



LESSON PLAN:

Classroom Shapes Quilt

Students will explore shapes through analyzing *Star Quilt* by Nora McKeown Ezell then make individual quilt squares out of paper.

Objectives:

Students will:

- Recognize shapes in the quilt example and in their own artmaking.
- Practice their skills with scissors by cutting and creating their own shapes.
- Create their own shapes quilt square.

Grade level:

K-2nd

Duration:

60 minutes

Materials:

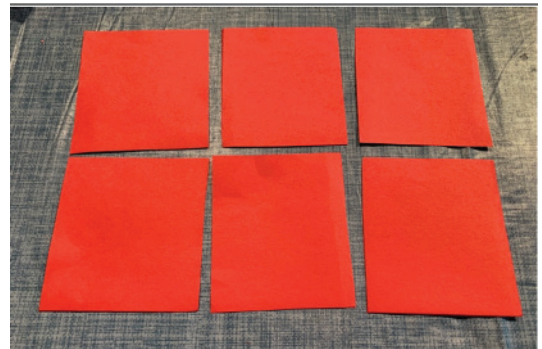
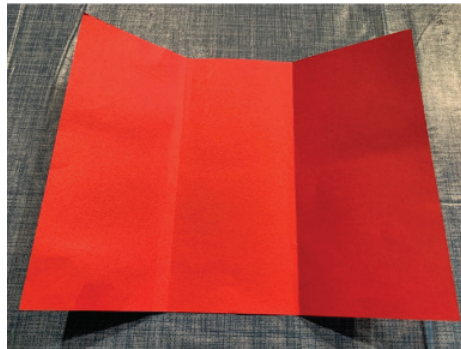
- [Image of *Star Quilt*, Nora McKeown Ezell](#)
- Scratch paper
- Pencils
- Timer
- Paper cut into large squares - 1 for each student
- Small paper squares in a variety of colors - 3 for each student (see activity for additional information)
- Crayons
- Scissors
- Glue

Vocabulary/Key Terms:

- Shape – A flat two-dimensional form or outline of an object. Shapes can be natural or geometric. Some examples include squares, circles, triangles, etc.
- Quilt – A type of blanket made with layers of fabric and with thread stitched on it in patterns and designs.

Activity**Prep:**

- Prepare the various color squares for the activity, preferably using construction paper as it's a bit more sturdy. Each piece of construction paper can make 6 squares.
- Fold or directly cut into 3rds along the long edge.
- Fold or directly cut the paper in half making 6 individual squares.
- If folded, cut along the folds to create the squares.

**Drawing Warm-Up (5 minutes):**

- Start by passing out scratch paper and pencils for a quick drawing challenge.
- Give students one minute to draw as many types of shapes as they can think of. They can feel free to make up some new shapes too!
- When time is up make a list as a class of the different shapes they drew.

Class Discussion of a Quilt Artwork (10 minutes):

- As a class, look at the [Star Quilt](#) and talk about the different shapes you see.
- Make sure that Squares, Triangles and Diamonds are pointed out.
- Pick one area to look a little closer at and count some of the shapes you see. Example: How many squares do you see? How many red diamonds? How many triangles do you see?

