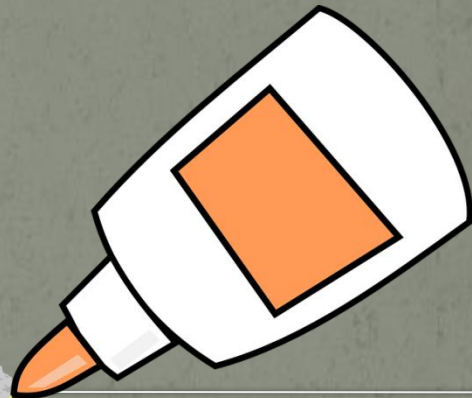


Collage Curriculum



By: *Faigie Kobre*



Welcome to the Collage Curriculum

Collage is not always fully understood as an art medium for young children.

Years ago I remember hearing a teacher describe how she gives her students collage. She would collect all the scraps of paper that she had left over from cutting out projects and would give the children these little scraps to collage with.

Collage is so much more than that.

The dictionary defines collage as..

“An artistic composition of materials and objects pasted over a surface, often with unifying lines and colors...or to paste diverse materials over a surface, thereby creating an artistic product

That’s usually talking about adult collages...Do you want to know what collage really is for children (and adults)? It’s gluing stuff to make a picture (either abstract or representational).

Which materials to use for gluing, along with what to make with them is what this eBook is about.

I call this a collage curriculum because there are enough ideas here to make up a full art curriculum using only collage. Most of the ideas here can be used for any age. Of course, results will vary greatly. The beauty of collage is in its wide potential.

Children at young ages are not usually developmentally ready to create truly artistic collages and their work is quite haphazard.

As long as they are allowed however, the freedom to create at their own developmental level their collages will become more and more sophisticated with age and time.

What is so great about collage?

Collage is fun, expressive, very forgiving and teaches children to think and solve problems. How many pieces should they use? Which pieces should they use? Should they make a border? Should they overlap pieces? These are just some of the questions collage makers are presented with. They are learning to make decisions each time they begin a collage.

It's very forgiving because no one expects a collage to "look" like something and there is so much room for error.

Very young children are learning that glue sticks things to paper and they are largely unconcerned about the what product looks as they randomly paste pieces on top of each other.

As they develop and are given more and varied collages their collages get more sophisticated and thoughtful and they actually create collages that are true artistic products

Since children's collages show where they are developmentally it is very helpful in figuring out children that are having difficulties in other areas. If a 6 yr old is collaging like a 3 yr. old you will want to find out what are the deeper issues.

Among every one group of children the same age the results vary greatly. To illustrate this the two collages below were both done by children in a first grade classroom.

I was teaching a first grade class and I made sure to show my principal the collage on the right. That child was indeed having learning issues.



As a former early childhood director I used to look at the collage displays on the bulletin boards in the halls and I was usually able to pick out the children that needed close watching.

How this eBook is organized

The types of collages are divided into four sections

Section 1: Shape collages

Section 2: Themed collages with reference pictures

Section 3; Themed collages without reference pictures

Section 4: Collages inspired by materials

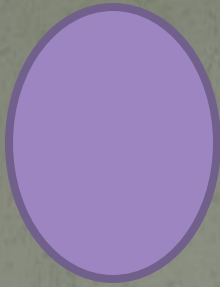
There are no long list of materials for each collage as the pictures do most of the explaining but, there are materials listed in the descriptions of the collages when necessary.

There are many materials that can be used for collages that are not listed here. You will find items around your home and school area that would be appropriate for various collages if you only open your mind to the possibilities.

That's actually where your creativity comes into play thinking of the various materials that you can offer that will enhance the collages.

One important point is to be careful not to offer materials that are hard to stick to the backgrounds or make sure to give the type of glue that will stick .

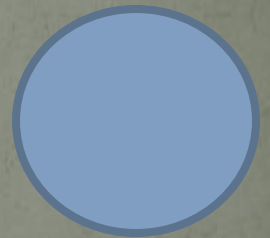
For example: Pipe cleaners unless cut very small don't stick very well nor do large pom poms. Craft sticks also can only work with glue and not glue sticks. At times you may have to test out the materials yourself before presenting them.



Shape Collages



Shape collages have a lot more variety than you'd think and there are many different types you can offer.



One important skill that is important to teach the children is to make sure that whichever glue or glue stick they are using, they need to get all the edges of the back of the piece they are pasting covered or it won't paste well. Teach to glue all around the edges and then some in the middle.



Circle Collages

I always start with circles when doing shape collages. You can begin by just giving a bunch of circles of the same size. Then give circles of all different sizes using a standard background. You can choose to do specific colors and specific materials. (like fabric, shiny papers, patterned papers, warm colors, cool colors or metallic's) It's a good idea to present them on plates or trays so they can see the different choices available.



Many of the collages you do can be tied into some kind of curriculum or artist study.

The image of the painting below is from the artist Wassily Kandinsky. It is a famous painting of his and is a perfect way to bring in circles. The black background the children did these collages on makes the bright colors pop.

