Color and Arrangement to Depict Literary Work

1. Subject Area – English Language Arts
2. Intended grade level range – Middle or High School
4. Artwork Title: Nine Colors
5. Artist: Ellsworth Kelly (American, born 1923)
6. Date: 1951
   Medium:
   Ink on paper and gouache on paper
   Dimensions: 7 1/2 x 8" (19 x 20.3 cm)
   Credit Line: Gift of the artist and purchased with funds provided by Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, Sally and Wynn Kramarsky, Mr. and Mrs. James R. Hedges, IV, Kathy and Richard S. Fuld, Jr. and Committee on Drawings Funds
   MoMA Number: 1156.2001.30
   Copyright: © 2013 Ellsworth Kelly

7. Materials for project
   Hand construction:
   Construction paper in colors to match those in the painting
   Scissors
   Glue
   Pens and Paper
   Digital construction:
   Access to internet and computers for individual or pairs of students

The goals of this assignment are to have students

- experience a painting
- discuss ways the colors, shape and order evoke emotions and suggest feelings of the painter
- consider ways colors and order could reflect characters, place and events in a story
- create an original piece of art, imitating the style of Kelly to portray the character, places, or events in their chosen story
- write an explanation of their choices using quotations from their chosen story
- self-check their art and written work using rubrics and grading guidelines provided
- display and explain their artwork to their classmates
Colors and arrangements can be used to evoke different moods, different personalities, and different feelings. **Spend at least five minutes looking closely at this painting, *Nine Colors* by Ellsworth Kelly.**

1. What do you notice about the colors and arrangement of these circles on a black background?
2. What mood or emotions does this painting evoke from you and suggest what the painter may feel? Explain making references to the painting.
3. How do you think the mood and tone of this painting would change if Kelly had chosen to use different geometrical shape(s)? Which shape(s)? Why?

**Think about the story you’ve just read.**

1. Which colors in this [Ellsworth Kelly](http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=109756) painting, *Nine Colors* could reflect or represent the people, places, and events in that story?
2. See [Color Symbolism Chart](http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=109756) and explore cultural links to color on sites like Visual Color Symbolism by Culture.
ASSIGNMENT:

1. Keep notes and you answer the questions about ways colors in this painting could portray people, place, and events in your chosen story.

2. Create an artistic imitation of the Ellsworth Kelly painting that shows your choice of rearrangement to portray characters, places, or events. Label your artwork so someone viewing will know your choices.

3. Write a one-two page paper explaining your choices. In your opening paragraph, include title and author of story, and the title and artist of the painting. Use quotations from your story to support your choices. Include adjectives on the color symbolism chart(s).

4. Turn in your notes with the final word-processed essay of explanation.

5. Self-check your project using the grading guidelines for your art and the written work.

PREPARATION WORK:

Look closely at the painting Nine Colors by Ellsworth Kelly and think about the story you’ve chosen for this assignment. Then, write in your own words, the answers to the following questions:

- **Which colors could represent the main characters?** Quote lines from the text or make reference to specifics from the story to support your choice. Put the pages numbers in parenthesis. For example: Sylvia: (Greenish circle) “When Lauren strolled into the restaurant in the same outfit as hers, Sylvia yelped with envy.” (p.157) Lauren: (Purplish circle) She thinks she’s a little princess.

- **Which colors could represent elements of setting: time and place?**

- **How would you rearrange the colored circles to show the relationship among the characters?** Which colors side by side? Which colors above or below another? Why? What words, phrases from story support your choices?

- **How would you rearrange at least five of the colored circles in a row to represent the events in the plot line?** For example, from left to right:
  - DARK BLUE (depression). Felicia was morose. (p.17) She hadn’t been invited to the first party of the year and feared no one would ask her to the Halloween dance to be held in the school gym. (p. 25)
  - ORANGE: (enthusiasm, demanding of attention) She saw a note taped to her locker. Hope filled her with anticipation, until she read and saw it was simply a reminder to pick up her little brother from pre-school. (p. 28)
  - OCHER: (blending brown and yellow - reliability, covetousness) Maybe, if she asked Fernando to walk home with her, he might ask her to go with him to the dance. She’d known him since second grade. No-one would be surprised to see them together. (p.53)
  - YELLOW: (hope, happiness) “Dingle, dingle, dingle.” “A text is coming in. Maybe, just maybe, some of the girls in my science class group will want to go together. You didn’t have to have a date for a Halloween party.” (p. 78)
  - LIGHT BLUE: (calm, confidence) Yes! “Want to go with us?” It was from Ahmara. She’d been friendly since the first day of school. Felicia tapped into her phone, “Sure. Can your Mom drive me, too?” Ahmara tapped back. “Yeah. Don’t see why not.” (p.82 and 83)
  - GREEN: (good luck, vigor) “All right!” Things are looking up. I’m going to the dance. Now, what’ll I wear. I don’t want to look like some little kid. After all this is middle school! Maybe Deshawn from math will be there. I know he’ll ask me to dance. (p.98)

GOING PUBLIC:

- On the due date, be prepared to participate in a gallery walk during which you show your work to classmates and explain your choices of colors and arrangement as they relate to your chosen story.

- We will photograph hand-crafted work and display that on our class website. Digital creations will be used as slides in a video of this class project.
Self-Check for Art and Writing Project about Painting and Story

I. Visual Presentation

☐ Three characters are represented in ways that can be justified by the text of chosen story.
☐ Written labels briefly explain decisions for color, position, and arrangement
☐ Student name appears on the front.
☐ Design is neat.

II. Written Explanation

Introductory paragraph

☐ includes title and author of literary work, painting and artist
☐ identifies characters, setting or plot
☐ has a thesis statement.

Body

☐ is an explanation of choices
☐ uses quotations to support decisions re: color and arrangement

Conclusion

☐

☐ is a summary of the process
☐ is a reflection on the characters and choices

Conventions

☐ Essay edited for mechanics, usage and grammar.
### Rubric for Writing about Painting and Story

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>IDEAS AND CONTENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>This paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader’s attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the writing about the character’s stance on a contemporary issue. <strong>Includes references to 5-6 incidents in the story</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The writer is beginning to define the position of the character and his/her position on a contemporary issue, even though development is still basic or general. <strong>Includes reference 3-4 incidents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or focus on character personality or stance on issue. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details.</td>
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<th>II.</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The organization enhances and showcases the personality of the character. The order, structure, or presentation of details about issue is compelling and moves the reader through the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the details of the situation/incident without too much confusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; there is no identifiable internal structure.</td>
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<th>III.</th>
<th>VOICE</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The writer speaks in a way that reflects the personality of the character, is compelling, and engaging, is aware and respectful of the audience, and the purpose for writing this account of a character’s response to issue(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the personal reminiscence and/or the audience.</td>
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<th>IV.</th>
<th>WORD CHOICE</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Words relate the character’s stance in a precise, interesting, and natural way, with powerful engaging words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The language is functional, even if it lacks energy. It is easy to figure out the writer’s meaning on a general level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The writer struggles with limited vocabulary, searching for words to convey meaning and to recreate the personality of the character and position on issues.</td>
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<th>V.</th>
<th>SENTENCE FLUENCY</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The writer has an easy flow, rhythm and cadence. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive oral reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or business like than musical, more mechanical than fluid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The reader would have to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading.</td>
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<th>VI.</th>
<th>CONVENTIONS</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g. spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, and paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be few and just a few minor touch-ups would make this publishable. <strong>Title of story and painting are punctuated correctly.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The writing shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times errors are distracting and impair readability. <strong>Includes title of story and painting.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage and grammar and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the essay difficult to read. <strong>Does not include title of story or painting.</strong></td>
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