

Lesson 4

Movement and counter-movement

Expectations

Students are:

- Expected to describe composition activity by means of gestures.
- Expected to counter-balance the direction of movement in composition.
- Expected to create a dominant movement within a composition, supported by smaller counter-movements.

Concepts

Gesture development (part, whole, group)
Movement and counter-movement
Dominant movement
Thrust and check

The following Ministry Grade 6 expectations are addressed:

6a30 - describe how line can be used to direct the viewer's attention;

6a35 - describe how the strengths and limitations of both traditional and contemporary art tools, materials, and techniques affect artistic choices;

6a36 - identify the most appropriate tools, materials, and techniques for the size and scope of the work and use them correctly;

6a37 - solve artistic problems in their work, using the design elements and at least one of the design principles for this grade;

6a36 - produce two and three-dimensional works of art;

6a39 - describe, in their plan for a work of art, how they will research their subject matter;

6a40 - identify strengths and areas for improvement in their own work and that of others;

6a42 - demonstrate awareness that an artist intentionally used some of the design elements and principles to convey meaning, and explain how the artist accomplishes his/her intentions.

Teacher's notes

Movement and counter-movement are other powerful techniques that you can use to both unify your compositions and make them look dynamic. You will discover movement in your compositions in the same way you found it in shapes of figures and objects - through the gesture. Not only do positive and negative shapes in pictures have gestures, but also their arrangement does as well. The accumulation of gestures throughout the subject will create movement in your pictures. Also, it is important in preventing your design from becoming stiff and lifeless. Because it sweeps through separate sections of the subject, movement unifies separate areas.

Gesture development

Movement will be created by lines that follow a similar direction. Think of tree branches blowing in the wind. Their gestures show that they each have their own direction, but combined, they create a unified movement which could be shown by a single line.

Even though the subject in the photo below is still, the stems of the flowers follow a similar direction and create movement from top to bottom. The green lines show the progression of this movement

and how it is also taken up by the line of the table.



Dominant movement

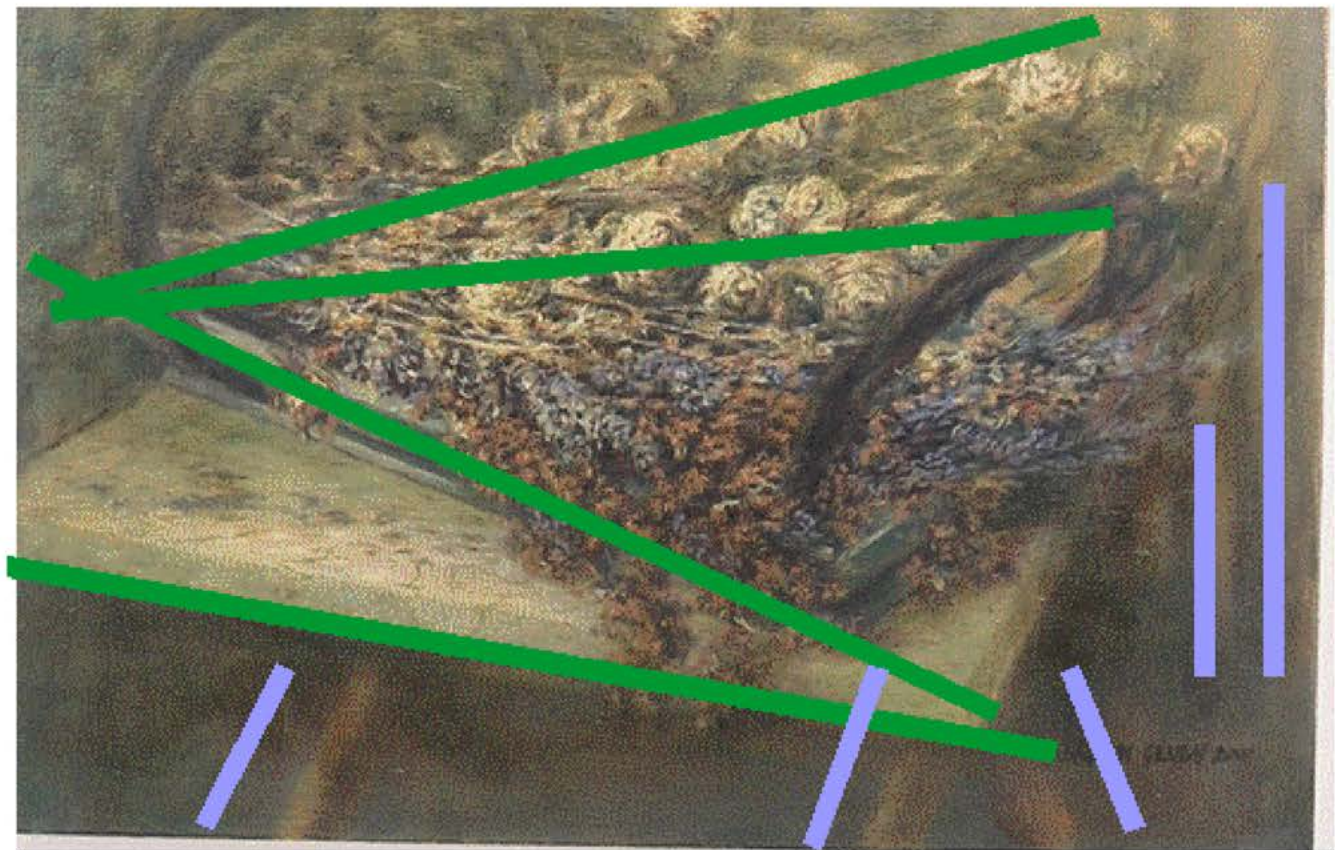
A movement is like a crowd moving toward a single goal or event. To show how this movement is composed, you might start with the shapes that are formed by large groups. These shapes will share a similar direction. Within the groups, you can show how each individual figure or part conforms to the direction of the group. Throughout the parts of the movement, there is a dominant direction that they all follow.