You can see from looking at those collages which children pasted randomly and which used more thought.



Square collages

For young children, doing collages for each shape is a great way for them to learn the various shapes. Giving the children scissors broadens their choices of what to create.



Circles on circles

Once you finish with standard shapes and standard background you can add different shape background.

It's amazing how differently they work when the standard (rectangle paper) is switched for something like a circle background.



Small shapes on big shapes



Aside from the circles on circles you can do triangles on triangles, hexagons on hexagons etc. You also can do triangles on hexagons along with adding different types of materials.



Geometric shape collage

Using all of the shapes in one collage is a geometric shapes collage.

I always start off these types of collages by holding up each shape and asking them what that shape makes them think.

Children that are ready may use some of those ideas, others will just continue randomly pasting things on. Scissors are always helpful.

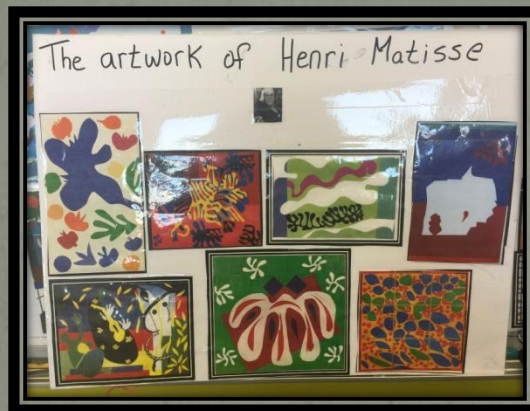


Organic shape collage

(Drawing with a scissors)

Organic shapes are shapes without definite boundaries. Things like rocks, clouds and any kind of abstract shapes.

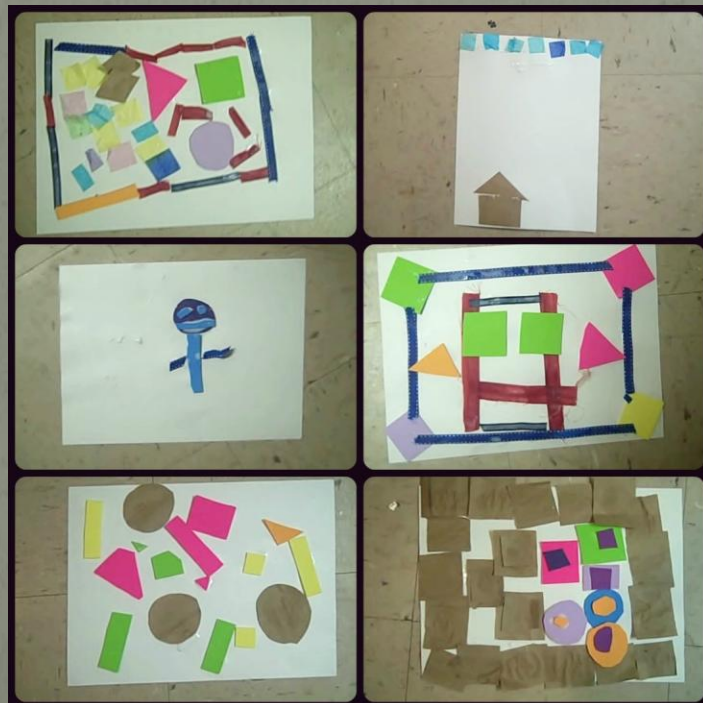
Henri Matisse was an artist that drew with his scissors at the end of his career creating collages out of the organic shapes he cut out with his scissors. Doing an organic shape collage by having them draw with scissors is a great tie in to learning about Matisse.



Collage shape game

This is an activity based on a game I once made up involving shapes.

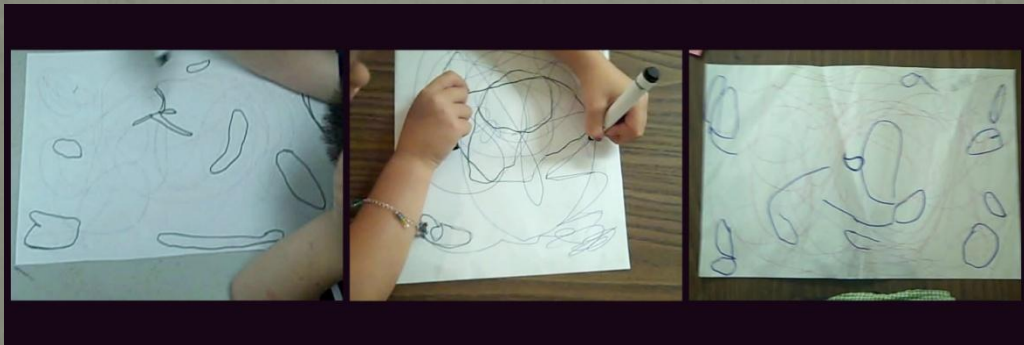
Cut up a variety of shapes in different materials. Paste each of those on a separate card. Place the cards down and have each child pick up a card with a shape on it. They then use that shape to collage with. You can go on and on and keep reusing the cards.



Scribble, find shapes, cut, collage

Another fun way to make a collage. The children need to make a scribble picture. They color in then cut out the shapes they find in their scribbles.

Using these cut out shapes they then make a collage with them.





Themed collages with reference photos

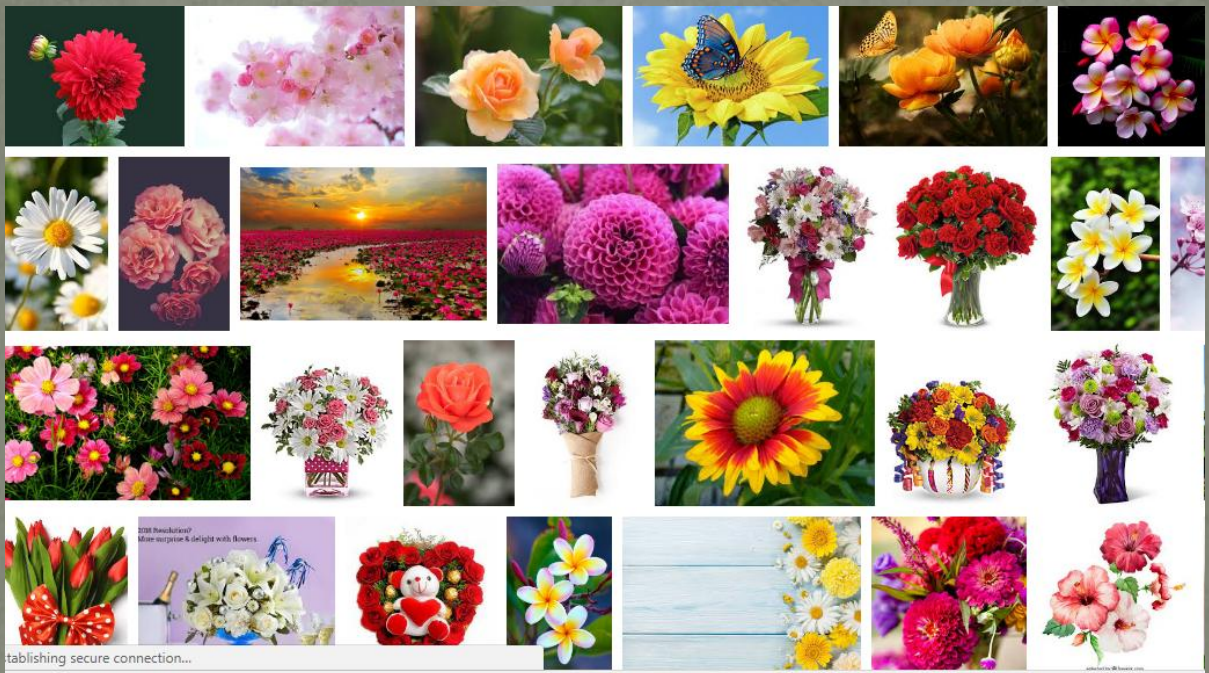
Collages in this section are created by showing the children various images of a theme or item to collage. For this eBook I googled images to give you an idea of the types of pictures I may show and just copied and pasted the first groups that came up.

I usually print these out individually on separate papers. The pictures are only there as suggestions.....never for them to have to copy anything that they don't want to.

For materials I usually cut up various materials that are suggestive of the theme they are collaging. Sometimes I prepare special materials and also find items that would work for that specific collage.

Flower reference photos

Point out the different ways they can collage flowers. There are single flowers, groups of flowers in fields or in vases. Flowers with many petals and flowers with different colored petals. Since children are very familiar with flowers you don't MUST have reference images.



When you look at the flower collages on the next page you will see that there were many different materials offered for the different flower projects at different times.

Cupcake holders, straws, small pom poms, small sequins, cut up pieces of construction paper, metallic paper and any number of items you find around your house or classroom.

There is really an amazing variety of materials that can be used to create flowers.

Flower Collages



These children were trying to copy the types of flowers painted by the artist Georgia O'Keefe using foil papers.

Cityscape reference photos

Cityscapes are more for kids 5 and older.

This activity must take into account a bit of perspective teaching. Namely that there is a horizon line (where sky meets ground) and often cityscapes have the cities coming up from the horizon line.

They need to be able to see how the cities can also be in the bottom of the page as well.

I always give prepared materials for this project. Usually its an assortment of rectangles in various widths and lengths. I will cut them up in grays, browns, tans and blacks. In the image below you can see how I also cut small square pieces that they can use for windows.



Some black and white cityscapes I once used for reference along with a list of ideas that the children came up with that they can use in their cityscapes.

Cityscape Collages

Its important to always get feedback from the children on what things are in cities that will help them along with the reference photos.



