

Stencil Skyline

Everyone loves watching colors run down a page — this process makes it easy and fun to learn about positive/negative space and color temperature!

(art + history)

A city skyline is a great place to look for shapes and positive/negative spaces between buildings.

In this lesson plan, students create an architectural stencil with adhesive-backed film, stick it to the paper, then brush tempera paint over the top. The paint won't stick to the film, so, when sprayed with water, it runs right down the paper.

For best results, this project should be done upright, to allow gravity to lend assistance. The paper can be suspended, placed on a table easel, or propped up in a vertical position. A stack of newspapers or a shallow tray beneath the painting will help catch any paint that drips off the paper.

GRADES 2-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Cut 9" x 12" pieces of film from the roll and place under heavy books to flatten.
2. Invite students to look at cityscapes and observe the shapes of skyscrapers and famous buildings. Look at all forms of architecture, from beautiful designs to very functional, utilitarian buildings.

Process

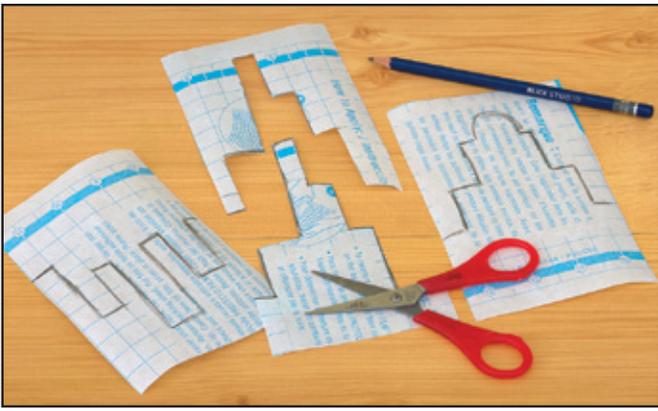
1. Protecto is marked on the back side with inch and centimeter markings, so it's easy to cut building shapes without having to measure with a ruler. Using these markings, students cut film into fourths (4-1/2" x 6" pieces).
2. On the back (paper) side of each piece of film, draw the shape of a building (or more than one) on each piece, either horizontally or vertically. The base of the building will be on one edge of the film. Aim for a variety of shapes and heights.
3. Cut the building out of the film, keeping the negative space intact. This can be achieved if the cut is only made on the pencil lines. Each building will have a negative and a positive piece — the building shape itself is the positive piece and the space around it is the negative space.
4. Imagine a line across the center of the watercolor paper. Peel backing paper from one of the building shapes and place it along that line. Burnish down well with a baren or rounded-edge tool. Peel and place the other



Materials (required)

Protecto® Film, 18" x 10 ft (23211-1010); share two rolls across class
Blick® No. 2 Writing Pencil, box of 12 (20341-4002); need one per student
Fiskars® Student Scissors, 7" (57016-1065); one per student
Blick® Student Watercolor Paper, 90 lb, 22" x 30" (10028-1022); share one sheet across three students
Blick® Economy Baren (42910-1004); share one between two students
Blick® Essentials Tempera, pints; need a minimum of three to share among class. Recommend: Blue (00057-5006), Violet (00057-6506), Green (00057-7006), Yellow (00057-4006), Red (00057-3006), Orange (00057-4506)
Holbein® Watercolor Atomizer Bottle, 2 oz (02912-1003); one per student





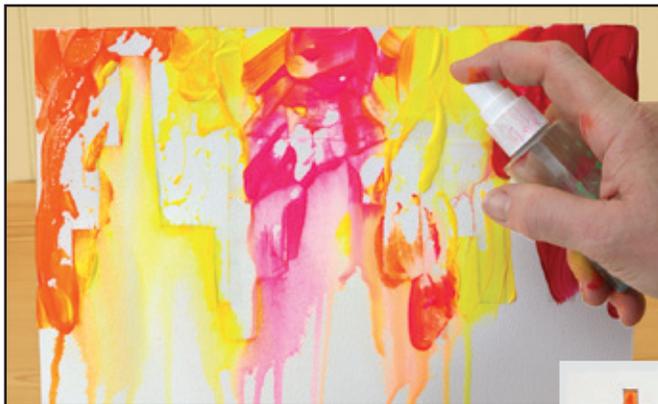
Step 1: Draw buildings on the back side of Protecto film using grid markings as a guide. Cut only on the pencil lines, so that there are two pieces: the building and the space around it.



Step 2: Make a skyline in the center of one page with the positive (buildings) and one on the second page with the negative (space around buildings).



Step 3: Apply warm colors to the stencil on one sheet, and cool colors to the stencil on the other.



Step 4: With the paper in an upright position, spray the paint with water and watch it run! Allow it to dry, then peel off the stencil.

Process - continued

- three buildings so they align with the first one to create a skyline. Buildings can overlap.
- 5. Next, prepare a second skyline from the negative space that was cut away from each building. This one will be positioned near the center of the second page of watercolor paper. Burnish film down well.
- 6. Both papers will be painted in the same way, so it doesn't matter which one is painted first. For the first painting, use warm colors (Red, Yellow, Orange, Pink) to make it "summer" in the city. Apply color to the film until it is covered with paint. It can be placed in orderly color for each building, or randomly applied. Some paint will probably get placed off the film and onto the paper, too. The second one will be painted with cool "wintery" colors (Blue, Green, Violet, Purple).
- 7. Place one of the papers in an upright vertical position on a table easel or prop it against a cardboard box. Make sure the surface below is covered with a stack of newspapers or a shallow tray to catch the paint. Turn the page so the painted stencil area is at the top.
- 8. With a spray bottle, aim a jet of water onto the painted film. Spray until the paint drips down the paper.
- 9. Repeat with the second skyline. Allow to dry, then peel off the stencil film. Use a pencil or marker to outline and draw details on the skyline, if desired.



Option

1. Instead of creating warm and cool paintings, combine them into one rainbow-colored piece!

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

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

Presenting

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Connecting

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

