

SCHOLASTIC
ART

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TEACHER'S EDITION



**TEACHER'S
EDITION
GRADES
4-6**

COMING THIS YEAR!

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All articles correlate with
the National Content
Standards for Visual Arts

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of structures and functions
3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
4. Understanding visual arts in relation to history and cultures
5. Reflecting upon, assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Greek Vase Painting

Working With Shape

Overview

The images painted on ancient Greek pottery give us a glimpse into the daily lives and culture of the early Greeks. In this issue, your students will explore the various ways in which Greek vase painters used shapes to decorate their pots. By studying the Minoan, geometric, black-figure, and red-figure styles, students will learn how this beautiful and functional art form developed over time.

Before Reading

Have students study the poster of the black-figure *hydria* depicting Hercules and Cerberus. How did the artist use shapes to tell his story? Explain that this



water jar was painted in the black-figure style. Silhouetted shapes were painted with a liquid clay called slip. Details were indicated by lines that were incised, or scratched, into the slip. When the pot was fired, the image turned black, while the background remained the red of the clay.

SECONDARY TEACHERS MAY WISH TO USE CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THIS GUIDE
OR YOU MIGHT WANT TO PASS IT ALONG TO AN ELEMENTARY COLLEAGUE.

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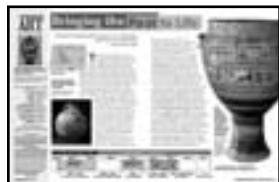
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Supplement to *Scholastic Art*

Questions for Class Discussion

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

READING COMPREHENSION



2-3

Content Standards 2,3,4

1. What can we learn about ancient Greek culture by studying its pottery? By studying

the images painted on ancient Greek pottery, we can learn about the Greeks' beliefs and religion as well as about the details of their daily lives.

2. How does ancient Greek culture affect our lives today?

Answers may vary. Modern American politics, science, language, and drama are based on early Greek concepts. American cities such as Sparta, Corinth, Athens, and Crete are named for ancient Greek city-states. Most traditional government buildings are based on Greek architecture. And, the Olympics we watch on TV began in Greece in 776 B.C.

3. How do the shapes painted on the Minoan vase on page 2 emphasize the round form of the pot? The organic curves of the octopus tentacles seem to wrap around the jar, emphasizing its circular shape. A mirror-image octopus on the jar's other side swims in the opposite direction, serving to pull the viewer's eye around the pot. The circular suckers that run along the octopus tentacles repeat the round shapes of the jar's handles.

4. What is geometric-style pottery like? Geometric-style pots (like the one on page 3) were shaped on a potter's wheel so they are perfectly symmetrical. The surface decoration is usually divided into horizontal bands. In some of the bands, simplified, orderly, abstracted, angular figures are repeated, with variations. Other bands are filled with repeated geometric shapes, such as circles, arcs, triangles, zigzags, wavy lines, checkerboard and herringbone patterns.



4-5, 8-9

Content Standards 2,3,4

5. How were black-figure pots decorated? Silhouetted shapes were painted on black-figure pots

with a liquid clay called slip. Details within these images were indicated by lines that were incised, or scratched, into the slip. When the pot was fired, the image turned black, while the background remained the red color of the clay.

6. How are the black-figure chariot and horses on the cover different from the geometric-style chariot and horses on page 3? Both designs are simplified and stylized, but the shapes in the black-figure image are rounded and realistically proportioned. The effect is much more lifelike. The shapes on the black-figure vase are larger, the silhouetted profiles have individual faces, the horses overlap, and the negative background spaces are important parts of the composition.

7. How do the different poses of the figures painted on the jar on pages 8-9 reflect what is happening in the story? The king's vertical shape and raised arms express his terror. His static figure contrasts with the dynamic diagonals created by the menacing man and beast on the right. The repeated, superimposed shapes of Cerberus's many heads and the twisting curves of the snakes that spring from his body express action and increase the work's threatening feeling.



6-7

Content Standards 2,3,4

8. How were red-figure pots decorated? In red-figure pottery, the artists painted slip on

everything but the figure. They could then paint in the details, rather than having to scratch out any lines. The positive figure stayed red, while the negative spaces around it turned black. This new technique allowed artists to add more detail and create more realistic-looking images.

9. How is the red-figure painting of the woman on page 7 different from representations of people on black-figure pottery? The red-figure style allowed the artist to paint the woman from the front, rather than just a profile. The painted lines allow portions of her figure, such as her arm and body, to overlap each other. Her right shoulder and arm are slightly foreshortened which creates a feeling of depth.

FOCUS QUESTION

Content Standards 2,3,4

How are the black-figure and red-figure styles different?

In black-figure pottery, silhouetted shapes are painted on the pot in black slip and details are scratched away. The red-figure style is the opposite: Slip is painted on everything except for the figure, and details are painted in. The red-figure style allowed artists to create more-realistic representations with a greater sense of depth.

WORKSHOP #1



PAINTED GREEK POTTERY

ADAPTED BY MELODY FUNK

Content Standards 1,2,3,4,5

PREPARATION

🌀 Ancient Greek artists painted both narrative and decorative shapes on their pottery. Their use of pattern and repeated shapes emphasized the pot's form and pulled the viewer's eye around it. In this workshop, students will paint designs on flat clay vase forms. Low-fire (cone 5 or 6) terra-cotta clay is recommended for this project. Wedge clay to proper working consistency and make sure it is free of air pockets and foreign material.