The direction of movement is repeated in many ways in the photo above. The “V” formation of the group of boats points toward the direction they are travelling. The shapes of the boats themselves are like arrows heading across the page. And also, the gestures of the rowers shows them leaning into the direction they are moving. If the photo were larger, we might see similar groups heading in the same direction and enlarging the scope of the movement more.

Counter-movement

Although movement creates a dynamic composition, too much of it can disrupt the picture’s unity. Strong, sweeping lines showing the force of a storm might be very expressive, but they could also lead your eye outside the field. Movement that is too powerful will threaten the rest of the composition if it is not checked. A way to control movement within a picture is through a counter-movement in another direction. If you can imagine your eye as a ball rolling in the direction of the movement, the counter-movement would be like a gate closing and preventing the ball from going further. An example of movement and counter-movement could be sailboats leaning in the wind. Their movement is made steady visually by the horizon, or by a pier to which they are anchored.



The purple lines show how the movement of the green lines is kept in check so that they do not lead our eyes outside the picture. These lines show the counter-movement that holds in the strong line created by the table and echoed by the flower stems. A balance of movement and counter-movement is important in keeping our focus within the composition.

Thrust and check

As a shape pushes outward, the negative space that surrounds it can check its movement. This game of thrust and check ensures that the composition remains stable and balanced and also, that our eyes do not leave the picture. A forceful shape that points in a particular direction should be held in place by other shapes, either positive or negative, around it.

There is a powerful thrust created by the shapes of the subject into the background of this picture. The negative space is pushed up and around the sides of the dark subject.

The red bands move across the form of the table in an opposite direction to its thrust. Because of their repetition, they also move in the same direction. This creates tension as they guide our eyes back and forth along the subject.



Lesson props and questions

1. What directions are the lines pointing towards?
2. Is there a dominant direction?
3. Is there another less important direction among other lines?
4. What would happen if all the lines pointed in a single direction?
5. What would happen if each line pointed in a different direction?
6. Are there slight variations to the dominant direction?
7. In which direction do different parts of these objects point?
8. What would a negative shape beside part of this object look like?
9. What would be its direction?

Think of things that have a dominant direction. (trees, steeples, racing animal)

10. What are the lines that describe the movement?
11. What are the lines that steady it so that it remains stable and balanced?



Lesson props and questions



Exercise 1

**describe composition
activity by means of
gestures**

1. Find an example of a painting, photograph or advertisement.
2. Using tracing paper, trace the gestures for large groups or parts of the subject within the composition.
3. Over the tracing, sketch the gestures for these groups or parts.

