



Lesson Activities

Frank McKelvey



Landscape

Frank McKelvey was famous for painting landscapes and they were mostly landscapes of Ulster. Explain to the children what a landscape is. As a home learning activity, set the children the task of taking a photograph of landscape scenery somewhere in Ulster.

Describe it!

Look at each pupil's photograph. Ask each pupil to write a list of words to describe the features of the landscape they have photographed. For example: hills, green, river or trees. Once they have this list of words, ask them to choose an adjective for each, so they can start building up a description, for example: rolling hills, emerald green, gentle river or gigantic trees. It may be useful to discuss with the children which words would create a negative description and what words would create a positive description of the landscape.

Painting and Painting Techniques

Tell the children that they are going to create their own landscape painting. There are several things that they can do to get their painting started.

1. Composition

Firstly, the children should decide what exactly they are going to paint. Perhaps they will paint the landscape they have photographed. On their page, they should use a pencil to lightly sketch out their landscape composition. Explain to the children that this means they will mark out on the page where each part of the landscape will begin and end, such as the horizon line (where the sky and land meet), trees, hills, fields, buildings and so on. They should have a think about the perspective of certain objects in their composition, such as whether they need to paint something bigger because it is closer.

2. Wash

Explain that the first thing many artists do when painting a landscape is to do a 'wash' on the page, especially if they are using water-colour paints. This is when the



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artist uses a wide brush with water and a tiny bit of colour, usually blue or green (for landscape paintings), to colour the sky or the grass etc. It may be useful to show the children some examples of this online. As the children create their own washes, encourage them to experiment with colour, making darker or lighter shades to match the landscape they are trying to paint.

Let's Print!

Frank McKelvey worked as a lithographer. Explain to the children that this is a printing technique which involves printing from a flat piece of limestone or a metal plate. A design or an image is drawn onto the limestone or metal surface with a greasy material. Water is applied to keep the stone/plate wet. Acids are also used with this type of printmaking to etch the image into the stone or metal. Finally, the printing ink is applied. Lithography works on the principle that grease attracts grease and it repels water, so the greasy lines of the drawing will absorb the ink and the wet parts will not.

The children can have a go at creating some simple lithograph printing of their own. You will need the following items:

- Pieces of perspex-type plastic to use as a hard base for their lithograph (these are only needed for the process and will not be part of the final piece of art).
- Heavy-duty tinfoil (aluminium foil)
- Masking tape
- A ruler
- Wax crayons, pastels or a chinagraph pencil
- Water in a spray bottle
- Cola (this acts as the acid used in lithography)
- Vegetable oil
- A basin or tray
- Etching ink
- Rollers
- Paper towel
- Gloves (disposable)
- Paper (watercolour paper is preferable)



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Step 1: Creating your canvas

Firstly, give each child a strip of foil and a piece of Perspex plastic. They should place the foil on top of the Perspex. Using the edge of a ruler, they should smooth out the foil so that there are no creases or bumps in it. They need to be careful not to rip the foil. When they are satisfied that it is completely smooth they should stick the edges down with masking tape. They have now made their canvas

Step 2: Drawing

Using a wax crayon or pastel, they should now draw their design or picture onto the foil. For best results, remember the following steps:

- As the children will be creating a print, remind them that whatever they decide to draw will print backwards, like a reflection.
- They should take care not to touch the foil with their fingers as their fingers will leave a grease mark.
- They should use all of the space on the foil if they can, so that their print is effective.
- They should go over their image a few times with the crayon/pastel as this will ensure that the print comes out clearly at the end.
- The simpler the image the more effective the print will look.

Please note: You may wish to set up various stations around the classroom for each of the following parts of step 3 in order to manage the rest of this activity.

Step 3: Magic!

It is very important that the following parts of step 3 are carried out in order:

1. Place their canvas (the Perspex covered in foil) into a tray. Pour cola over the bits they have drawn on. For a minute, move the tray from side to side so that the image is covered in cola. Carefully lift out the canvas (by holding it by the sides) and place it on a table. Pour away the cola and leave the tray for the next person to use. Carefully dab any excess cola off your foil with a piece of paper towel.



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2. Pour a tiny bit of vegetable oil onto a paper towel and rub it over the foil so that the pastel or crayon rubs off. The color will have etched the image onto the foil. They should make sure they can see their image at this point.

Step 4: Print!

Using the roller, roll a little bit of paint onto the foil. Wipe off the excess with a paper towel or a sponge. Repeat this several times until only the etched image has paint on it. Next, get the sheet of paper that is being printed onto and spray water onto it with the spray bottle so that it is damp, but not soaking. Place the page on top of the foil and press down on the page gently. It may be useful to use a roller or the edge of a ruler to make sure the paint transfers from the foil onto the page.

This is your very own lithograph!



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