TIME: Three-week project

GRADE LEVEL: 4 and up

MATERIALS:

1. 8 1/2 x 11-in. white paper
2. pencils
3. terra-cotta clay
4. rolling pin
5. clay cutting tools
6. sponges and water
7. black acrylic paint and acrylic spray sealer (or black underglaze and clear coat glaze)
8. assorted paintbrushes
9. old shirts (to protect clothes)

AIMS:

1. create a symmetrical vase form
2. paint a geometric or narrative design

VOCABULARY

see lesson plan for definitions

kiln organic pattern
scale symmetry

EXTENSION PROJECT

Grades 2–3: Cut out a Greek vase shape from a piece of white paper. Have students use red markers to draw a central frieze that shows their own personal heroes (parents, friends, teachers, athletes, etc.) in static or active poses. Add decorative bands to the neck and foot of the vase. Then, use black markers to outline the drawings and fill in the negative spaces.

WEEK 1

1. Create a vase template by folding a sheet of paper in half lengthwise and drawing half of the profile of a Greek vase on it. Cut the folded sheet of paper along the line, and unfold. Trace the resulting vase shape onto a second piece of paper. The cutout will be used as a template for the clay slab. Save the second sheet of paper with the vase outline for next week.
2. Use a rolling pin to roll out a thin slab of clay.
3. Using the template, trace the vase shape onto the clay. Cut out the shape with a cutting tool. Remove extra clay and smooth edges with a sponge and water. Carve your initials on the back.
4. Let clay dry thoroughly. Fire in a low-fire kiln (oven) at suggested cone temperature.



WEEKS 2 and 3

1. Decide on a subject for your vase painting. It should include both narrative and decorative elements. Using a pencil, sketch out your design on the paper vase outline you made last week. (Explain to students that clay shrinks during firing, so the design will need to be smaller than the template.) Focus on the use of **pattern** (a repeating arrangement of shapes), **organic** (curving) and geometric shapes, **symmetry** (the same design on both sides), and **scale** (relative size).
2. Using black acrylic paint (or underglaze), paint your design directly onto the fired clay vase form.
3. Working in a well-ventilated space, spray the finished painting with a coat of sealer.

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Content Standard 5

1. Did student demonstrate an understanding of different styles of Greek vase painting?
2. Did student create a symmetrical vase form in clay?
3. Did student include a pattern in his/her design?
4. Did student work with organic and geometric shapes?
5. Did student's vase include both narrative and decorative elements?

WORKSHOP #2

SGRAFFITO GREEK VASES

ADAPTED BY MELODY FUNK



TIME: Two-week project

GRADE LEVEL: 4 and up

MATERIALS:

1. 9 x 12-in. white drawing paper
2. pencils
3. orange and red crayons
4. black tempera paint
5. wide brushes
6. scissors
7. scratching tools: nails, tooth-picks, dull pencils, etc.

AIMS:

1. create a symmetrical vase form
2. create a heroic narrative
3. work with positive shapes and negative space

VOCABULARY

see lesson plan for definitions

amphora positive shape
negative space symmetrical

EXTENSION PROJECT

Grades 1-3: Using black paper and red paper, cut out two vase shapes. Cut out pairs of geometric shapes from both black and red paper. Glue the red shapes onto the black vase and the black shapes onto the red vase to create matching positive/negative versions of each design.

Content Standards 1,2,3,4,5

PREPARATION

🌀 Ancient Greek artists decorated pottery with images about their culture that remain preserved for history. In this workshop, students will use a *sgraffito* technique (scratching away a surface layer of black paint to expose the orange layer underneath) to decorate flat paper vase forms with heroic narratives and geometric patterns.

WEEK 1

1. After viewing and discussing different styles of Greek vase painting, have students use orange or red crayons to color in a 9 x 12-in. sheet of white drawing paper.
2. Once the entire sheet has been colored in, paint over the crayon with black tempera paint.
3. Give each student a second sheet of white drawing paper. Have them create a template by folding it in half lengthwise. Using vase photos on page 6 as reference, have students draw half of the profile of a Greek **amphora** (a tall, two-handled pot). This way their vase shape will be **symmetrical** (the same on both sides). Cut the folded sheet along the drawn line, then unfold to see the finished vase template.

WEEK 2

1. Using last week's template, trace vase shape onto the paper that was painted black.
2. Many Greek vases featured stories of Greek gods and superheroes. Ask students to think of a heroic story (from ancient Greece or today) to depict on their vase. They can practice drawing their designs on the white cutout vase template. What parts will they scratch away and what will they leave black? How do the **positive shapes** (interior area of a shape) and **negative spaces** (area surrounding a shape) work together? What is the focal point of the composition? Will adding bands filled with geometric shapes help frame the composition?
3. Have students practice working with the scratching tools on the edge of the black paper to see the different effects. Once they are comfortable, they should start scratching away the shapes on their black painted paper to reveal the orange layer underneath. When the scratched-out design is complete, cut out the vase shape.



ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Content Standard 5

1. Did student demonstrate an understanding of different styles of Greek vase painting?
2. Did student create a symmetrical paper vase template?
3. Did student depict a contemporary or ancient Greek heroic narrative?
4. Did student demonstrate an understanding of the sgraffito technique?
5. Did student demonstrate an understanding of positive shapes and negative spaces?