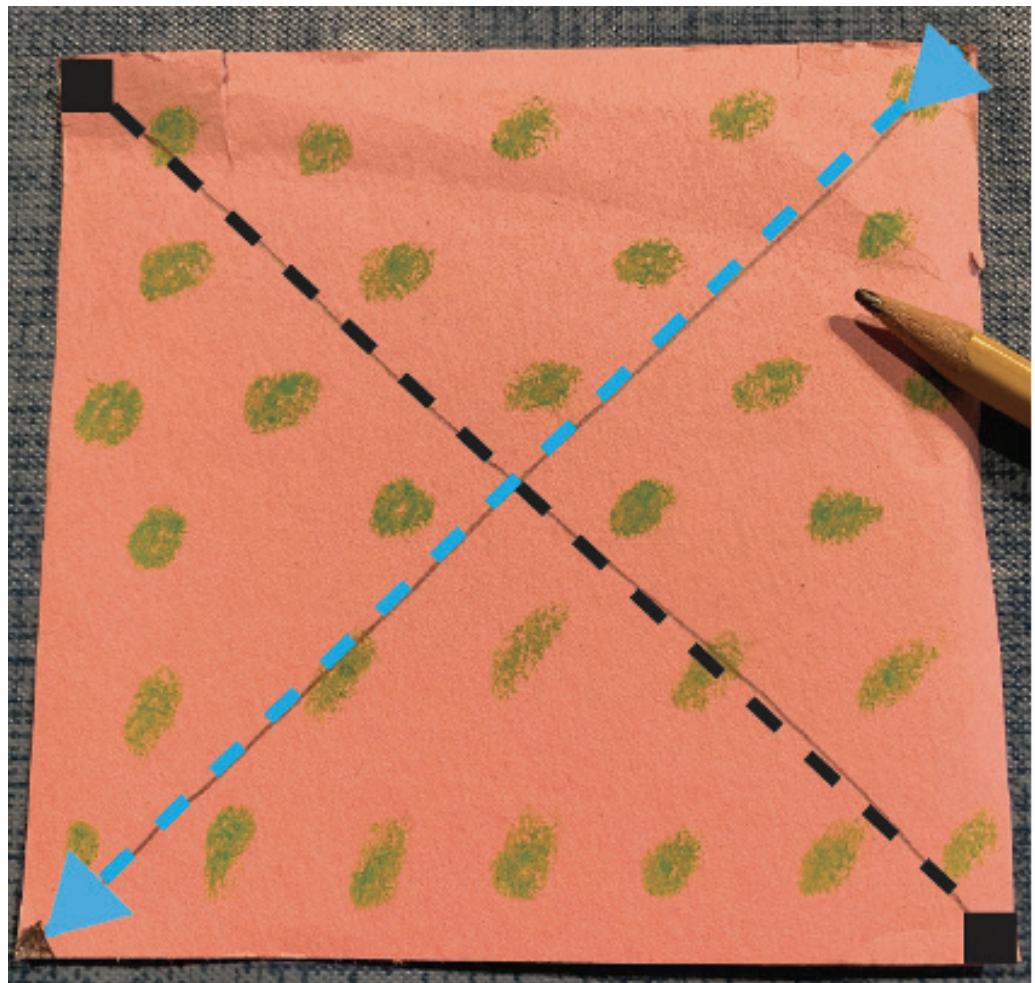
Creating a Classroom Shapes Quilt (45 minutes):

Start with every student picking out 3 different colors of the little squares of paper. You can also pass out the colors randomly to students if it is easier.

Have students use crayons to decorate their squares with different shapes, patterns, lines, etc.

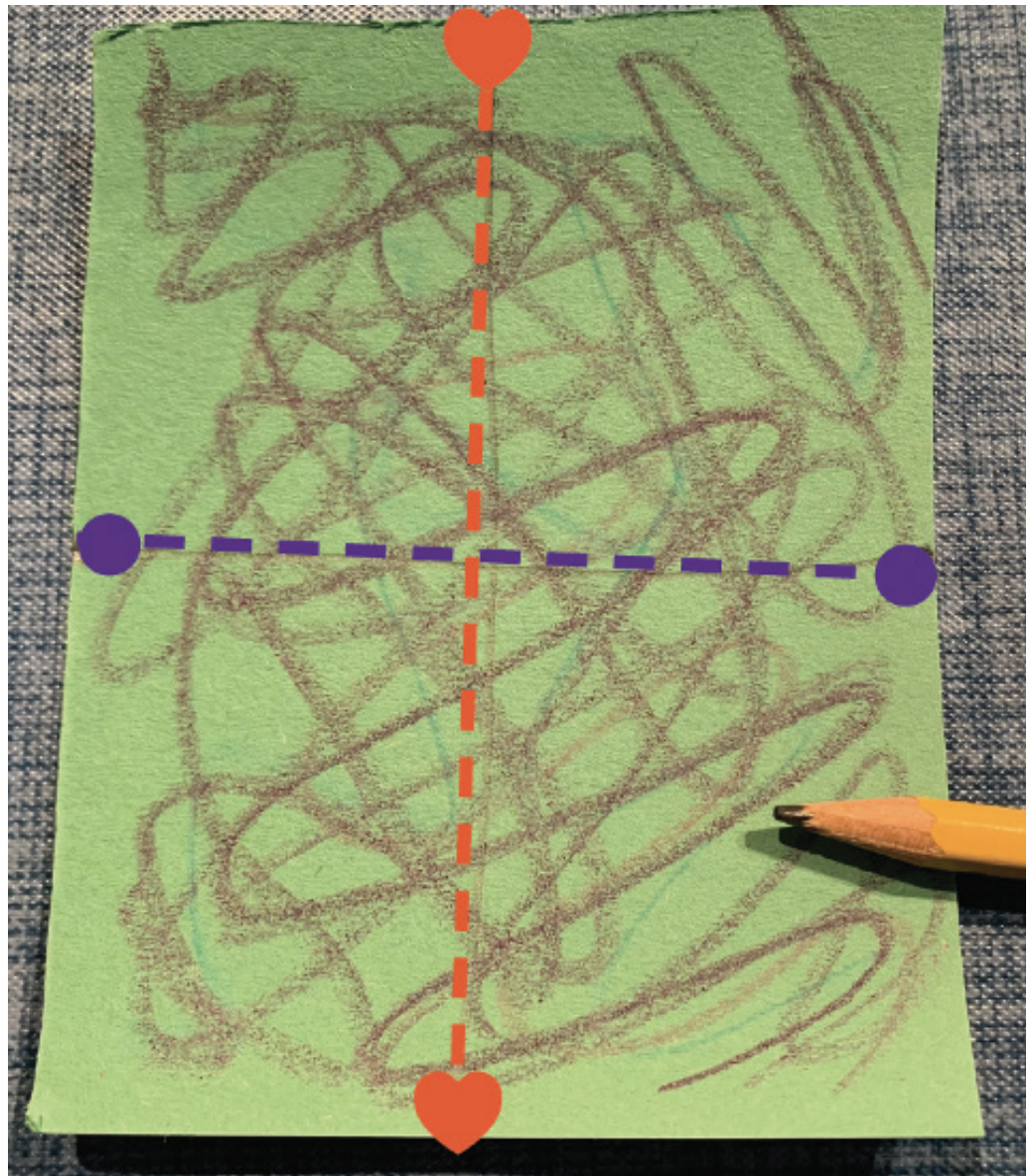
Starting with one of the three papers and with a pencil make a big X. One way to do this:

- Draw a little square on the top left corner and on the bottom right corner.
- Draw a little triangle on the top right corner and the bottom left corner.
- Now make a line from one triangle to the other, going all the way across your paper.
- Do the same thing with the two squares, making another line going all the way through to make a big X.

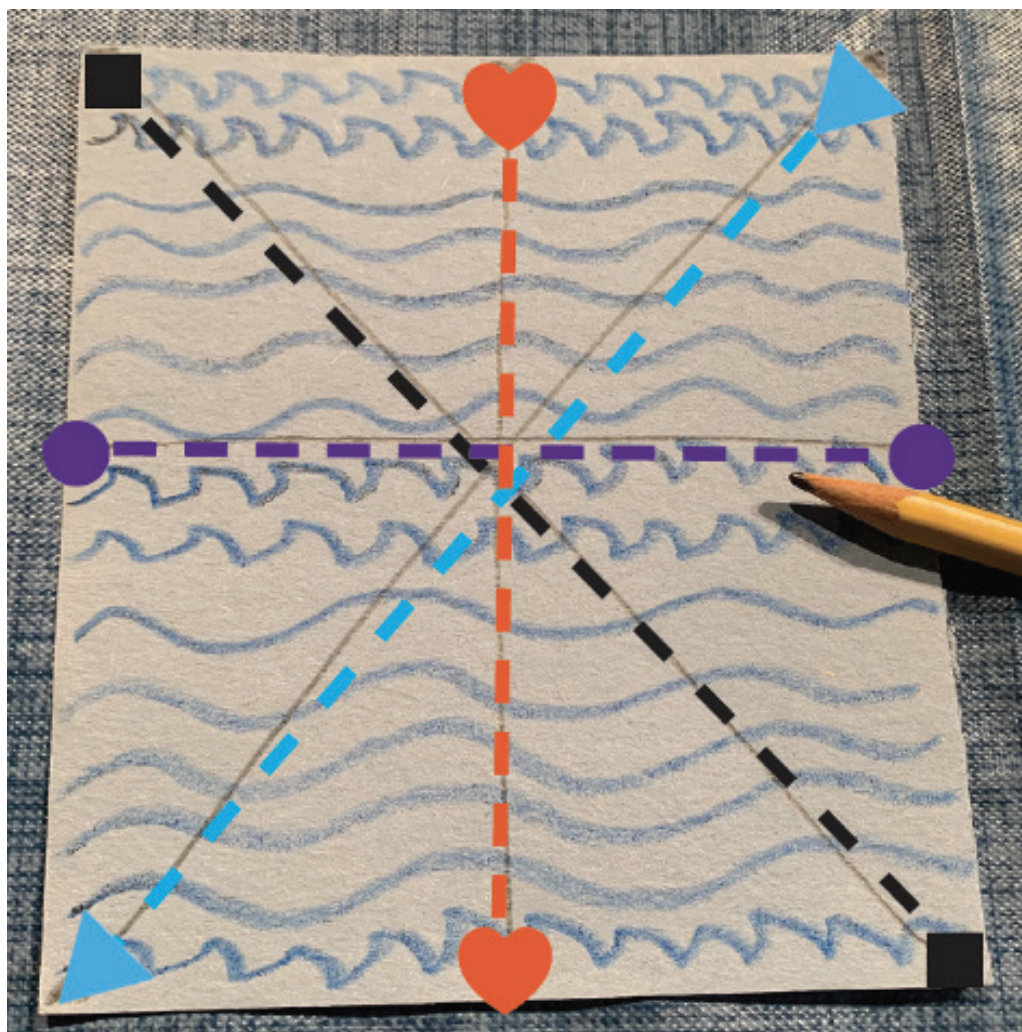


Set that paper aside and grab your 2nd paper. With a pencil draw a + in the middle. One way to do this:

- Draw a little heart at the center of the top and bottom of your paper
- Draw a little circle in the middle of the right and left side of your paper
- Connect the hearts with a line going up and down your paper
- Connect the circles with a line going all the way across your paper



With the 3rd square paper we're going to make all the same lines as the last two squares. So make a big X and + the same way done before.



Take all three of your papers and cut along the lines made.

Grab your new smaller shapes and thoughtfully glue them on your white square paper in any design you like. Encourage students to be creative and do something different than their neighbor.

Once everyone is finished you can put all of the squares together for a big classroom quilt.



Methods for Assessment:

- Ask students about the shapes they used and how they were able to turn the squares into different shapes.
- Examine student work for originality and creativity.
- Use student responses to questions and artworks to assess engagement. Did they recognize the different shapes? Did they focus and stay on subject?

Additional Resources

State Core Links:

- **Kindergarten:**

Mathematics - Strand: Counting and Cardinality (K.CC): Know number names and the counting sequence. Count to tell the number of objects. Identify and compare quantities of objects and numerals.

Mathematics - Strand: Geometry (K.G): Identify and describe shapes, including squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, hexagons, cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres. Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes.

- **First Grade:**

Mathematics - Strand: Geometry (1.G.): Reason with shapes and their attributes

- **Second Grade:**

Mathematics - Strand: Geometry (2.G): Reason with shapes and their attributes

- **Fine Art Standards:**

Strand: Respond: Students will understand, evaluate, and articulate how works of art convey meaning for the observer as well as the creator.

Strand: Create: Students will generate artistic work by conceptualizing, organizing, and completing their artistic ideas. They will refine original work through persistence, reflection, and evaluation.

Artwork Spotlight:



Nora McKeown Ezell (Eutaw, AL), *Star Quilt*, 1977, cotton and synthetics, detail, image courtesy of the American Folk Art Museum, photo by Scott Bowron.

Handstitched Worlds: The Cartography of Quilts was organized by the American Folk Art Museum, New York and is toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC

- “I like to put a little bit of me in my quilts because I think this is one thing that lives on after us” - Nora Ezell (interview for the Alabama Folkways Radio Series)
- Nora Ezell was a profoundly talented artist and quilt maker. From Alabama, Ezell learned quilting by watching her mother and aunt. Teaching herself from observing their needed and practical work on traditional scrap quilts. Ezell perfectly balances tradition, creativity and resourcefulness in her quilt artworks.
- “Ezell’s vibrant *Star Quilt* is a remarkable adaptation—informed by African aesthetic principles—of the traditional eight-pointed Star of Bethlehem pattern. Improvising freely, Ezell replaced the traditional central star with an asymmetrical composition that combines stars of different sizes with incomplete stars. Smaller sections made of small-scaled geometric prints contrast with larger areas of bold color, and an unexpected floral border frames the entire quilt. At the lower right, a band of blue and white diamonds and green triangles recalls African textiles made in strips. This design is the result of both careful planning and trial and error. A perfectionist, Ezell would rip out areas and rework her quilts until she had achieved the effect she wanted. In addition to “puzzle” quilts like *Star Quilt*, Ezell also made history and Bible story quilts.” – Cheryl Rivers, “*Star Quilt*,” in Stacy C. Hollander, *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum* (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with American Folk Art Museum, 2001), 395-396
- Sources: https://arts.alabama.gov/Traditional_Culture/heritageaward/Nora_Ezell.aspx, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/17/arts/design/17ezell.html>

Contributer Bios:

Katie Seastrand has been working at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts since September 2019 after completing a M.A.T. program at George Washington University in Museum Education. She grew up in Utah and has early memories of visiting the UMFA as a child. Working now with amazing Utah educators and bringing art and the museum to students is a dream come true.

This Lesson Plan was created for the March 16, 2022 UMFA Evening For Educators: Stitching Together Subjects with the Arts. The evening and activities were inspired by the special exhibition *Handstitched Worlds: The Cartography of Quilts*, on view from February 19 to May 15, 2022.



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