1. Select two sheets of construction paper in contrasting colors. Cut one sheet in half to 9" x 6". Retain the other half sheet for another student.
2. Using the half sheet, draw and carefully cut out half a picture or design along the 9" length.
3. The full sheet (9" x 12") can be folded in half along the 9" length to determine the center of the sheet. The parts cut from the half sheet are arranged along the fold forming half the design. The remaining parts are placed on the opposite side of the full sheet in locations opposite those from which they were cut.
4. Glue the pieces to the large sheet.
5. The final project will have a positive image on one side of the full sheet and a negative image on the other.
6. An optional approach would be to "hinge" everything down the center using transparent tape. This will produce an image that is at first simply two contrasting vertical rectangles. When the design is "opened" the positive-negative images appear.

## Options

- Use other media - try clay slabs cut apart into positive and negative shapes



## Materials

- Blick Construction Paper** assorted colors (11409-1003) 50-sheet package 9" x 12", need 1-1/2 sheets per student
- Snippy Scissors** (57040-2009) package of 12, need one per student
- Blick Economy Graphite Pencils** (20302-2009), package of 12, need one per student
- Blick Multipurpose Glue**, 8-oz (23872-1065), share one bottle between two students

## Optional

- Blick Construction Paper**, 50-sheet package 9" x 12" Gold (11409-4073) or Silver (11409-2593)

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## National Standards

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

**K-4** Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

**Content Standard #2** — Using knowledge of structures and functions

**K-4** Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas