

Design Abstract Word Art

If you're looking for a fun group activity for 4 or more kids, wacky word art is just the ticket. Offering writing practice and grammar review, this isn't your average art project. Kids practice building sentences with different parts of speech, then create paintings of the silly mad-lib sentences they come up with. In an unexpected fun twist, at the end they get to rip up their paintings and arrange them into wild and unique abstract collages.



What You Need:

- 8.5" x 11" or larger sheet of white watercolor paper to paint on (1 sheet per child)
- Tempera, poster, or acrylic paint
- Paintbrushes
- Water cups to wash out brushes
- 8.5" x 11" or larger sheet of white paper to glue on (1 sheet per child)
- Glue stick (1 per child)
- Stack of white index cards
- Examples of abstract collage from art books from the library or printouts downloaded from the Internet

What You Do:

1. Write adjectives, nouns, and verbs on the index cards ahead of time. An effective formula to follow for a mad-lib sentence is: The (ADJECTIVE) (NOUN) (VERB) (choose a preposition or adverb) the (ADJECTIVE) (NOUN). Sentences tend to be a bit surreal, which is part of the fun! Here's an example sentence: The jagged rainbows grew in the hot desert.
2. Pass out word cards to the kids. Show them how to organize their word cards to make a wacky sentence.
3. Once they have their sentences, have the kids create a painting of their sentence on the watercolor paper.
4. After they finish, have them pass their paintings clockwise to the person sitting to the left, so each child has a painting that another created.
5. Now invite the kids to paint their sentence again directly on top of the new painting they have in front of them. Encourage them to vary their interpretation of their sentence if they wish.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 until each picture has been painted on by all kids participating.
7. Set the paintings aside to dry.
8. While the paintings are drying, talk about abstract collage with the kids. Show them examples of abstract collage work from art books or examples found on the Internet.
9. Once the paintings are dry, arrange them in the center of the room and have the kids stand around them. Going around the circle, ask each kid to talk about a part of each painting that they like or find interesting. Guide them by making your own observations about repetition or patterns in the paintings, such as if there are a lot of eyes or teeth or a certain color in the design.
10. Now have the kids shred the paintings with their hands into various shapes and sizes.
11. Give each kid a new sheet of white paper and a glue stick.
12. Using the painting shreds, invite the kids to assemble their own abstract collages on the new sheet of paper. Once they're satisfied with their compositions, have them glue the painting shreds to the paper with the glue stick.

