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Everyday Patterns

Lesson plan



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EMPOWERING TOOLS

Everyday Patterns: Lesson Plan

Subject: Natural sciences, biology, geometry, social science, art, technology

Age group: Primary school, middle school (7–14 years olds)

Duration: 3 lessons

Learning outcomes: To explore the ways in which patterns are part of everyday life, how we interact as humans, and how we care for each other and the planet.

You will need:

Writing tools and a large piece of paper

Pre-printed images or a projector

Fruits and vegetables with beautiful interiors
(interesting lines, dots, shapes, etc.)

Cooking tools (a kitchen knife and a cutting board for
the fruits and vegetables)

Materials for drawing (pencils, markers, paints, etc.)

Materials to mould (clay, plasticine, Play-Doh,
modelling material, etc.)

Paper

Scissors

Glue

Magazines to make collages if needed

Topic introduction:

What is a pattern? Where do we encounter them? How can we recognise them?

A pattern is anything that repeats. They are the dots, lines, waves and spaces that make up our world. We encounter them every day, often without noticing, and some patterns are so familiar that we don't even recognise them, such as rows of buildings, the beating of our heart, the shape of a feather and even the timetable of our lessons at school!

People and communities have the power to create patterns, too – how we live and behave towards each other. These patterns can become models of how we recognise and create things, and how we connect to each other.

Step 1: What is a Pattern?

This first lesson should help students to recognise everyday patterns by examining the forms and structures that exist in nature and our urban environments. Social and behavioural patterns can also be acknowledged. The main task for the students is to understand the many different patterns that surround us. They should learn that patterns are not only beautiful forms but also our own behaviour and habits.

Give a few examples of various patterns. These can be images, a story that describes a behaviour based on a recognisable pattern, or an analysis of the surrounding space and natural environment.

Next, brainstorm as a group some visual patterns that come to mind. Then think about your daily routines and habits, and discuss some of these behavioural patterns. What is a pattern? Working together, try to come up with a shared definition.

This activity can either take place indoors or outside. The main goal is for the students to sharpen their skills in observation and analysis, while also visualising the processes and structures at play in daily life.

Discuss the following questions and encourage the group to come up with some of their own.

How are patterns made?

Who makes patterns?

How many patterns can we see around us?

Which patterns make you happy?

Which patterns make you feel safe and calm?

Which patterns annoy you?

Which patterns would you like to change?

Which patterns do you find beautiful?

Which patterns do you find ugly?

Step 2: Natural Forms with Fruits and Vegetables

This activity takes the form of a practical workshop. It can take place either partly or entirely outside. (For example, the observation task could be done outside and the drawing part indoors.)

In this activity teachers should help the students to explore the everyday patterns that we find in the natural environment around us. A good place to start is by looking at some of the fruit and vegetables we regularly eat. From this exploration you can go on to think about how our bodies recognise other patterns that occur in nature? Do we see them, feel them or hear them? The aim here is to help the students make a connection between themselves and the world around them.

First, help the students to cut the fruit and vegetables in half, and then study their interiors carefully.

Do you see the patterns they are made of? What do they remind you of?

–Draw a composition of the fruits and vegetables that have been cut in half.

–Touch them and draw what you feel.

–Sniff them and draw what you smell.

–Make stamps with the cut sides of the various fruits and vegetables. Dip into paint and then make patterns on paper.

Imagine that you are walking inside a tomato. What do you see around you? What colours can you see? What can you smell? What can you hear? What colour are you? Are you big or small? Describe the surrounding environment. What shapes, materials, liquids, or holes are there around you? (For this activity you can use any fruit or vegetable, or natural object)

You can adjust the complexity of the topic based on your teaching goals and age/ability level of the group:

Geometry: Discuss the laws of geometry in regards to various fruit and vegetable patterns; discuss some famous patterns in geometry, (Fibonacci sequence, 'golden rule' spiral, cymatics) and use visual examples to explain. Measure the size of different fruits and vegetables; draw some geometric shapes and make a composition of them. Invent your own patterns and use the geometric fruit patterns you have observed so far to make improvised drawings.

Biology: Discuss how climate influences the development of patterns on tree bark and tree trunk rings. You could look at animal tracks and the patterns they make in mud, or the intricate forms spiders make when they weave their webs. You could also think about the migratory patterns of birds or travelling patterns of bees, leading on to how humans move around the world, thinking about the flight paths of planes and migration patterns. After looking at several examples, you could have a go at drawing some of these patterns.

End the session with a shared discussion and, if possible, a group exhibition of the work created. Alternatively, you could create a group collage or drawing on a large sheet of paper. Presenting their work will help your students notice some of the patterns between their ideas, while also nurturing feelings of independence and confidence.

Discussion:

Where do patterns appear in our daily life?

What kinds of patterns are they – aural, visual, textural, behavioural?

How does my body recognise patterns? Can I see them, touch them or hear them...

Additional activity: Materials Cycle

Think of what will happen to the materials you use in the workshop after finishing the activity. Can they be reused? How could you use the fruits and vegetables? For example, you could make salads and eat them together, compost them, or dry the seeds and plant them. This could be an opportunity to discuss the cycle of growing fruits and vegetables (from planting to composting).

Step 3: My Mini Do-It-Yourself Art Book

This is a creative format. The formal folding method of the book can create a space to liberate the imagination of your students. Follow the instructions to fold a mini-book and make your own *pattern* record!

Size: 8 pages with covers

Suggestions *for younger kids*:

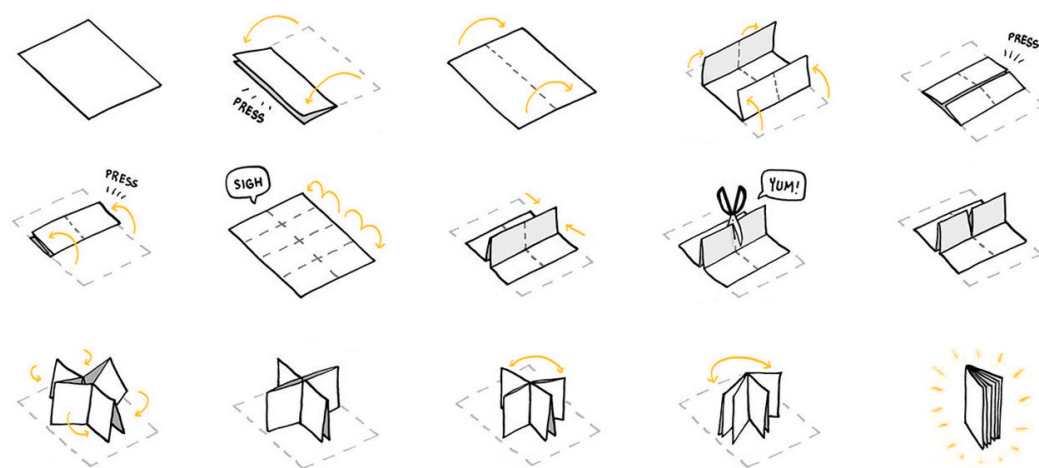
- Try doodling—a method of unplanned drawing, usually using dots, lines, and other shapes.
- Write a comic about how a tomato met a carrot and became friends.
- Write your name using the letters of fruits and vegetables. For example: TOMAS = T – tomato, O – orange, M – mango, A – apple, S – soybean.
- Write a story about a potato coming to Europe.
- Draw some geometric shapes of fruits and vegetables.

Suggestions *for teenagers*:

- Try doodling—a method of drawing without thinking, usually using dots, lines, and other shapes.
- Write a comic called “My Everyday Patterns”.
- Draw some unusual geometric shapes.
- Write an essay called “The Revolutionary Patterns of Everyday Life”.

In the writing tasks, encourage the students to add illustrations!

Instructions: How to FOLD a DIY mini-book



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