

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade: March**  
**Lesson 5: Landscape**  
**Chalk Pastel**

**Objective:** To create a landscape drawing, pulling colors and light out of a dark background

**Technique:** Sketching and drawing with chalk pastels

**Set-up: (before lesson starts, docent and aides)**

Chalk pastels  
9" x 12" black construction paper  
Baby wipes  
Spray fixative

**Visuals:**

*Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains, California*, Albert Bierstadt  
Sample artwork

**Teaching the Lesson: (1 hour, total)**

Give your aides a brief summary of the lesson. Introduce yourself and your aides

Last year you painted with pastels, mixing colors to create a Galaxy of Color. In Second grade you painted a water lily waterscape, and in first grade you used colored pencil to create a "Beautiful Place" landscape.

This lesson uses all the skills learned so far about mixing colors, painting, and making a landscape that includes a foreground, middle ground, and background. Today's painting will be made working from dark and building up to the lights, "painting" by layering and blending color with soft pastels.

Albert Bierstadt was a German-born 19<sup>th</sup> century artist who was fascinated by American nature and landscape. He found beauty in nature, in mountain and forest scenes, and was particularly skilled in combining light and shadows in a dark setting. Show *Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains, California*, by Albert Bierstadt. Today you will create your own landscape showing colors and light on a dark background. Show sample artwork.

1. Review (3 min)
  - Pastel use and technique: They resemble chalk, but are quite different. Pastels can be used to draw, sketch, color, add small details, and even to blend and smear like paint or chalk.
  - **Holding and applying:** Hold your pastel sideways (NOT a like pencil or crayon), between thumb and forefinger. Press softly but firmly on one spot of the paper; this will give you a short but broad mark/streak.
  - **Blocking:** Blocking is filling in a space with color. You can use the side or the tip of the pastels and color in your shapes. Your hand will control

how dark or light you want to make the color—a bit more pressure on the pastel may make the color appear darker; and less pressure may make the color appear lighter.

- **Blending:** Blending is done by starting with one color, and rubbing an area/patch of color on the paper; next, lightly rub another layer of color over the first color. These two layers will visually blend and look like a color somewhere in between the 2 colors of the pastel.
- **Tip:** Advise students to BE CAREFUL. Avoid blowing the pastel dust up; rather tilt the paper and let dust fall on your desk. Demonstrate as needed.

## 2. Plan the Scene (3 min)

Note: Use the white board to list/outline the elements of the planning stages of step two to help the kids see the mental steps to designing a meaningful composition.

- Artists choose to paint a particular scene because they see something that catches their eye. This is the center of interest or focal point that makes the whole composition worth painting.
- To emphasize the focal point the artist can use visual tools such as the brightest colors or the strongest contrast of lights and darks to distinguish the focal point from it's surroundings
- Choose the setting: from different California regions
- Plan the scene: components (mountains, water etc.); scale and perspective (overlapping images, extending off the page, size and emphasis of images)
- Plan the orientation (horizontal or vertical layout; consider focal point and height or width of main subject)
- Consider value: Bright and dark areas; choice of light and atmospheric effect, time of day, weather, mood (cloudy, hazy, bright, mysterious, peaceful)
- Consider color: Warm, cool and color accents for light/shade contrast.
- Deepen colors for emphasis, use lighter colors to show light source and highlights.
- Use natural elements from the scene to direct the eye into the picture and towards the focal point. Example: Use the direction of branches from the foreground, a path, a winding river, a row of trees, the shapes of clouds...to direct the eye the way a pointing finger points towards something.

## 3. Draw the Foreground (10-12 min)

- These are the largest and closest objects in the drawing and have the most detail. Remember scale and perspective.
- The **foreground** shows the things that are **closest** to you in your picture. Since they are closest, they will also be the biggest and have the most detail (scale). Choose a color that represents what you will have in your foreground.
- Use the Foreground objects to frame the focal point that is somewhere further into the landscape.
- With the tip or corner of a light or middle value color pastel, sketch an

outline of the objects you want in the front of the picture.

- **Tip:** Mistakes can be lightly rubbed with a clean finger to “erase”
- Color in: Use a darker value color pastel that represents what you will have in your foreground. Keep the warmest colors and most contrast (darkest darks and lightest lights) in the front, closest to the viewer and the center of interest. You can also layer or blend two or more colors to make new colors.

#### 4. Draw the Middle Ground (10-12 min)

- These details will be a little smaller, to show distance and perspective. Now think about what kinds of things you see in the **middle** of your picture (rocks, trails, water, etc.). They are a little farther away in your picture, so you need to draw them a little smaller. Think about how big those objects are in relation to what you have already drawn.
- Some of the (larger) objects you already drew in the foreground may overlap in front of the middle ground shapes you are adding now. This helps to suggest that some shapes are closer and some are further away. This is what artists call **perspective**.
- Choose a light value color pastel, and sketch in the outline to these middle ground parts to your picture now. Draw additional details to build your scene. Color in.

#### 5. Draw the Background (10-12 min)

- This is what is in the distance of the scene. It will be the simplest and have the least amount of detail. Since the background is the furthest away in your picture, the objects there will be even smaller and simpler and will also have less detail as a result.
- Backgrounds can be simple (blue sky, distant mountains, clouds, etc.) Sketch that in now, with the appropriate light value colors. Color in.

#### 6. Complete and Share (10-15 min)

- Adding color: Warm and cool color accents for light and shade contrast. Deepen colors for emphasis; make rich dark colors by pushing harder as you draw. Use the corner of the pastel to create thin, striking lines to show detail.
- Adding light: Use lighter colors to show light source; layer and blend on top of darker colors to highlight
- Sign name
- Give a title
- Share

#### **Clean-up: (after lesson ends, docent and aides)**

Close the lesson, clean up the classroom

Spray artwork with pastel fixative **outside** the classroom (do not allow children to be present when spraying and close doors to the classroom)

Line papers on the ground next to each other and allow each to dry for a couple of minutes before returning to classroom.

Return pastels to containers and all materials to bin

Return all materials to the art closet

Ask teacher where to store artwork and arrange time with teacher to display artwork



*Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains, California, Albert Bierstadt*



Sample artwork