

THE FIGURE ZERO(PROOF) PROJECT

Developed by Alice Webb

Reasons for Teaching this Lesson:

Big Idea:

Artists use the language of art, the elements and principles of design, and visual symbols to influence personal and communal values, perceptions and attitudes.

Essential Question:

How do art and design influence our lives and our choices?

Grade Level: 7th through 12th Grade

Artistic Media:

22" x 14" Tempera or acrylic painting that supports abstaining from alcohol.

Vocabulary:

Digit Value	Complementary Colors
Blending	Analogous Colors
Design	Shape
Hue	Emphasis
Tint	Primary Colors
Shade	Secondary Colors
Balance	

LESSON INTRODUCTION

Materials:

Poster of *The Figure Five in Gold* by Charles Demuth, <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/488315>

Advertising examples promoting drinking

The Great Figure poem by William Carlos Williams

The Great Figure

Among the rain
and lights
I saw the figure 5
in gold
on a red
fire truck
moving
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city

Time Period: 30 minutes

Hang the poster of *The Figure Five in Gold* by Charles Demuth for students to view while reading aloud William Carlos Williams' poem *The Great Figure*. Ask students what they think Williams' was trying to convey in his poem. The story goes that Williams was walking home from work one night when a fire truck roared past him. What he noticed when he looked up was the number five on the fire truck. This small event, a short moment in time, inspired William's to write the poem *The Great Figure*. This shows us how much images can influence us. Charles Demuth, a friend of Williams, was in turn inspired by Williams' poem and created *The Figure Five in Gold*.

Everyday art and design influence our choices. Williams uses language art to describe an image that had a strong impact upon him. Today, advertising images influence us to use alcohol and to participate in other risky, alcohol-related behavior.

Students will design and paint an artwork based on Demuth's painting. However, rather than a number five we will use a zero and the word "proof". Bottles and cans of alcohol always state on their labels the amount of alcohol in the beverage. For example, a typical beer might be twelve proof. We want teens to keep their bodies clean so they will be ZeroProof! By encouraging self-expression through visual and literary art, students will promote their personal visions of abstaining from alcohol and become ambassadors against underage drinking.

Materials:

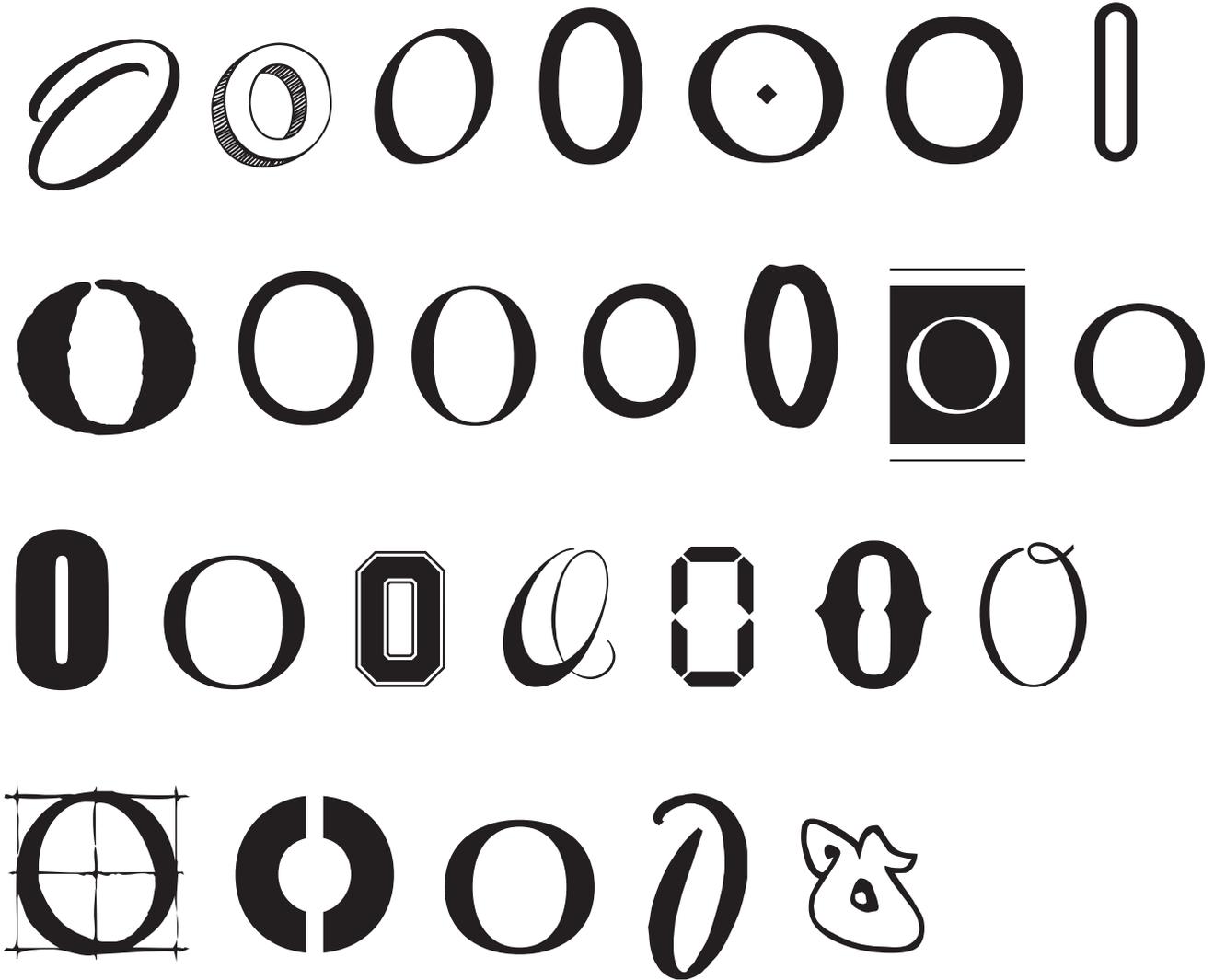
- 1) White poster board 22" x 14"
- 2) Small piece of poster board to experiment painting on
- 3) Pencil, eraser
- 4) Rulers, triangles, protractors, yardsticks, French curves (optional)
- 5) Tempera or acrylic paint (primary colors, secondary colors, black and white)
- 6) A variety of paint brushes
- 7) Something to use as a palette for mixing colors (like old magazines)
- 8) Cups for water
- 9) Paper towels
- 10) Printouts of a variety (about four) zero digit fonts

Time Period: 3-4 hours

- 1) Briefly discuss the use of value and shape in *The Figure Five in Gold*. Point out how sometimes the straight lines in the painting cross the number five and sometimes they don't. This creates interest, as it appears that the lines go behind the number and then reappear.
- 2) Students choose their font and draw the zero large in the center of the poster board (vertical format). (See font samples on following page)
- 3) Use the rulers and French curves to break up the space. Remember sometimes to cross the number and sometimes not to cross the number. Somewhere on the poster board students need to include the word "proof" in block letters or a complementary font.
- 4) Choose a complementary color set and the primary and secondary colors in between that color set on ONE side of the color wheel.
- 5) Experiment mixing and painting tints (any color plus white) and shades (any color plus black) on a scrap piece of poster board. Also experiment with mixing the primary and secondary colors together.
- 6) Now paint your ZeroProof painting. In order for your zero to stand out you must make a decision about whether your background is going to be mostly dark or mostly light in value. If the background is light in value, then the zero needs to be dark and vice versa.



ZERO FONT SAMPLES



NATIONAL CORE VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques for presentation.

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS (9th Grade)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5



ZeroProofnm.com