Time required

research:	½ hour
gestures:	½ hour
total time:	1 hour

Materials

paper
pencil

Evaluation criteria

- identifies the main movement
- identifies the sub-groups to the movement
- identifies the counter-movement

Suggested cross-curricular topics

Social Studies/Canada and World Connections-Canada and its trading partners:

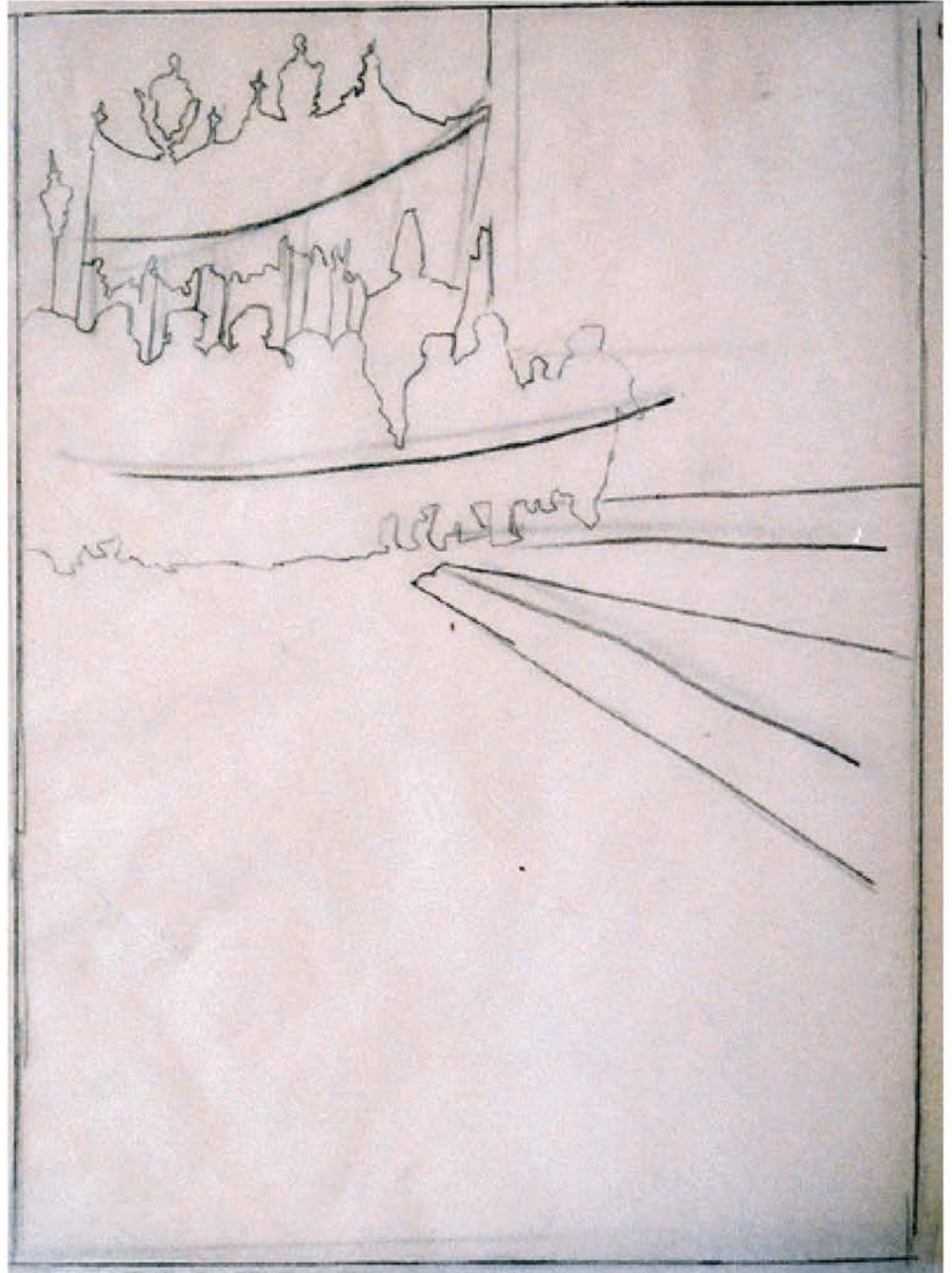
- Identify Canada's connection to the US through media, trade, immigration, culture, technology, tourism, history, and geography.

