

## Art Building Block Decoder



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Build and design an infinity cube to solve the visual language puzzle of a favorite artwork.

Visual language is a system of communication using visual elements that helps viewers perceive and comprehend visible signs. It begins to develop in babies as the eye and brain become able to focus and recognize patterns. In addition to recognizing and identifying objects, babies can even communicate simple needs with sign language long before saying their first word!

As we grow, the images we come across become more complicated and include abstract signs and imagery. This

is because elements in an image represent concepts in a spatial context rather than in the linear form used for words. There are 10 building blocks of art, which include line, shape, color, form, motion, texture, pattern, direction, orientation, scale, angle, space, and proportion.

Our world is becoming more and more visually based through advertising, social media, digital gamification, and emojis. Many of these images can be looked at passively, but when viewing a work of art, one must take a more active role as the viewer. How do we interpret a complex image? Where do we start to deconstruct it and find meaning?

Visual language skills are put to work in this lesson plan. Students will first analyze the elements of art used in a chosen painting, taking notes in their sketchbook. Then this visual data will be transferred to a transformable cube. The cube can be flipped and folded in different directions to reveal ten different external faces, creating the perfect substrate to explore each facet of the elements of art.



**Note: Instructions and materials are based on class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.**

### Materials (required)

[Hygloss Wooden Blocks](#), 3/4", bag of 72 (60452-1072); share four bags across class

[Blick Masking Tape](#), Natural, 1/2" (24149-1012); share one roll between two students

[Pacon Bright White Sulphite Drawing Paper](#), lightweight, 50lbs, ream of 500 sheets, 12" x 18" (10266-1106); need one sheet per student

[Blick Glue Sticks](#), Purple, 0.28 oz (23895-5632); share one between two students

[X-Acto Gripster Knife](#), (57420-2050); share one between two students

### Optional Materials:

[Hygloss Wooden Blocks](#), assorted sizes, bag of 48 (60452-1048); share four bags across class

### Ready to order materials?

Go to [www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/Deconstruct-an-Image/](http://www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/Deconstruct-an-Image/) to access a product bundle for your convenience.

## Preparation

1. First, look at a selected work of art. Consciously take the time to really look at the image. Allow the eyes to wander around, as if taking a walk inside the painting. After taking the time to look, begin to take a mental inventory of how the artist uses the 10 elements of art, which include, line, shape, color, form, motion, texture, pattern, direction, orientation, scale, angle, space, and proportion.
2. In a sketchbook, list all of the ways each element of art is used in the image.

## Process

**Note:** When attaching two cubes together with masking tape, be sure to place a scrap piece of heavy cardstock between the cubes being attached. This will act as a spacer and can be removed after the tape is applied. If done at each stage when taping cubes together, it will ensure that the tape hinges are loose enough to fold tightly together when complete.

1. Lay two cubes next to each other. Attach the cubes with tape.
2. Flip the left cube on top of the right cube, hinging at the taped side.
3. Apply tape to the opposite side of the first tape hinge.
4. Repeat steps 1-3, creating a total of four sets of double cubes.
5. Arrange the cubes flat on a table so they look like the diagram at the end of the lesson plan.
6. Flip the whole grouping along the horizontal axis, placing the piece back down on the table upside-down. Once turned over to the other side, all top-facing surfaces are free of tape.
7. Attach the top-left cube to the cube to its right. Attach the top-right cube to the cube to its left. Attach the bottom-left cube to the cube to its right. Attach the bottom-right cube to the cube to its left.
8. Fold the top and bottom far-left cubes to set on top of the cubes directly to their right. Fold the top and bottom far-right cubes to set on top of the cubes directly to their left.
9. Finally, place two pieces of tape vertically, attaching the top cubes to the cubes below. Do this for both the right and left sides.
10. Test the cube by opening and folding in different directions. It should feel a little bit loose at this stage, as a paper surface will be added in later steps. If any connection feels tight, remove the tape hinges and replace, leaving more room between the connected cubes this time.
11. There are 10 distinct faces to the transformable cube. Number each face, writing directly on the cube or tape. It should look something like the diagram shown at the end of the lesson plan. There will be two large rectangular faces, comprised of all eight blocks, and eight squares comprised of four blocks each.
12. Create an image to represent each of the 10 elements of art, as they are used in the observed image. The diagram at the end of the lesson plan can be used as a template, or, lay the cube on a piece of paper and trace each side. List the corresponding cube face number above each drawing.
13. Cut out the first square and use a glue stick to attach it to the cube. When attaching, note the intersections where the smaller units of cubes are not taped together.
14. Use an X-Acto knife to carefully cut a slit where the cubes are not attached with tape.
15. Repeat steps 13-14 until all the faces of the cube have an image.



**Step 1:** Analyze a work of art, then list all the building blocks of art used in an image.



**Step 2:** Create the transformable cube. There is a full instructional guide, with diagrams, at the end of this lesson.



**Step 3:** Draw representative images for each of the 10 building blocks of art and attach to the cube.

### Ready to order materials?

Go to [www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/Art-Building-Block-Decoder/](http://www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/Art-Building-Block-Decoder/) to access a product bundle for your convenience.



