

### Exploring visual storytelling through composition and storyboarding

"Shape Stories" is a two-part lesson. In the first part we will create simple cut-out shapes and explore various compositions with them. By drawing on the imagination we will begin to create characters and potential story ideas. In the second part we will storyboard three frames each representing the beginning, middle, and ending of our story. This lesson is designed to inspire children to further explore writing and illustrating their own stories.

**Materials:** Color construction paper or found paper, white copy paper, scissors, pencil, white school glue or glue stick, common household objects used as drawing templates

#### The Lesson:

1. Self-introduction, project overview, and materials.
2. **Part 1: Character Play.** Find objects in your home you can trace.
3. Cut out a variety of shapes using different colored papers.
4. Think about each shape as a *character* in a story.
5. Move them around on the blank page as you envision how they might interact with one another. Discuss meaning of *composition* and *negative space*.
6. **Part 2: Storyboarding.** Cut out two additional identical shapes for each of your chosen characters.
7. Lay three sheets of blank paper next to each other as story *panels*. Discuss *sequence*.
8. Decide the beginning, middle and end of your story.
9. Choose the best ways to *illustrate* this sequence with your chosen shape characters.
10. If you need to cut out additional *props*, do so now.
11. Glue down the shapes once your *storyboarding* is complete.
12. Show examples of storyboards used for various projects, including books, movies, and television.
13. Challenge the students to continue exploring forms of *visual storytelling*.

#### Connection to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for the Fine Arts

- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic work and ideas.
- Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.

VA:Cr1.1.1 Engage collaboratively in exploration and imaginative play with materials.

VA:Cr2.1.1 Explore uses of materials and tools to create works of art or design.

VA:Cr3.1.1 Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art.

VA:Re8.1.1 Interpret art by categorizing subject matter and identifying the characteristics of media and composition.

VA:Cr1.3.1 Elaborate on an imaginative idea.

**Connection to Literacy:** "Shape Stories" connects to literacy through the exploration of several vocabulary words including composition, negative space, character, sequence, panels, visual storytelling, props, illustration, and storyboard. The second part of the lesson explores the idea of story structure, as we will be creating three storyboards that describe the beginning, middle, and end of a simple visual story. I will be giving them step-by-step instructions, so listening to and following directions will be emphasized as well. I will also include slides that can be read that list materials required, as well as simplified step-by-step written instructions.

## Resources

Arree Chung's Creativity School for Kids:  
<https://creativitieschool.com/>

Reading Eggs – How to Write a Story:  
<https://readingeggs.com/articles/2015/06/19/story-writing-for-kids/>

National Storytelling Network's Websites for Kids:  
<https://storynet.org/websites-for-children/>

### **List of 12 fun titles/prompts to create visual stories for:**

1. How I met my first friend.
2. The day I woke up and I wasn't me anymore.
3. What I did when I was the school principal for a day.
4. My greatest invention ever.
5. Discovering the most amazing place in the world.
6. Finding out my teacher is an alien.
7. The time I won first place.
8. How I found my very unusual pet.
9. The terrible thing I found under the bed.
10. How I caught the tooth fairy.
11. What made me become invisible?
12. The house I built on the moon.

## About the Artist

### **Bonnie Kelso**

Bonnie Kelso writes and illustrates books for children and adults that encourage individualism and brave creative self-expression. She facilitates creative workshops online and in-person. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, Bonnie has a background in exhibit design and has worked on projects for NASA, National Geographic, and the Smithsonian Institution. She traveled all the way around the world... twice! Bonnie still enjoys indulging her wandering nature whenever she gets the chance. Currently, she lives in Las Vegas with her partner and two sons with whom she enjoys many real and imaginary adventures.

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artists in schools +  
communities

### **Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster**

*The Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster* is an online resource for schools, organizations and communities seeking to engage teaching artists. Roster artists are experienced in collaborating with schools and communities to conduct arts learning and cultural experiences in, through and about the arts.

Explore the roster at <https://www.nvartscouncil.org/rosters/teaching-artists/>