



AFTERSCHOOL EXCHANGE ACTIVITY

LET'S LOOK FOR PATTERNS

PREPARATION

Grade Levels: 3 – 5

This activity would be most effective if delivered in (3) separate 30-40 minute periods, with groups of no more than 12 students, and followed by a period of “free” or outdoor play.

Prerequisite:

Before beginning this activity, make sure the children have read *Tar Beach* and *Aunt Harriet’s Underground Railroad* by Faith Ringgold. The children can either read the books on their own, or it can be a read-aloud activity.

Materials:

Students will need:

- Crayons/Colored Pencils
- Rulers
- Copies of “Quilt Design Sheets” from the Ed Online/NTTI lesson plan “Sew, You Want to Quilt?”
(http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/ntti/resources/lessons/m_sew/index.html)
- Paper Squares (can be pre-cut or the students can cut themselves)
- Large Paper or Suitable Material for mounting the squares
- Glue/Tape

Group Leader will need:

- Sample quilt designs to initiate conversation with students (can be found at the Library of Congress at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/qlthtml/qlthome.html>)
- Samples of patterns in everyday life: e.g. flag, turtle shell, necktie, wrapping paper

Academic Goals:

- Children will become familiar with the work of author Faith Ringgold.
- Children will learn about the history of quilts.
- Children will understand the concept of pattern, identifying things in our everyday life (man made and natural) that have patterns.
- Children will identify simple geometric patterns.
- Children will share with peers their own geometric “quilt” designs.

Social Goals:

- Children will have opportunities to work in small groups, share ideas and brainstorm.
- Children will develop their listening skills, allowing peers to speak and share opinions.

STEPS

Activity 1:

Introductory Activity (5 minutes):

Gather the children in their usual meeting place. Ask three of them to stand together in a line. Face one forward, one backward, and one forward. Next, ask another child to join the line and decide which way to face. Have the children take turns doing this. For younger children, you may need to give initial verbal clues, such as “front, back, front...” When this exercise is finished (approximately 3 minutes) ask, “What have we created?” The children will probably say “a design” or “a pattern.”

Transition: If you think the children need to stretch before continuing, have them stand up and “shake” their limbs and then ask them to sit.

Learning Activities (30-40 minutes):

1. Ask the children what other design or pattern they could create together in this fashion. (Boy, girl; sit, stand; etc.)
2. Ask children what other things have patterns. Younger children may need prompts, such as “what do you sleep on?” (sheets) or “what do you play checkers on?” (checkerboard of black and red squares).
3. 4th and 5th graders should be able to think of patterns on their own. These can be jotted on the board or on chart paper. Encourage the children by asking questions such as “Can you think of another one?” or “Do you think we can get to 10 items?”
4. You can also bring out a “bag” of things with patterns – a small flag, a dinner napkin, a picture of a turtle shell or bumblebee and then give verbal clues to their identity. These can be added to the list you started in step 3.
5. Explain to the children that in the next session they will create their own designs and patterns.

Transition: Before sending the children to the next part of their afternoon, it might be fun to have them create their own clapping games. If anyone knows the “hand jive” have him or her do it with the children. Younger children might enjoy doing a popular

clapping game, like Ms. Mary Mack, first with words and then without. Have them listen for the pattern when they are clapping without words. Then, have the children create their own patterns!

Activity 2:

Introductory Activity (30-40 minutes):

Re-introduce Faith Ringgold's books, explaining that today we are going to "read" them differently. Say to the children "We are going to read them for patterns." If multiple copies of these books are available, children can meet in small groups of (to find and discuss the different patterns. If only one copy is available, this can be a whole group activity. Be sure to keep the discussion moving quickly, so that children do not become restless.

In your discussions with the children, note the many intricate patterns presented in Ringgold's work. Point out the borders in *Tar Beach*, the magnificent quilt on page 17, and the quilt on page 15 of *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad*.

Learning Activities (30-40 minutes):

1. Start a discussion about quilts: Do any children have them at home? Were they made by a family member or store bought? Discuss how quilts can be made from "memorable" scraps and how their designs can tell a story.
2. Hand out copies of the various design sheets for the children to look at. This can be done in various ways:
 - For all age groups, this activity would be most effective if children work in groups of four. Each group will work on the same design, with each child receiving his own worksheet. Circulate among the groups while the children color the design, asking them to focus on the geometric shapes they see in their design. Ask: *How many triangles do you see? Do the triangles make another shape? What is the name of this second shape?*
 - For younger children, you may want to leave the title of the design – i.e. Windmill – on the sheet. For 4th and 5th graders, you may want to omit this information and have students identify the shape themselves.
3. Each group can appoint a spokesperson to share their design with whole group.
4. Next, show other samples of *quilt designs* and ask groups what they think they are representing.
5. Now it is time for children to design and tile their own quilt squares. Give each child a ruler, pencil and crayons/colored pencils.

6. The quilt squares will be completed in two steps: design and completion. (Children will start their pencil designs in this session, and then finish them in the next session.) As much flexibility as possible should be exercised. Children should be able to work at their own comfortable pace.

Transition: Have children share their completed designs with whole group. 4th and 5th graders may want to ask their classmates what they think their designs represent before disclosing their titles. Children can then mount their designs (with your help) on large foam board or burlap for completion of a group quilt.

To develop this activity even further, these squares can be used as a quilt border, with the center of the quilt incorporating a literacy/writing activity. For example, children can reproduce in pictures and words excerpts of Faith Ringgold's books. Memory quilts, beginning with "I remember when....." are also popular and lead to great discussions.

Follow Up Activities:

1. Depending on your agency's technological capability, all sites noted in the classroom lesson plan can educate both staff and children. For example, if you plan on introducing author Faith Ringgold for the first time, staff will benefit from learning more about her work through the Web sites.

- Faith Ringgold's Web site
<http://www.faithringgold.com>
- America's Quilting History
<http://www.womenfolk.com/historyofquilts/lafam.htm>

2. Children can experience hands-on musical patterning by visiting the CYBERCHASE Web site at
<http://www.pbskids.org/cyberchase/games/patterns/patterns.html>.

CREDITS

This AFTERSCHOOL EXCHANGE activity was developed by Cathy Smith, Deputy Director of the Riverdale Neighborhood House, based on the Ed Online / NTTI Lesson Plan "Sew, You Want to Quilt?"

http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/ntti/resources/lessons/m_sew/index.html