

Stencil City (art + math)

Stencil City is a place that only exists on paper. It is created by cutting stencils in shapes of buildings and then using them to create areas of color against a black background. The end result is a nightglow cityscape. Stencil city images can be as simple or complex as the age and ability of the student allow. The city has many different activities. Some buildings may have lights on, others may be dark. The color may change to affect the mood or time of day. This lesson develops and promotes an awareness of the elements of design: shape, space and color.



Grade Levels 3-8

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

Process

1. On the sheet of white paper, measure a series of rectangles that resemble buildings. Use varying widths and heights with some more horizontal and others more vertical. Also draw clouds, moon, sun or any other shapes to be used in the final work. Cut out the shapes to create stencils.
2. Determine if your cityscape will be horizontal or vertical. Place one of the stencils along the bottom of the black paper and hold it in place.
3. Using the pastel, color over the stencil onto the black paper. Move stencil to another position and repeat or choose another stencil.
4. Continue the process, overlapping, continually monitoring the image as it is created. The city will take shape.
5. Add other stencils shapes and details.
6. Spray with fixative.

Options

- Cut out more detailed buildings (church, towers).
- Use colored construction paper instead of black.
- Substitute [Sakura® Cray-Pas Junior Artist Oil Pastels](#) (20013-2509) for Blick Pastels.
- Use a cotton ball or swab to spread the chalk off of the stencil and onto the black paper.

Materials

[Blick Construction Paper](#), Black (11409-2003) and White (11409-1023) 9" x 12", 50-sheet package, need one sheet each color per student

[Snippy Scissors](#) (57040-2009) package of 12, need one per student

[Blick Pastels](#) (20016-1109), set of 24, share four boxes across classroom

[Blick Plastic Ruler 12"](#) (55403-1012), need one per student

[Blick Economy Graphite Pencils](#) (20302-2009) package of 12, need one per student

[Blair® Digi-Finish Clear Protective Coating](#) (21722-1020) share one can across classroom

National Standards

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

K-4 Students know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes

5-8 Students select media, techniques, and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices

Content Standard #6 — Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

K-4 Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum

5-8 Students describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts