

Lesson 6

Coordinating line, tone and contour

Concepts

Flow
Gradation
Contrast
Harmony
Eye movement

Expectations

Students are:

- Expected to use shape, tone and contour to establish visual flow in design.
- Expected to balance contrast and harmony in visual design.
- Expected to control shape, tone and contour to create expression.

The following Ministry Grade 6 expectations are addressed:

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

6a32 - demonstrate understanding that shadows and shading create the illusion of a third dimension;

6a34 - describe how artists may use texture to represent or to evoke an emotional response;

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;

6a38 - 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;

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

Pictures are made up of many elements such as lines, shapes and values, along with structures underneath such as gestures and armatures. These tools and features of composition act like a team as you apply the different techniques presented in previous lessons. Positive and negative areas also belong to this group that unifies and animates the design.

Eye movement

With so many elements at work in pictures, it is helpful to think about how our eyes move from one area to another, and whether any part is disturbing to the way we view the whole composition. In a previous lesson, we talked about movement in pictures. The reason that you balance movement with counter-movement is that lines or shapes moving in a single direction can lead our eyes off the field. Therefore, movement also includes the way our eyes travel over the subject. And because of this, it is important to create pathways throughout the composition that our eyes can use to navigate the parts of the subject.

Flow

Line is an excellent way to create flow for the eyes because it has direction and can travel by curved, crooked, straight or broken routes.



In the picture to the left, the shapes of the dam create steps for our eye to cross the river. These shapes contrast in value with the large, dark, shapeless grassy area in the foreground that pushes our eyes up towards the bright, geometric pieces of concrete which span the river.

Shapes also have direction when their orientations point a certain way. Tonal areas with shape, value contrast and edge variety, provide good means for the eye to travel throughout the composition. Movement in the picture occurs when techniques to encourage a particular eye movement and the elements of the subject work together. The direction of a line could be continued by the edge of a tonal area. Or, a route for the eye could be made with gradually larger shapes that take us from small to large.

In the picture to the left, the lines in the orange cloth are picked up by the shapes of the curled leaves and, finally, by the taller weeds.

The movement begins in a horizontal direction and is transferred through different elements to a vertical one.

The pivotal point of the movement is the dark, round vase.



Contrast and gradation

High contrast will make parts of the composition stand out. Therefore it is useful for pulling our attention to important areas in the picture. On the other hand, value gradation is a slower way to lead the eye towards a focal area. These two techniques provide you with different speeds with which to direct our eyes throughout your picture.

Harmony

Harmony is a balance of unity and variety. It is created by identifying unique characteristics of the separate parts of the picture and then finding ways they are alike. For example, a group of areas with very different shapes might be of equal value. They are unique and special by their separate shapes and sizes; however, they are alike in their value. These differences and similarities are the things you use to organize parts of the composition. If the lightest shapes are of different sizes, we will still group them together by their value. Because of their different sizes, we will follow them through the composition like stepping stones. You are using a common characteristic to create a group, and then using their differences to create flow.



High contrast between light and dark surrounds the small figure that would otherwise be lost in this landscape.

This contrast is directed by the movement of the tall grass bending toward the figure from one side, and the dark clouds sweeping in from the other side.

Together, these two techniques of contrast and shape movement secure the focus for the picture, while giving us plenty of subject details to gaze over.



Compare this picture to the one on the opposite page. Where the first one uses high contrast to establish focus on the centre of interest, this picture has one level of middle contrast throughout. There is very little detail. Instead our eyes are led along the line between earth and sky through variations in edge quality and texture. This line is coordinated with the two large simple masses of light and dark tone that unify the composition.

Unity and flow throughout your composition is only part of your aim. You might also want to express emotion in your picture. Certain kinds of lines, shapes and tones will express emotions like peace, energy, happiness or sadness. If your picture is about a particular feeling, then all the elements in it should support the expression. Through techniques that you use to organize all the parts, you can help us to appreciate the picture the way you intend.

Lesson props and questions

1. Identify common characteristics within a groups of shapes.
2. How many variations of similar shapes can you see?
3. Where are the contours?
4. Where are the contours interrupted?
5. Are there important contours that travel over the entire composition?
6. What are their directions?
7. Are their edges firm or soft?
8. Are there strong contrasts or gradual changes?
9. How would you describe the tones: light, middle or dark?
10. What are the different ways that contrast has been created?
11. For each of these contrasts, how would you create a gradual change?
12. What happens when you omit steps in the series of gradual changes?
13. How would you create both harmony and contrast with one technique?



14. What is the expression of this picture?
15. What are the main shapes?
16. Where are they located?
17. Do they contribute to the expression? How?
18. What are the main values?
19. How much is there of each one?
20. Do they contribute to the expression? How?
21. How are they used together with the shapes?

Lesson props and questions



Exercise 1**balance contrast and
harmony in visual
design**

1. Collect materials for collage that are toned but not coloured. (string, printed or textured paper, dried leaves)
2. Create an abstract drawing or sketch using any kind of shape and arrangement on the page.
3. Organize the materials on the drawing so that they flow easily one into the other.
4. Allow some of the drawing to show through as part of the composition.

Time required

collecting resources:	$\frac{1}{4}$ hour
final work:	1 - $1\frac{1}{4}$ hour
total time:	$1\frac{1}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours

Materials

collage material	sturdy paper
glue	scissors

**Suggested cross-cur-
ricular topics**

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

- Describe early explorers' perceptions of Aboriginal peoples' way of life.

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

- Describe how sharing of goods and culture between Canada and other countries can influence the lifestyles of Canadians.
- Describe influences Canada has on other countries.

Exercise 1

Illustration



Evaluation criteria

- good variety of materials
- organization of materials creates flow throughout the arrangement
- common characteristics found in the different materials

Exercise 2

use shape, tone and contour to establish visual flow in design

1. Plan a poster for a special event. Include black and white photography, graphics and text.
2. Create an harmonious arrangement by discovering common characteristics among the different elements of the poster.
3. Use contrast to emphasize important areas and gradation to lead our eye throughout the poster.

Time required

collect resources:	¼ - ½ hour
final work:	1 hour
total time:	1¼ - 1½ hours

Materials

collage material	sturdy paper
pencil	brushes
rag	water container
paint or coloured pencils	

Evaluation criteria

- common characteristics found in the different materials
- contrast is used to guide the viewer throughout the design
- balance of harmony and contrast

Suggested cross-curricular topics

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

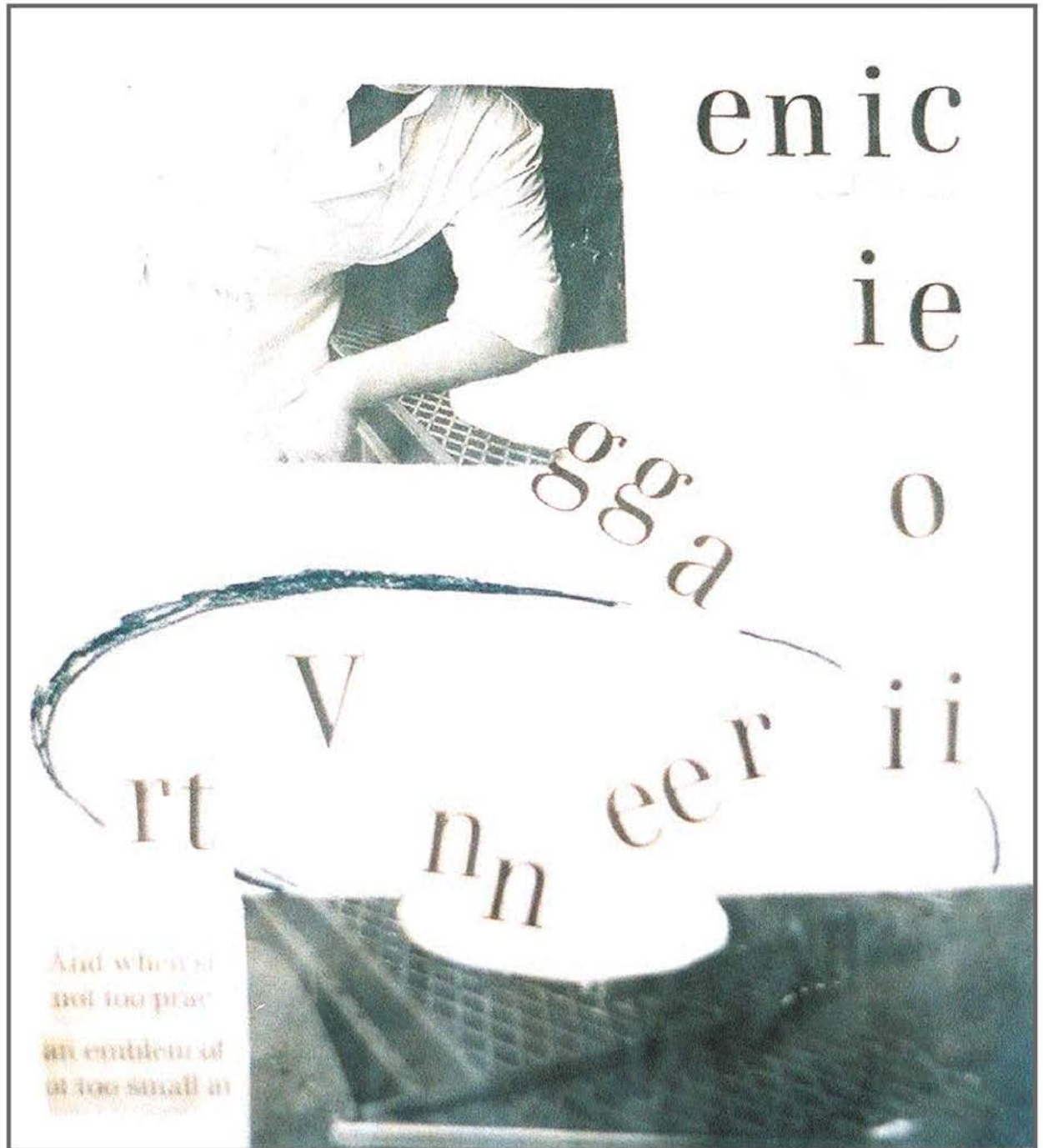
- Identify Canada's connection to the US through media, trade, immigration, culture, technology, tourism, history, and geography.
- Identify outstanding contributions of Canadians from various backgrounds to the global community through dance, sports, music, literature, art, science and technology.

Oral and Visual communication:

- Create a variety of media works.

Exercise 2

Illustration



Exercise 3

**control shape, tone
and contour to create
expression**

1. Use black, white and grey paper, or black and white paint, along with pencil.
2. Plan a composition that has a focal area. (realistic or abstract)
3. Use a combination of techniques to create flow and to lead the eye throughout the picture towards the focus.

Time required

planning:	$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ hour
final work:	$\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 hour
total time:	1 - 1½ hours

Materials

black, grey and white construction paper or paint	
sturdy paper	pencil
scissors	glue
brushes	rag
water container	