Social Studies/Heritage and Citizenship-Aboriginal peoples and European explorers:

- Identify the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to the political and social life of Canada.

Exercise 1

Illustration



The main movement is within the group of figures in the upper third of the picture.

The diagonal lines below provide a counter-movement that prevents our eye from moving in the direction of the group's procession and off the page.

Exercise 2**counter-balance the
direction of movement
in composition**

1. Use your drawings from Exercise 1 on which to plan an abstract composition.
2. Determine which lines and shapes are important to the movement in the composition and which add a counter-balance to it so that your eye remains in the picture.
3. Draw your revised composition.
4. Colour your composition so that this movement and counter-balance are clear.

Time required

planning:	¼ hour
final work:	1 hour
total time:	1¼ hours

Materials

sturdy paper	pencil
paint or coloured pencils	brushes
water container	rag

Evaluation criteria

- composition has a movement and counter-movement
- colour arrangement enhances the effect of movement and counter-movement
- good development from the first exercise

Suggested cross-curricular topics

Social Studies/Canada and World Connections-Canada and its trading partners:

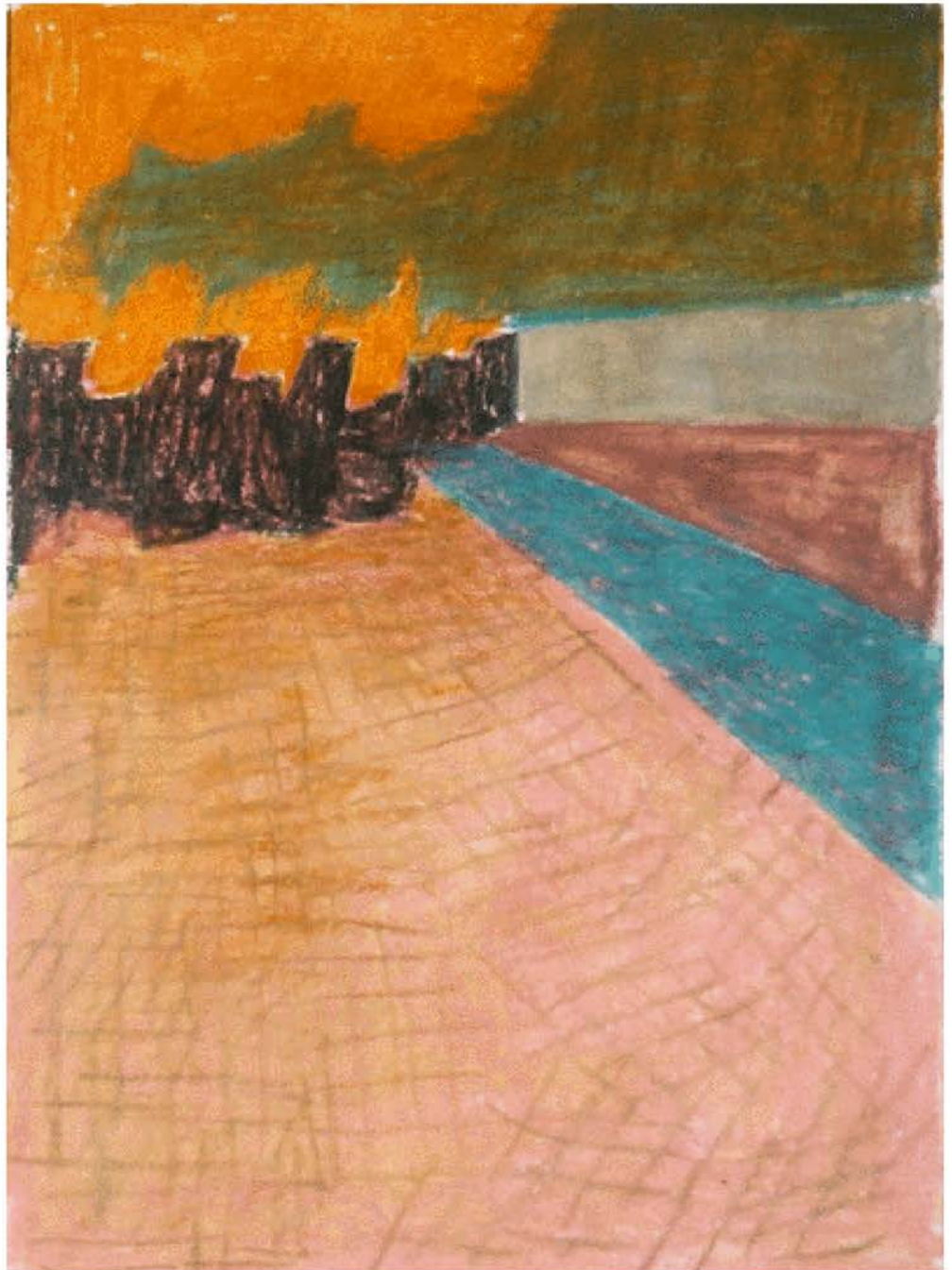
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Exercise 2