House reference photos

Aside from standard houses I sometimes also add interesting kinds of houses like igloos and other weird types of dwellings



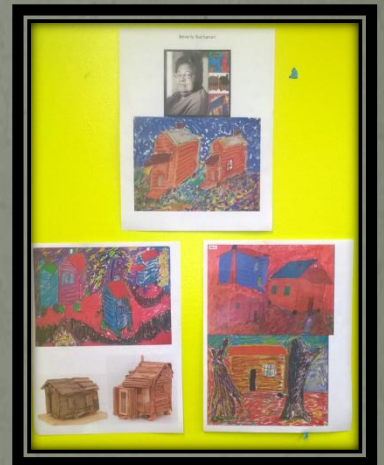
Some of the materials that I once offered for a house collage project



Houses Collage



The house collages below were created in learning about an artist named Beverly Buchanan who painted lots of shacks. (see images below on right)



Vehicle reference photos

If I would be cutting out shapes for a vehicle collage I would use rectangles, squares and maybe some oblongs, along with triangles, and circles.



Vehicle collages

The black and white photocopies are what I once used as reference pictures for these vehicle collages.



Castle reference photos

Materials for castles can be large gray cylinder pieces (maybe brown and tan too) along with rectangular ones as well.



Castle Collages

For these castles the children also used metallic foil pieces along with gold, silver and copper paint (which makes it a mixed media project).

Mixed media is always an option with collage. It always adds to collage to mix paints, markers and other items to add interest to the collage.



Tree reference photos

Children all know what trees look like so you don't always need reference photos. However, if you want them to see the variety of trees out there (I don't have a huge selection here) then showing all the different types of trees can definitely expand their horizons.



When discussing with children what they will create you can point out that there are single trees, groups of trees, palm trees, trees in the fall, trees in the winter, trees with fruit on them, trees with birds in them etc.

Tree collages

There were different materials offered here at each different projects. Some had trunks offered or material they could use for trunks like brown kraft paper, brown tape etc.



Below are some trees that were created by teachers in a teacher workshop I was giving. You can get an idea of different materials to use from this picture





Themed collages *without* reference pictures

Themes do not always need reference photos.

When the children are familiar with the concepts like winter, fall, self portraits etc, you just tell them what to create, give them materials and let them go.

There are times when you may want to add reference photos of course, but it is not a necessity.

All about me collages

Both of these self portraits started off by giving the children something to build on. The first one the children got a paper that had a round circle and a straight line coming down from the circle. They were given craft sticks, yarn, googly eyes, pieces of tissue and markers.



In this one they had a choice of circles to start with. They were given lots of material pieces, yarn, buttons, feathers and ribbons.



Winter collages

When discussing winter with children they automatically think of snowmen. Here they were told to use the construction paper and they can use white paint at the end to enhance their collages



Here very young children were given white materials to collage with on black background. (It doesn't matter that they don't look like snowmen, white on black looks like winter)

Fall collages

I actually did use reference materials for this project but, you can just give them fall colored papers, tissue papers, tree trunks, craft sticks and they'll be fine.



This was a mixed media fall picture. They used oil pastels and then a mixture of fall colored tissue papers and construction papers for their leaves.



Animal collages

Two types of animal collages. The first one was using pre-cut geometric shapes. Children were asked to create animals out of them



The second was a torn paper collage (also shown in a different section) where the children had to create an animal by ripping the pieces into the shape animal that they wanted.



Zoo collages

This was done after a visit to the zoo. The children were given animal print papers along with googly eyes, craft sticks, toothpicks and some mesh that served as fencing.

Their trip to the zoo was discussed along with what they noticed there and tried to recreate their experiences at the zoo



King and Queen Collages

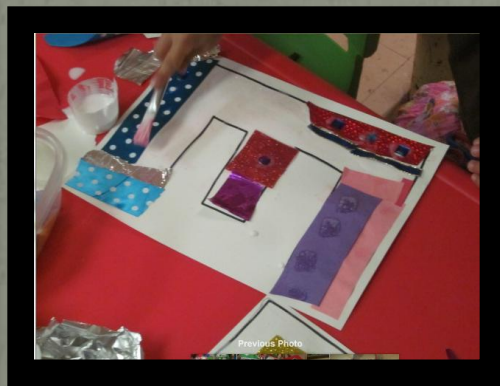
This started out with a bit more instruction than usual. I showed the children how to make a U for the face and then to create a neck to have place to dress their royal subjects in below the neck. They were given material, fabric, ribbons and foil papers to dress their kings and queens.



ABC Collages

Many teachers do similar types of projects when teaching letters. You can either give them a pre drawn letter and have them collage inside OR you can have them collage a letter without anything pre drawn.

Some teachers may give different materials for each letter.



Heart Collages

If you celebrate Valentines Day this is a great project to do for it. If not, and you just have or teach little girls then hearts are always a favorite.

As you can see you can either give them a large heart to collage with smaller hearts or you can just give various size hearts with different materials to collage with



Chanukah Menorah collages

If you celebrate Chanukah then making a menorah is a collage project you can do.

Notice the materials offered below. If you don't have images of different style menorahs (as these children probably saw) then you can give the children many different types of strips and small pieces like buttons, sequins and maybe some flame shaped small papers to use for flames. They can finish up with oil pastels or markers.



Fourth of July flag collages

If you live in the States then you may want to create flags for July fourth. Give the children a cut out template of a flag and an assortment of red, white and blue objects and let them collage their own version of the American flag.

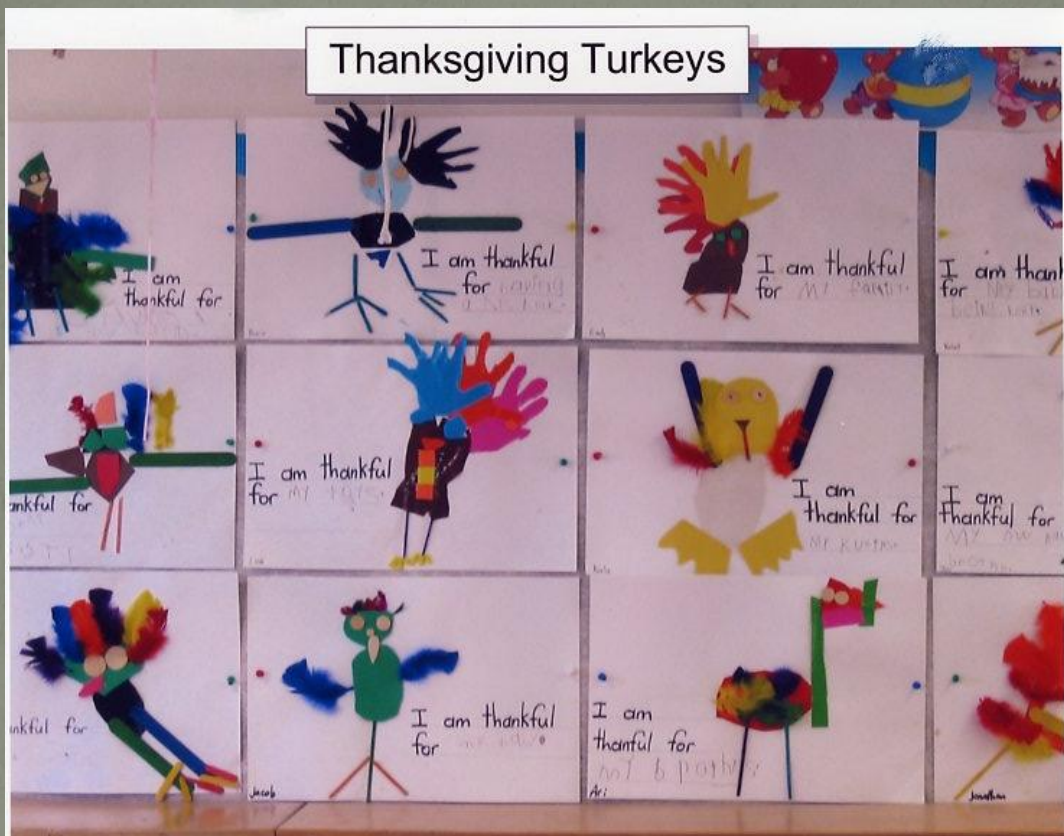
As a matter of fact you can do this in any country just using your country's colors.



Thanksgiving Turkey collages

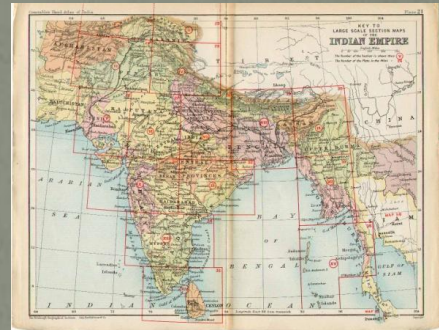
Another project for those living in the states. Many traditional teachers often make turkeys by having the children copy their hands and using that as the base for the turkey. In this project (which was not mine) the teacher did have the children make copies of their hands onto construction paper or felt but, they only used them if they wanted them and HOW they wanted them.

They were also given craft sticks, construction paper, buttons, (you can offer googly eyes) and what looks like colored toothpicks)





Collages *inspired* by materials



The following collages are inspired by the materials themselves.

You don't only have to just give them the materials sometimes you can take it further and give them a little bit more direction when using these materials.

Torn paper collages

Not allowing scissors in a collage allows children to be creative in new ways. I always start torn paper collages by giving the children two pieces of paper one for a background and one to tear. Below are examples of collages that are random and collages that are done with more thought.



When the children have had some experience with torn paper collages then you can add other materials to use along with the torn paper. Craft sticks, googly eyes, feathers or anything else you find may enhance these collages.



Torn paper collages with a theme



Giving the children a theme is another way to use torn paper collages. In the images on top and below are winter torn paper collages.



This torn paper collage had the theme of animals (seen in that section in this eBook). They were given one piece of paper and told to rip it up into pieces to create an animal and then were offered googly eyes.



Tissue paper collage

Very often people use tissue paper by cutting them up into small squares, scrunching them up and then using them for collage. That's also often used in a mosaic form to fill up empty space.

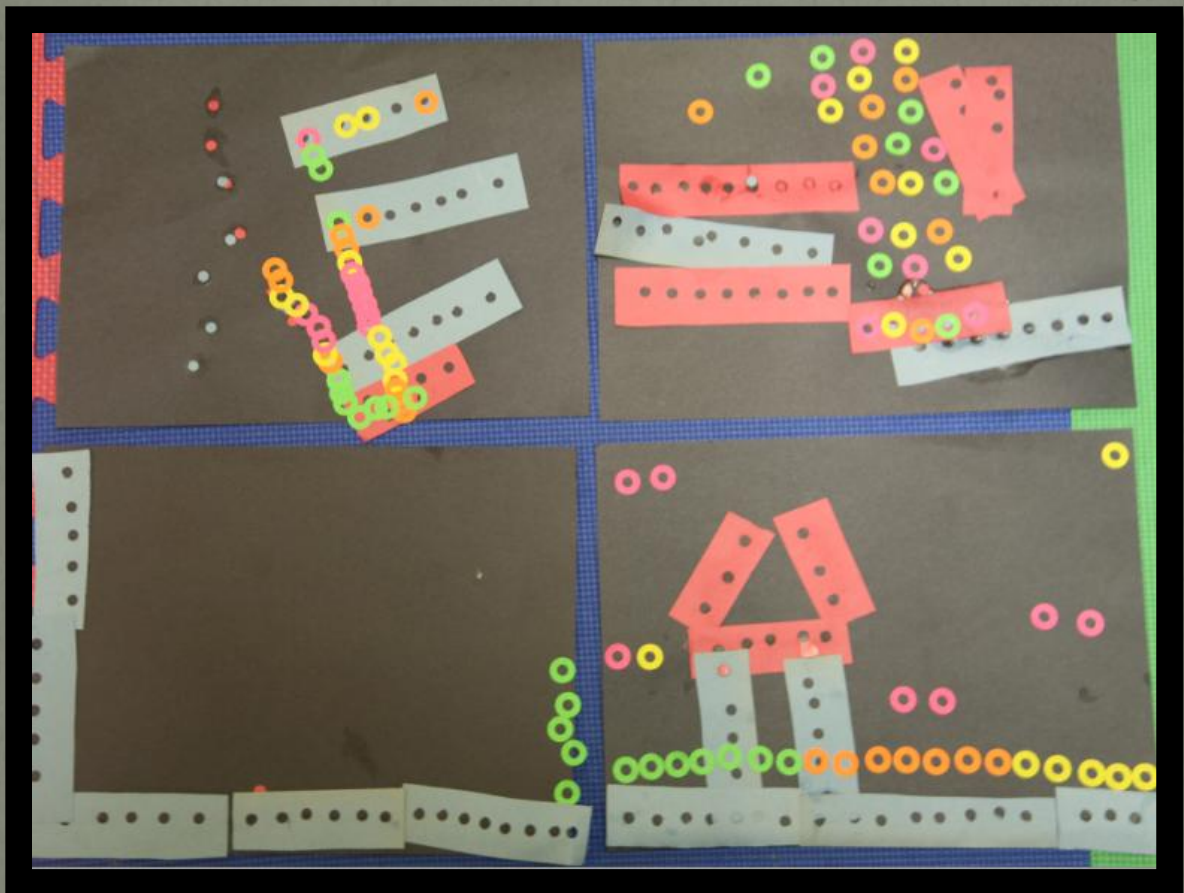
There are other ways to use the tissue paper as seen below. Either just to paste pieces abstractly or to create a picture or to fill in pieces of drawing



Hole Puncher & Reinforcement collage

Do you remember having to buy reinforcements when you were in elementary school to use to repair ripped hole in loose-leaf paper? Remember we never used them? Well here is a way to finally use them.

Give the children strips of paper, a hole puncher and some reinforcements and let them create. These reinforcements are fluorescent which makes the black paper as a background perfect.

