

# Grade 6

## Term 1

### Visual Art



The world is but  
a canvas to the imagination.

*- Henry David Thoreau*

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## Art Elements

*Every piece of artwork contains one, some or all of the art elements and design principles. So understanding these helps you create your own drawings and paintings, as well as enabling you to discuss, describe and interpret other artwork pieces.*

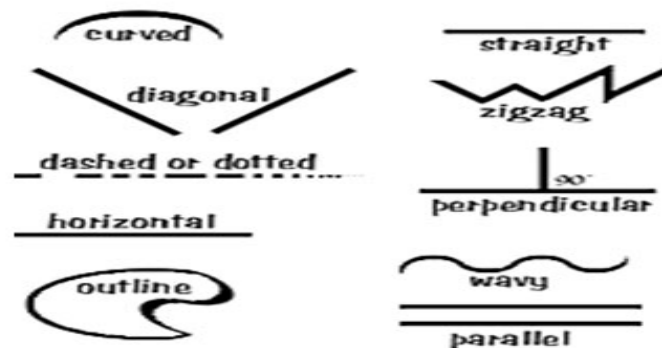
**What are art elements?**



Art elements are the 'tools' or the ingredients used to create all artwork. They include **line**, **tone**, **texture**, **shape**, **form**, **space** and **colour**.



1. **Line:** There are many different kinds of lines. Here are some common lines:

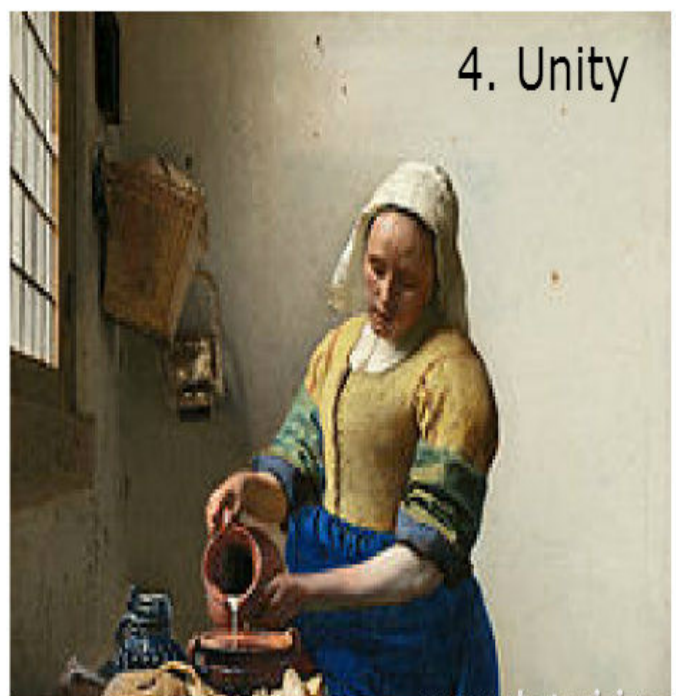
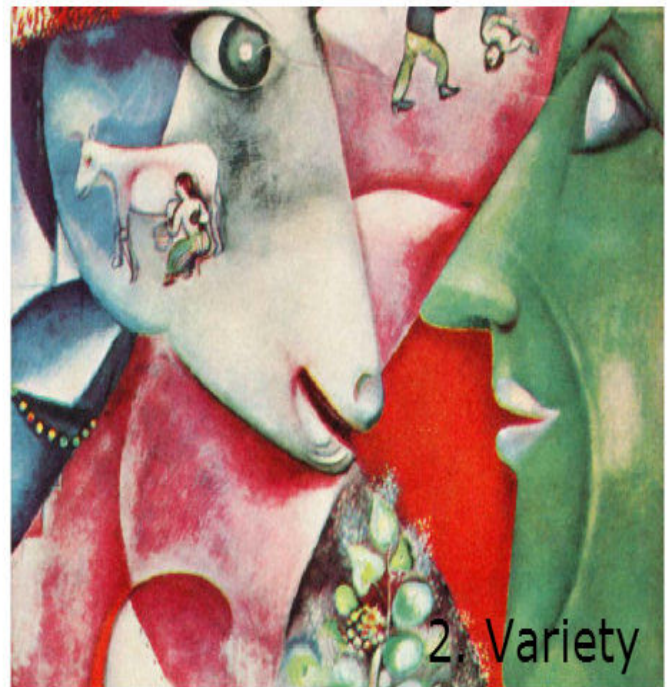


By joining lines together, you can make shapes.

2. **Shape:** When lines meet, shapes are formed. Shapes are flat. Some shapes are geometric, such as circles, squares, triangles, rectangles and ovals. Other shapes are organic or irregular.
3. **Texture:** Texture is the way something feels when you touch it. Artists, sometimes create the illusion of texture in artworks such as paintings, drawings and prints.
4. **Value:** Value is the lightness or darkness of colour. You can get different values of colour by mixing its shades and tints.
5. **Colour:** Artists use colour in many different ways, e.g. to evoke emotions or to send a message. Artists have invented many different media that imitate the colour of light.
6. **Form:** Forms are 3D (Three-dimensional). They have height, width and thickness.  
**Shapes are flat, forms are not.**
7. **Space:** Space is an empty place or surface in or around a work of art. Space can be 2D, 3D, negative and/or positive.

## Design Principles

What are Design Principles?



Design principles are the basic units that make up any artwork. They include **variety, unity, rhythm, patterns, proportion, emphasis, contrast** and **balance**.