Illustration



The small, dark areas balance much larger areas in the main movement and provide a counter-movement to it. The direction of this counter-movement is vertical and tends to steady the other diagonal lines.

The main movement directs our eye into the dark shape, as

well as back down and across the lower part of the picture. This is achieved by the repetitive shapes that

grow from small to large.

This movement is enhanced by the alternating colour pattern.

Exercise 3

**create a dominant
movement within a
composition**

1. Place some things together for a subject.
2. Plan the composition so that the subject is cropped and there is balance between positive and negative shapes.
3. Organize the shapes with a lot of movement among the lines of the subject, as well as interaction between the positive and negative areas.
4. Lay tracing paper over the drawing.
5. Modify the shapes so that they build towards a dominant movement.
6. Colour your second drawing.
7. Explain how the lines in the composition build toward a dominant movement.

Materials

sturdy paper

pencil

paint or coloured pencils

brushes

rag

water container

Time required

first drawing:	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	second drawing:	$\frac{1}{4}$ hour
colour:	$\frac{3}{4}$ hour	explanation:	$\frac{1}{4}$ hour
total time:	$1\frac{3}{4}$ hours		

Evaluation criteria

- dominant movement is built up through variations in line and shape direction
- good interaction between positive and negative areas
- explanations demonstrate understanding of movement in composition

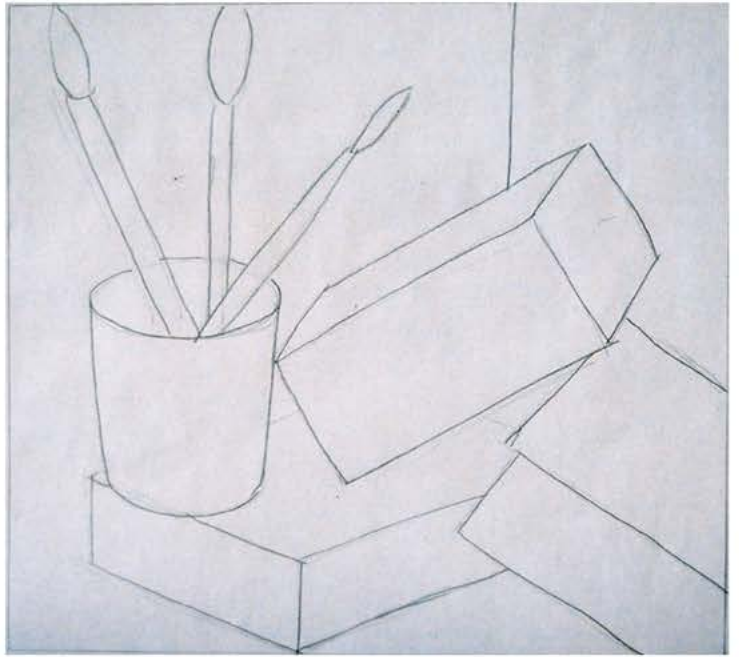
Suggested cross-curricular topics

Social Studies/Heritage and Citizenship-Aboriginal peoples and European explorers:

- Identify technological developments and cultural factors that led to the exploration of North America.

Exercise 3

Illustration



Links to topics at other Grade Levels

2/3	gesture variation and distortion	balance movement
4/5	outer contour contour qualities massed tone	positive and negative Forward link: coordination line, tone and contour
7/8	drawing development contraposto eye movement visual weight	balance counter-movement organization hierarchy focus and emphasis

Other skills

- observation
- pattern recognition
- re-construction