

LESSON PLAN | INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Grades: Middle school (6–8)

Subjects: Science and visual arts

Time required: 3 class periods

Lesson Overview

Students observe and study **insects** depicted in a seveneenth-century drawing. They identify characteristics common to all insects and those unique to particular **species**. Students research and draw insects, incorporating a variety of lines and shapes and using **value** to depict three-dimensionality.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Use observation, research, and prior knowledge to describe the universal and unique characteristics of insects.
- Describe and identify insects in a seventeenth-century drawing.
- Draw insects using a variety of shapes and lines.
- Use value to create the illusion of three-dimensionality in their drawings.

Materials

- Reproduction of *Butterfly, Caterpillar, Moth, Insects, and Currants* by Jan van Kessel (p. 7)
- Four detail reproductions of insects from the painting:
www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/art_science/00039301_detail1.html
www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/art_science/00039301_detail2.html
www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/art_science/00039301_detail3.html
www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/art_science/00039301_detail4.html
- Information about the featured work of art and Questions for Teaching (pp. 20–21)
- Student handout: Insect Fact Sheet (p. 24)
- Drawing paper
- Pencils and colored pencils
- Art activity, “Drawing Insects with Organic Shapes and Lines.” www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/tips_tools/downloads/drawing_insects.pdf

- Art activity: “Exploring Value to Create Form,” www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/tips_tools/downloads/exploring_value.pdf

Lesson Steps

1. Complete steps 1–4 of the beginning-level lesson, adapting for grade level as appropriate. For example, when viewing the drawing by Van Kessel, you may wish to discuss **color** and **composition** in addition to shapes and lines.
2. Divide the class into pairs and hand out pages with details of the insects in Van Kessel’s drawing, so that each pair of students has an assigned insect.
3. Give students access to the Internet or science texts and ask them to research their assigned insect. You can also prepare information sheets about all of the insects for students to use as research material.
4. Hand out paper and art supplies. Have each student draw his or her insect, making sure to identify the **head**, **thorax**, **abdomen**, legs, **antennae**, and **mandibles** (when relevant). Remind students of the lines and shapes they identified when discussing the drawing by Van Kessel by pointing out examples (e.g., ovals for the head and thorax, thin lines for the legs). Encourage students to draw their insects using a variety of lines and shapes. You may wish to view the art activity “Drawing Insects with Organic Shapes and Lines” on the Getty website.
5. Direct students’ attention to their details again. Ask them to consider what the artist did to make the insects look three-dimensional. Point out examples of shadows and shading. Students should use value to give their insect drawings a three-dimensional appearance. You may wish to view the art activity “Exploring Value to Create Form” on the Getty website. Ask students if drawing their **specimens** helped them to observe something they did not notice before.
6. Students should label the various body parts of their insects. They should label the three characteristics that are universal to all insects and also identify those that are specific to their insect’s species.
7. Have students work together to research and fill in the Insect Fact Sheet student handout. Display the students’ fact sheets with their labeled insect drawings.