1. **Variety**: Occurs when an artist creates something that looks different from the rest of the artwork. An artist may use variety to make you look at a certain part or make the artwork more interesting.
2. **Unity**: Unity is the feeling that everything in the work of art works together and looks like it fits.
3. **Rhythm**: Visual rhythm makes you think of the rhythms you hear in music or dance. Artists create visual rhythm by repeating art elements and creating patterns.
4. **Patterns**: Artists create patterns by repeating a line, shape or colour over and over again.
5. **Proportion**: It describes the size, location or amount of one thing compared to another. Think of drawing face proportions.
6. **Emphasis**: Artists use emphasis to make certain parts of their artwork stand out and grab your attention. The centre of interest or focal point is the place the artist draws our eye to first.
7. **Contrast**: Contrast creates excitement and interest in artworks. Two things that are very different have a lot of contrast. White and black have the greatest contrast. Complimentary colours also have high contrast.
8. **Balance**: It describes how artists create visual weight. Artists think about how to make their work balanced by using elements such as line, shape and colour.

*"The object of art is not to reproduce reality,  
but to create a reality of the same intensity."*

**Alberto Giacometti**



## Creative Lettering

### What is Creative Lettering?

In art, graphic design and typography, lettering refers to the creation of hand-drawn letters to apply to an object or surface.

Lettering includes calligraphy and lettering for purposes such as blueprints and comic books, as well as decorative lettering such as sign painting and creating custom lettering graphics, for instance on posters, for a letterhead or business wordmark, lettering in stone or graffiti. Lettering may be drawn or applied using stencils.

## Visual Literacy

Visual literacy is the ability to 'read' a visual text. This can be a painting, sculpture, drawing or even a photograph. You will learn how to use the art elements you have learnt to help you analyse visual images.

### Activity 1: I Want Change

Look at the following graffiti and answer the questions that follow.



1. What is the main subject matter of this graffiti? (1)
2. What makes the main subject stand out from the wall? (1)
3. Explain what is so ironic about the sign that is in the picture. (1)
4. What message do you think this graffiti is trying to give us? (2)

## Art Movement

An Art Movement is a style or why of doing art that spans over a period of time. An art movement can be subtly or distinctly different from another movement. These 'styles' are used to describe art practiced by a group of artists within the same time period/region. Some art movements are influenced by other and therefore show similarities, other art movements seem to defy their cousins because of limitations.

### **History of Graffiti**

The first drawings on walls appeared in caves thousands of years ago. Later the Ancient Romans and Greeks wrote their names and protest poems on buildings. Modern graffiti seems to have appeared in Philadelphia in the early 1960s, and by the late sixties it had reached New York. The new art form really took off in the 1970s, when people began writing their names, or 'tags', on buildings all over the city. In the mid-seventies it was sometimes hard to see out of a subway car window, because the trains were completely covered in spray paintings known as 'masterpieces'.



In the early days, the 'taggers' were part of street gangs who were concerned with marking their territory. They worked in groups called 'crews', and called what they did 'writing' – the



term 'graffiti' was first used by The New York Times and the novelist Norman Mailer. Art galleries in New York began buying graffiti in the early seventies. But at the same time that it began to be regarded as an art form, John Lindsay, the then mayor of New York, declared the first war on graffiti. By the 1980s it became much harder to write on subway trains without being caught, and instead many of the more established graffiti artists began using roofs of buildings or canvases.

The debate over whether graffiti is art or vandalism is still going on. Some people think that graffiti done with permission can be art, but if it is on someone else's property it becomes a crime. Others believe that these artists are reclaiming cities for the public from advertisers, and that graffiti represents freedom and makes cities more vibrant.

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/a-brief-history-of-graffiti-kelly-wall>

### Activity 2: Mars

Look at the picture of the graffiti and answer the questions below.



1. What is the first thing that grabs your attention in this graffiti and why? (2)
2. Notice how the artist used up as much space as possible on the wall.  
Why do you think he did this? (1)
3. What message or idea do you think the artist was trying to send? Give a reason for your answer. (2)

## Featured Artists

### **Banksy**

Arguably the most controversial street artist in the world, Banksy has developed an entire art sub-culture devoted to his works. Banksy's art can impact any location at any given moment. His *identity* remains unknown, even after over 20 years of being involved with the graffiti scene. He has worked with many different types of street art media and street art types. His work not only includes many powerful, often *controversial* images, but they may also be found throughout the Internet as viral images.



Banksy began his graffiti art lifestyle by admiring the works of Blek Le Rat and often recycling his old ideas. He has been very active in the graffiti scene since the early 1990s. By the age of 18, Banksy began to develop stencils after nearly being caught *vandalizing* public spaces by police. As his crew fled from the scene, Banksy was stuck hiding beneath a garbage truck. It was at this time that Banksy saw stencil letters on the truck. Looking for a faster way to paint, Banksy decided stenciling would be his new graffiti type.

The most common form of street art Banksy uses are stencils. These are often in the form of *multi-layered* stencils and/or combined with other media sources, such as *spray-paint*. He also includes anything found in the streets like street signs and other objects to convey his message by crafting beautiful street art installations. His artwork is often satirical and combines dark humour with graffiti and also spread messages across art, *philosophy*, and *politics*.

By the early 2000s, Banksy relocated to London, where he began to gain notoriety and even worked on a series of international exhibits. Eventually, he decided to travel to

Palestine and the West Bank, where he stenciled *nine images* on the Bethlehem Wall. These images were an instant hit and virally exploded in the Internet.



### Activity 3: Art or vandalism?

Write a paragraph of 40 – 50 words, where you explain if you think graffiti is vandalism or art. You need to justify your opinion with some information from your e-notes. (5)