## National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

### Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

### Presenting

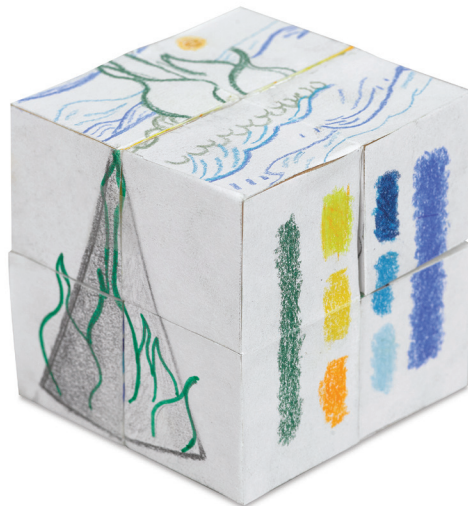
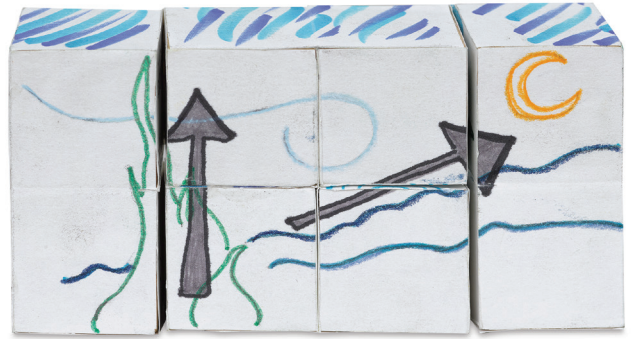
Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

### Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.





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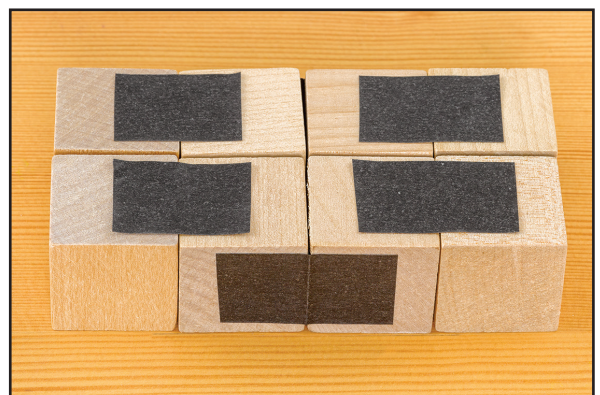
**Step 1:** Lay two cubes next to each other. Attach the cubes with tape.



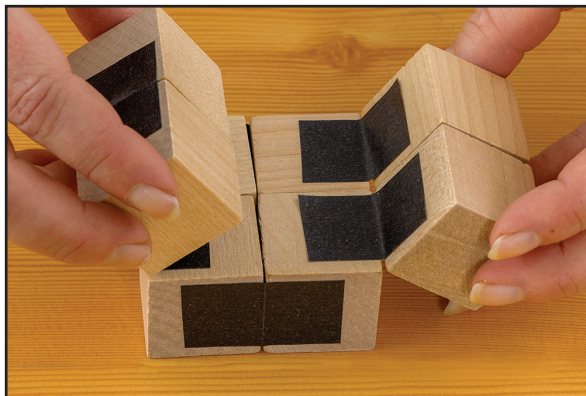
**Step 2:** Repeat, creating four sets of two.



**Step 3:** Arrange the cubes flat on a table into one large horizontal rectangle. Place the two outer cube sets vertically and with the



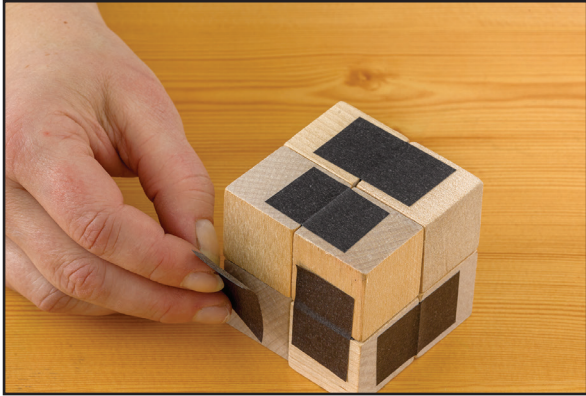
**Step 4:** Working clockwise, attach the top left cube to the cube to its right. Move to the next cube the right, attaching it to the furthestmost



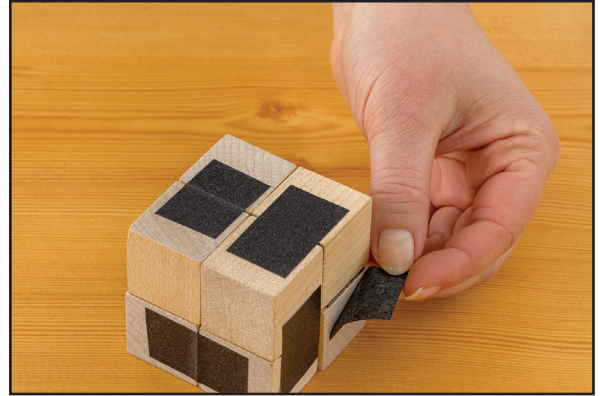
**Step 5:** Fold the right and left sides of the rectangle up and over, making a cube shape.







**Step 6:** Place two pieces of tape vertically, attaching the top cubes to the cubes below.



**Step 7:** Repeat on the opposite side.

**Ready to order materials?**

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