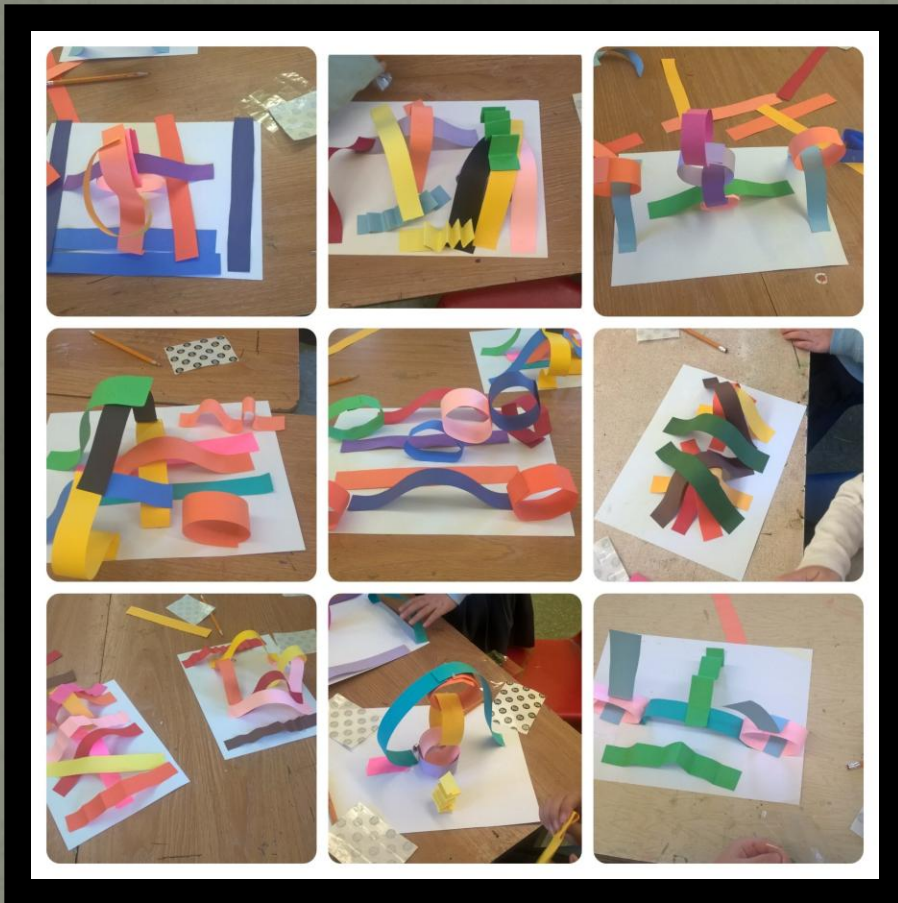


3D Paper Strip collages

All you need for this collage is a piece of tag board (cardstock), strips of construction paper and glue dots. The tag board is heavier than the construction paper which is what it needs for support.

You need to explain to the children that this is a type of collage that can be seen when walking all around (really a sculpture). Discuss with them the various things that they can do with their strips. Show them how they have to bend the ends of the strips a bit in order to get them to stick. (give them feet)

Glue dots is the most efficient type of glue for this. If you want to use glue then they will have to make sure to hold the piece down until they are sure that it sticks.



Rolled Paper collages

These collages are made by using cut up squares and rectangles from magazine pages rolled up and taped shut.



They can then be used abstractly or to make a representational picture with.



Rubbings Collages



The children create rubbings by taking copy paper or newsprint and an unwrapped crayon. They put the paper against textured objects and rub the crayon onto the paper. They can use texture plates too but , radiators, window screens, doors etc work well .



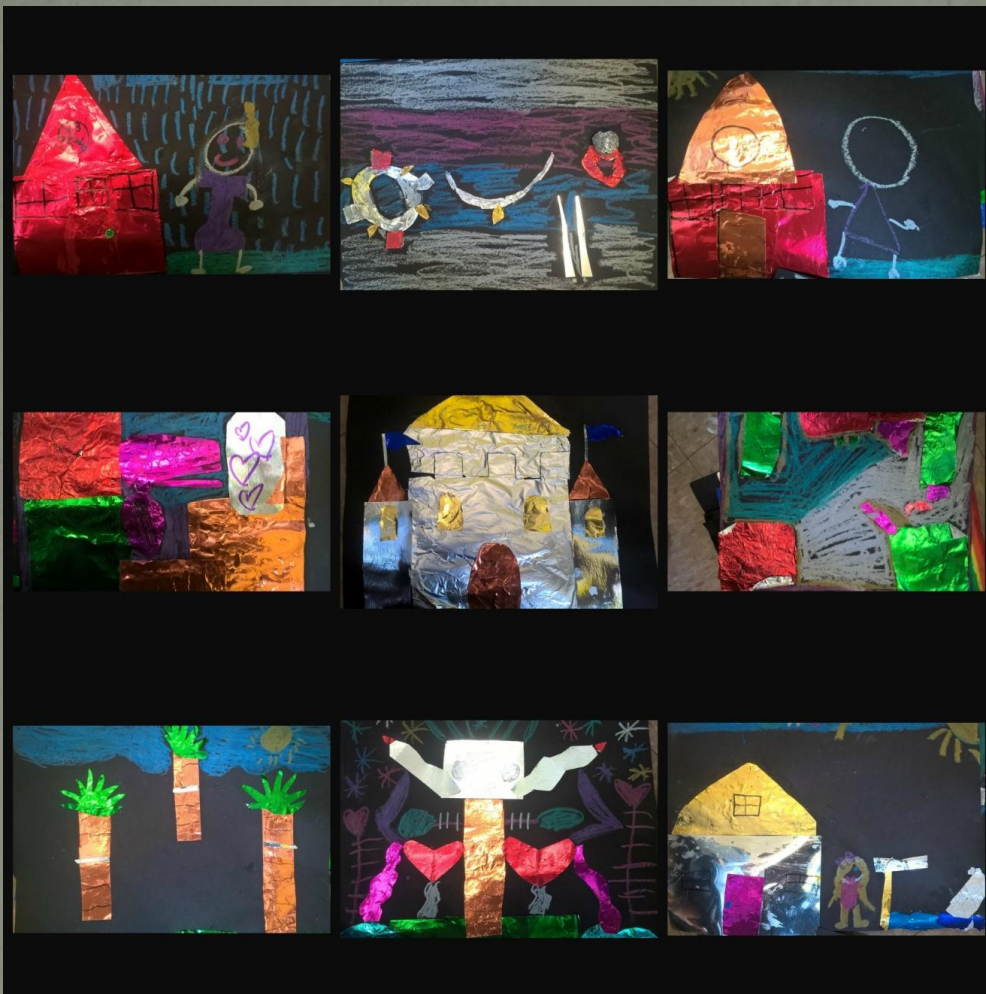
Collages children used from many rubbings that were created.



