

03 / APPLY + EXPLAIN

40 MINUTES

Positive space, negative space, figure and ground

LEARNING INTENTION		SUCCESS CRITERIA		MATERIALS		EVIDENCE TO COLLECT							
We are learning to apply positive and negative space independently and explain how our visual decisions guide attention.		• I can apply the concepts to a new composition. • I can plan and predict the effect of a visual decision. • I can review and revise my work independently. • I can explain how positive and negative space guide the viewer.		• Fresh black paper • White or off-white backing paper • Scissors • Glue stick • Pencil for planning on the reverse only • One unfamiliar positive-and-negative-space image placeholder • Lesson 02 photographs for brief retrieval • Student reflection prompt		• Response to the unfamiliar example • Stated visual intention • Prediction before making • Independent working process • Self-check and revision • Final composition • Verbal explanation • Short reflection • Selected video timestamps							
TIME	TEACHER + PROMPT	LEARNER		LOOK FOR		IF STUCK							
0–5 MINUTES SPACED RETRIEVAL	TEACHER Show one Lesson 02 photograph without labels. ASK “Where are the positive and negative spaces?” “How did placement affect the balance?” “What did you change deliberately?” <i>Spaced retrieval asks the learner to access earlier learning after a delay rather than receiving another explanation.</i>	Retrieves concepts and explains one earlier decision.		• Independent vocabulary • Recall of visual reasoning • Connection across lessons		Allow the learner to point before naming. Supply only the missing term.							
5–10 MINUTES TRANSFER TO A NEW EXAMPLE	TEACHER Show the unfamiliar image placeholder. ASK “What do you notice first?” “Where is the negative space active?” “How is this different from your previous composition?” Do not explain the example before the learner responds. <i>Transfer is tested by applying established knowledge to an unfamiliar example.</i>	Interprets the new example and supports the response with visible evidence.		• Application beyond familiar examples • Recognition of shared boundaries • Evidence-based explanation		Ask the learner to trace one boundary and describe what appears on either side.							
10–15 MINUTES STATE AN INTENTION	TEACHER Ask the learner to choose what the new composition should make the viewer notice first. Complete: I want the viewer to notice ____ first. I will use positive and negative space by ____. <i>Stating an intention creates a clear goal against which later decisions can be monitored.</i>	States an intention and identifies an initial strategy.		• Specific visual intention • Connection between strategy and intended effect		Offer two possible intentions: make the black form dominant or make the white space dominant.							
15–20 MINUTES PLAN + PREDICT	TEACHER Ask the learner to plan the first cut or placement before acting. ASK “What new negative shape will this create?” “Where might the viewer look first?” Keep teacher explanation minimal. <i>Prediction requires the learner to mentally rehearse a decision before acting, reducing random trial and error.</i>	Plans, predicts and begins the composition.		• Anticipation of both resulting shapes • Purposeful first action • Use of prior learning		Ask the learner to indicate the proposed cut with a finger before using scissors.							
20–25 MINUTES MAKE INDEPE NDENTLY	TEACHER Observe without directing the composition. Use only one neutral prompt if needed: ASK “What are you considering now?” <i>Independent practice shows whether the learner can coordinate the concepts and process without continuous guidance.</i>	Cuts, preserves, positions and tests pieces independently.		• Independent sequencing • Consideration of black and white spaces • Problem solving • Need for prompts		Return the learner to the sequence: cut, preserve, position, test. Do not choose the arrangement for them.							
25–30 MINUTES SELF-CHECK + REVISE	TEACHER Ask the learner to pause and inspect the work. ASK “Does the viewer notice what you intended?” “Is any negative space accidental or inactive?” “What one change would strengthen the composition?” <i>Self-monitoring and formative assessment allow the learner to compare the developing work with the stated intention.</i>	Checks the work, identifies one issue and tests a revision.		• Accurate self-assessment • Willingness to revise • Decision linked to intention		Temporarily rotate the work or view it from a distance to support fresh observation.							
30–35 MINUTES RESOLVE + COMPLETE	TEACHER Ask the learner to select the final arrangement and glue it. Avoid adding new suggestions unless safety or task completion requires intervention. <i>With scaffolding faded, the learner takes responsibility for resolving and completing the visual decision.</i>	Makes the final decision and completes the work independently.		• Commitment to a reasoned solution • Independent completion • Consistency with the intention		Ask the learner to compare the current solution with the original intention statement.							
35–40 MINUTES EXPLAIN + REFLECT	TEACHER ASK “What did you want the viewer to notice first?” “Which decision helped achieve that?” “Where is the negative space doing important work?” “What can you now do without help?” “What would you change if you continued?” <i>Retrieval, explanation and reflection provide evidence of transfer, independence and metacognitive awareness.</i>	Explains the final work and reflects on learning across the three lessons.		• Correct terminology • Decision connected to effect • Independent explanation • Recognition of progress and remaining need		Ask the learner to point to one area and complete: “I changed this because...”							
SEQUENCE EVIDENCE		Conceptual understanding: _____		Cutting skill: _____		Prompt that helped: _____		Point of confusion: _____		Support needed next: _____		Video timestamp: _____	

ITALIC TEXT = BRAIN AND LEARNING PRINCIPLE IN ACTION Spaced retrieval · Transfer · Goal setting · Prediction · Independent practice · Self-monitoring · Fading scaffolding · Reflection
SOURCES Visual Arts content: Greenwood (2023); Guthrie (2017); VCAA (2022). Studio process: ArtJohn (2019). Brain and Learning: Bloom (1968); Deans for Impact (2015); Kirschner et al. (2006); Martin and Evans (2018); Sweller et al. (2011).