Evaluation criteria

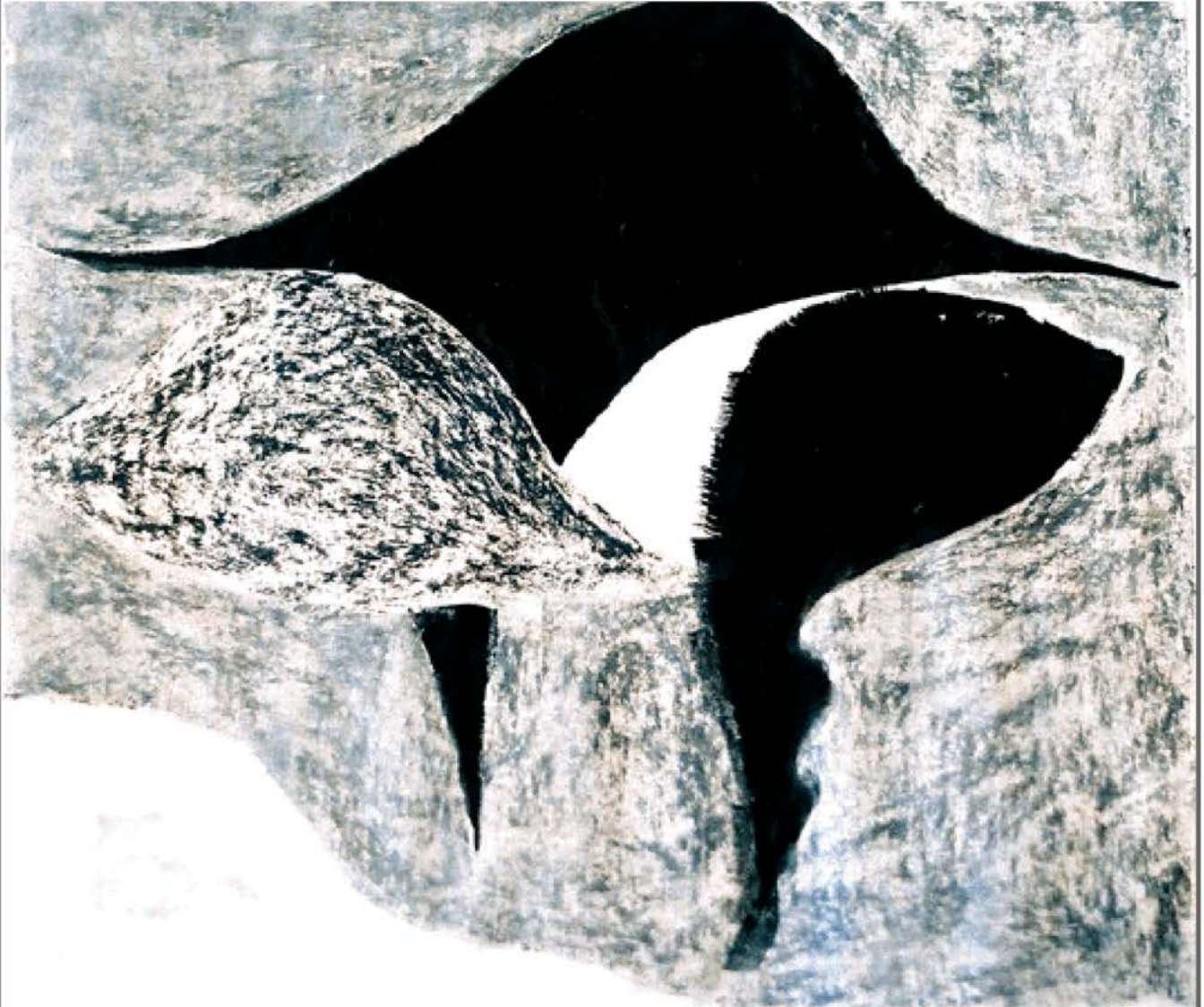
- shape, tone and edge are coordinated
- contrast is used to emphasize the focal area
- the entire field is used

Suggested cross-curricular topics

- Social Studies/Heritage and Citizenship-Aboriginal peoples and European explorers:
- Identify current concerns of Aboriginal peoples.
- Oral and Visual communication:
- Create a variety of media works.