An older child used the rubbings to create a realistic scene.

Foil Collages

Foil paper is just another kind of paper to collage with that makes for an interesting collage. I would use black as a background as it shows up beautifully that way. You can also add chalk or oil pastels to finish up since those also show up nicely on black.



Magazine Face Parts collages



The idea here is to cut out all the different face parts from magazines and use them to create their own zany face collages. In the bowl in the upper right picture I drew a mouth to show where the mouths are and had the children put all mouths they cut in there.

They should cut out lots of face parts as they don't have to use them all. You can always give extra collage materials and drawing materials to fill out their face.



Map collages



Maps and old book pages are something I've started using in my own mixed media artwork but, the way to use maps with children is for them to outline various shapes they find in the maps, cut them out and collage with them.

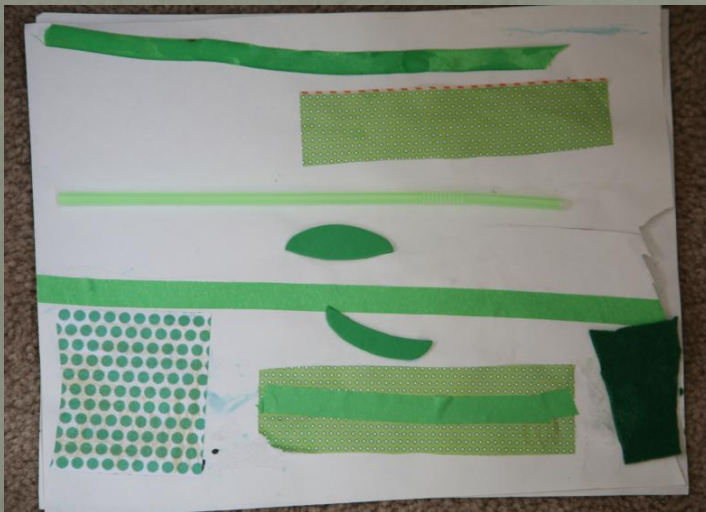


Sometimes the children may just use them to create their own collages out of the pages

Color Study collages

Color study collages are collages using one color cut out of various materials. In this case it was for St Patrick's Day but, you can use this idea if the children are learning about colors.

You can also have them add to their color study by cutting out color swatches from magazines



Nature collages

Nature collages are simply collages made from object collected from nature. Sometimes you may want to collect flowers and leaves and press them before collaging as well.



You can also add other object to the natural object like craft sticks and googly eyes as seen below.



Craft Stick collages

The children colored the craft sticks first and then collaged with them. Since this was a long time ago I don't remember if they were told that they could make houses with them or that is just what they did naturally.

You will need to use cardstock as the background for this to hold up the sticks.



4 Other Collages

While doing some research on various type of collages I came across a few that I don't have in this eBook and I decided to add them here as well.

Wood collages



A collage with small wood pieces will need to be collaged onto a strong background

Dried Colored Glue collages



Add bits of paint to glue and dribble onto either a craft mat or some other kind of plastic. When dry, peel off the pieces to use in a collage

Fabric collages



Cut up small bits of various types of fabrics to collage with.

Magazine paper



Magazine pages can either be cut or ripped to collage with. One idea is to keep in mind the colors found to use in the collage.

How to figure out your own theme collages

You may want to use the theme collage idea for a special holiday or topic that I haven't covered and it so this is how you would go about it.

You would think of the holiday or topic you want to use and think if there is some kind of icon connected with that holiday or theme that you can use that can be used for a collage.

If you can think of that then collect materials, get a few reference photos and try it out. Sometimes you can actually collect the same materials you would use to give the children a “copycat crafts” project but, let them decide how to use them and if to use them.

I hope you enjoyed this Collage Curriculum eBook and I hope you enjoy watching the children's creativity blossom as they create their collages as much as I do.

Thank you
Faigie Kobre