

THE RULE OF THIRDS – Composition, Dominance

Students engage in critical thinking activities that help them understand how to frame a still or moving image using the rule of thirds. They use it to compose a coloured pencil drawing and then replicate the drawing using a digital camera or iPad.

Required Time
180 Minutes

Grade Level
Grade 7 to Grade 10

Subject
Language Arts
Mathematics
Visual Arts

Vocabulary
composition
digital literacy
dominant element
framing
photography
rule of thirds

Materials

Digital Camera or iPad

Ruler

Pencil

Drawing Paper

Coloured Pencils

Shop Crayola Products



Marker

&

Watercolour

Pad,

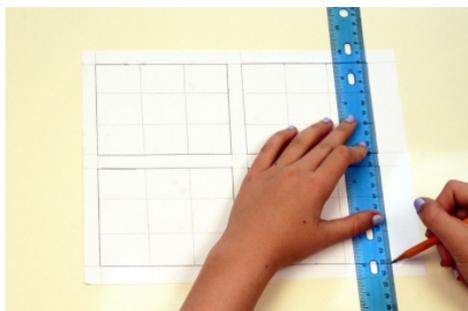
60

Pages

Steps

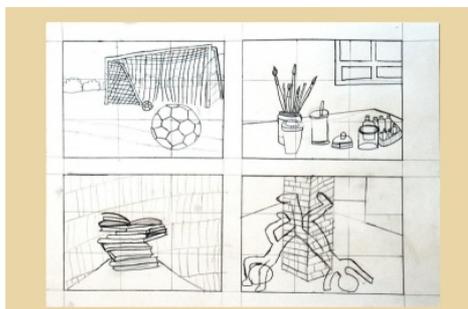
Step One

1. Work with your paper in the horizontal (landscape) position.
2. Divide the paper into 4 quarters. The rectangles in each quarter should measure 8.9 cm x 11.4 cm (3.5" x 4.5").
3. Draw the rule of thirds grid inside each quarter. The grid within each rectangle should measure 3.2 cm x 3.8 cm (1.25" x 1.5") per rectangle, roughly representing nine evenly spaced small rectangles.



Step Two

1. Explore the school environment and sketch four different compositions with coloured pencils.
2. Make sure your dominant element is located within one of the 4 intersecting points that have been penciled in during step one.



Step Three

1. Choose your best thumbnail sketch to recreate as a final drawing.
2. Make the composition of your good drawing exactly the same as your thumbnail sketch.
3. Use coloured pencil techniques to create texture and the illusion of depth.



Step Four

1. Enable the grid on your device.
>Settings > Photos & Camera >Grid >On/ Off



Step Five

1. Take several images with your device that replicate your fine art image. Remember you are trying to make it exactly the same as your drawing.
2. Email your final image to your email account.
3. Rename your final image rule_of_thirds.jpg and copy it to a USB.





Step Six

1. Print your photograph.
 2. Glue the photograph and the drawing side by side on a piece of Bristol board.
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Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

1. Compose and draw an image using the rule of thirds;
2. Add visual interest in a composition by creating a dominant element;
3. Replicate the drawing using a digital device;
4. Explain why the rule of thirds works and is used by professional photographers;
5. Support their ideas and accomplishment with a 250-word reflection report; and
6. Demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.

Extensions

Have students:

1. View visual art and photographs that use the rule of thirds and ones that don't. Have them use critical thinking, bringing together existing knowledge and new understandings, to discuss likes and dislikes of the image as a class. Encourage them to support their ideas with evidence found in the images.
2. Find a 'memorable' image and glue it into their sketchbook. Ask them to analyse the composition and explain how the composition contributes to the effectiveness of the image.

Prepare

1. Prior to the lesson have students find an image with the dominant element off-centered in the frame.
2. Prior to the lesson have students review the principles and elements of design.
3. Prior to the lesson have students explore the school environment in and out of the classroom. Guide them as they explore, pointing out contrasting colours as well as the principles and elements of design.
4. Download rule of thirds images from the Internet, for example,
Thirds
Sunset
Diagram
Barn
5. Download and display the Elements posters available on this website,
Posters
6. Prior to this lesson have students do the Coloured Pencil Techniques worksheet available on this website.
Coloured Pencils

Introduction

1. View the rule of thirds images and discuss them paying particular attention to the placement of elements and how they are composed. Guide students to notice the rule of thirds and have them point out the division lines.
2. View a diagram of the grid, and explain the rule of thirds, for example,
 - a way of composing images so that the picture plane is divided into thirds
 - two imaginary vertical lines, and two horizontal lines make 3 columns, 3 rows, and 9 sections
 - the grid is used for the placement of important elements and leading lines
 - a dominant element is placed on or near the intersection of two of the lines
3. Discuss why the rule of thirds is used by professional photographers, for example,
 - helps create a sense of balance without being too static
 - it makes an image seem more complex without being too busy
 - adds variety and interest to the image by creating a dominant element
4. Ask students to look through their personal device for the best picture they have shot, or have them look through supplied magazines and cut out a picture of an off-centered image.
5. Have students work in small groups to describe their photo using key visual vocabulary posted around the classroom.
6. Ask several students to share their photo and description with the class. If a projector is available have the students show the image to the class.
7. Show students several examples of classroom objects that they could draw, then show them how they were replicated through a digital photograph.
8. Introduce the challenge.

Activities

The Challenge

1. Compose an image found in your school environment using the rule of thirds.
2. Add visual interest in your composition by creating a dominant element.
3. Replicate the drawing using a digital device.
4. Explain why the rule of thirds works and is used by professional photographers.
5. Support your ideas and accomplishment with a 250-word reflection report.
6. Demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.

The Process

1. Ensure that everyone understands the challenge.
2. Establish success criteria with your students. For example,
 - *accurate use of the rule of thirds*
 - *composition creates visual interest with a dominant element*
 - *coloured pencil techniques are used to create texture and the illusion of depth*
 - *photograph accurately replicates the drawing*
 - *reflection report is carefully organized and ideas are expressed clearly*
 - *self-assessment sheet is fully completed with thoughtful answers*
3. Guide students through the steps outlined in this lesson plan. Once drawings are completed demonstrate how to put the rule of thirds grid on their digital device.
>Settings > Photos & Camera >Grid >On/ Off
4. Observe students as they work.
5. Provide individual assistance and encouragement.

Sharing

1. Once the drawings and the photographs are complete ask students to share them in small groups.
Ask them to:
 - *Look closely at the images and determine whether they fit the requirements of the rule of thirds;*
 - *Share thoughts and opinions about what works and what can be improved;*
 - *Talk about how shape and colour contribute to the overall effectiveness of the images;*
 - *Talk about how the camera angle helps to tell a story; and*
 - *Talk about what was difficult about conceptualizing and drawing an image and then replicating it through a photograph.*
2. Ask some of the students to share their ideas with the whole class.
3. Display the images in and around the classroom and school so students can view them as a body of work throughout the next few weeks.

Assessment

1. Observe students as they work – attention to detail, transfer of knowledge from lesson to activity, collaboration with classmates
2. Observe students as they discuss their work – active listening, insightful contributions, supporting ideas with evidence found in the work and from personal experience.
3. Use checklist to track progress. (Downloads – Rule_tracking.pdf)
4. Have students use the self-assessment form to evaluate their work. (Downloads – Rule_self-assessment.pdf)
5. Have students use the self-assessment form to evaluate their 250-word reflection report. (Download- Rule_Reflection.pdf)