

Create a Two-Sided Opposites Painting

Create a colorful painting—twice! Transform a single sheet of card stock into a double-sided painting of opposites: on one side, a bright daytime landscape, on the other, a dusky evening scene. Not only is this a great way to let your kids dive into art and explore their artistic side, it also provides an excellent lesson on the concept of opposites and the differences between night and day. And as always, any hands-on art project like this also helps strengthen little hand muscles for writing.



What You Need:

- Card stock or other thick paper
- Pencil
- Tempera paints
- Paint brush
- Water cup (make sure it's one you won't reuse for food or drinks)
- Paint palette or washable art tray
- Hole punch
- Scissors
- Yarn or thin ribbon

What To Do:

1. Sit by a window (or outside if possible) and have your child make a pencil sketch of what he sees on the card stock. This is a great time to introduce him to art terminology such as landscape, horizon line (where the earth meets the sky), foreground, middle ground, and background. Ask him to really look at the area he's drawing. Do trees that are further back look bigger or smaller than the ones that are closer to him? What colors and shapes does he see? Is it sunny, rainy, or cloudy?
2. Take the drawing to a suitable workspace such as a flat table or an easel. Lay small puddles of paint onto the palette or tray. Try using just the primary colors (blue, red, and yellow) and white. Use this opportunity to talk about the color wheel: encourage him to mix the primary colors together to get new colors, and use the white paint to make lighter shades.
3. Now start the painting. Invite him to color in his landscape sketch by painting over it with the tempera paint. Once he's finished, set the painting aside to dry.
4. At dusk, have him sit in the same spot he was in for step 1, and ask him to sketch what he sees on the reverse side of the painting (if you started the activity in the afternoon, wait until the following day to do this step so the front side has time to dry completely). Talk about the landscape: does it look different now than it did earlier in the day? Do the shapes still look as sharp? Is there more or less to see? What does the sky look like?
5. Bring the drawing to the workspace and encourage him to paint his new nighttime landscape. Talk about the colors he'll need for this painting. Once he's done painting, set the work aside to dry.
6. Once the painting is completely dry, punch a hole in the top of the painting with the hole punch. Cut a piece of ribbon or yarn, thread it through the hole, and tie a knot just above the edge of the painting.
7. Hang the painting mobile style so both sides are displayed.

Explore other "opposite" concepts for more art activities. Try themes as simple as inside/outside or beginning/end or as complicated as Impressionism/Realism or classical art/pop art.