Exercise 3

Illustration



Links to topics at other Grade Levels

2/3	lines balance basic forms field pattern	rhythm tonal contrast graded tones edges light, dark colour
4/5	contour defining space interrupting space	three-tone scale light, dark colour
6	outer contour contour qualities linear and planar drawing massed tone light, middle, dark tone	positive and negative movement design massed tone Forward link: colour value
7/8	drawing development five-tone grey scale contraposto scale and detail armature system eye movement	visual weight balance counter-movement organization hierarchy focus and emphasis

Other skills

- organization
- pattern recognition
- re-construction
- observation

VISUAL LANGUAGE LESSON NETWORK

SHAPE DESIGN	FORM	FIELD DESIGN	TONAL DESIGN	COLOUR
2/3				
SHAPE BASICS	FORM BASICS	FRAMEWORK	-tone FEATURES	COLOUR
1 Building block shapes	1 Flat shapes in space	1 Field	1 Flat tones	1 Colour wheel
2 Lines	2 Basic forms	2 Grouping	2 Tonal contrast	2 Hue
3 Balance	3 Combining simple forms	3 Pattern	3 Graded tones	3 Light and dark colour
4 Parts and whole	4 Detail and form	4 Rhythm	4 Edges	4 Colour organization
4/5				
SHAPE KINETICS	FORM GROWTH	FIELD AND SPACE	tone	TINTS AND SHADES
1 Gesture	1 Complex form and simplicity	1 Field structure	1 Three-tone scale	1 Light and dark colour
2 Variation and distortion	2 Planes	2 Defining space	2 Tone and space	2 Monochrome colour
3 Balance	3 Contour	3 Structuring space	3 Value and form	3 Complementary colour
4 Movement	4 One-point perspective	4 Interrupting space	4 Coordinating tone, texture and edge	4 Expression and organization
6				
OBSERVATION AND DRAWING	FORM UNITY	DESIGN INTEGRATION		
1 Blocking in shapes	1 Linear-planar drawing	1 Positive and negative areas	1 Chroma	
2 Proportion	2 Consistent aspect	2 Scale	2 Warm and cool colour	
3 Parts	3 Shadow	3 Grids and ratio	3 Complements and contrast	
4 Alignment	4 Massed tone	4 Movement and counter-movement		
5 Outer contour	5 Light, middle and dark tone	5 Massed tone		
6 Contour qualities		6 Coordinating line, tone and contour		
7/8				
FORM DEVELOPMENT	DESIGN ORDER	COORDINATED COLOUR USE		
1 Drawing development frameworks	1 Field design and armature systems	1 Colour combinations		
2 Rhythm and balance	2 Armature systems and subject design	2 Colour balance		
3 Three-dimensional form	3 Eye movement	3 Relative colour		
4 Tonal development	4 Visual weight	4 Colour-value relationship		
5 Form and space	5 Balance	5 Spatial effects		
6 Scale and detail	6 Counter-movement	6 Focus and emphasis		
	7 Organization and hierarchy	7 Expression		

Armature System	a set of imaginary diagonal, horizontal and vertical lines that link opposite corners of a field and create internal divisions used to organize the composition
Broken Contour	a contour that is interrupted by another line, shape or form
Colour Context	the prevailing colour that permeates all others in a composition
Complementary Shape	pairs of shapes with opposite characteristics such as wide/narrow, square/round, large/small
Counter-movement	a movement in opposition to the main movement in the composition
Cropping	cutting away part of the subject with the edges of the field
Dominant Direction	the general direction that a form is facing
Dominant Movement	the main movement in a composition
Focal Area	an area of a composition that draws the most attention
Interactive Gestures	the interaction among gestures of different parts of the composition that creates dynamic unity in the design
Interval	spaces between a pattern of shapes and/or lines
Massed Tone	areas of similar tone or value that are combined to create a new, unified shape
Negative areas	areas of the composition between the positive shapes and the edge of the field
Perspective System	arrangement of construction lines and points on which to build a perspective drawing
Positive areas	shapes and/or forms generally regarded as the subject
Relative Size	the size of a part relative to another or to the whole; the ratio between two sizes
Scale	having to do with size, ratio or proportion
Stability	a feeling of solidness and immobility caused by balance within a design
Texture	the quality of a surface that one associates with touch
Thrust and Check	the interaction of movement and counter-movement in a composition