

Verb In A Hat

Verbs are action words and we use them to describe movement. What happens if we try to translate a movement - a verb - into a static (non-moving) object? In this activity, we learn about art and design by playing with abstract expression.

Materials:

- String
- Straws
- Popsicle Sticks
- Paper clips
- Paper
- Cardboard
- Clay, play-doh, or similar
- Scotch tape
- Scissors
- Timer

Learning objectives:

- Understanding linear, planar, and volumetric
- Abstract representation
- Material selection
- Sketch prototyping

Time required: 20-45 minutes

Context:

Abstraction can be used to describe when we take something literal and recreate it in a different form. In the case of this activity, we're taking verbs - which are actions and movement - and creating a physical object that doesn't move at all, but "implies" (gives us the idea of) that movement. This type of thing is essential in art and design. A lot of the times, we want the design to "look and feel" a certain way, to let people connect what they're doing with a different experience. Think about "luxury": what objects or buildings have you seen that exude (or embody) "luxury"? Luxury, of course, is not a physical object we can hold in our hands. Yet, many products try to make us feel like, by owning that product, it is bringing us luxury. It is a luxury. We see this all the time in advertisements - by buying a certain product, you're buying a certain lifestyle. In art, abstraction is everything. Sculptures can give us a sense of movement, a particular combination of shapes and colors can move us deeply, a word in just the right place can mean its opposite.

Context:

All that being said, in this activity, we'll play with different types of materials. The goal here is to explore how the materials that you choose to build with can greatly impact what you make. We're going to play with (3) sets of materials: linear, planar, and volumetric. Linear is like lines - these materials are almost one-dimensional. It includes string, straws, and popsicle sticks. Planar is like a plane - not an airplane, but like a surface. These are almost two-dimensional and include paper and cardboard. The third set is volumetric, like a volume. It's three-dimensional (3D) and is the clay or play-doh. Let's get to it!

Activity:

1. Split up your materials based on the type: Linear materials include: string, straws, popsicle sticks, and paper clips. Planar materials include paper and cardboard. Volumetric material is clay or play-doh. You can use tape and scissors with any set of materials.
2. Pick (2) verbs from the following list and write them down somewhere that you can see them. Alternatively, you can write all the verbs down and choose two from a hat! The verb list is: twist, pull, invert, hang, climb, and embrace.
3. Time yourself for 10 minutes for each round. We'll do (3) rounds: one for each set of materials.
4. Start with the linear set of materials. Create (1) sketch prototype that embodies/expresses both of the verbs that you chose. It's ok if it's not finished or perfect!
5. Nice! Set your linear model aside. Put 10 more minutes on the clock. Using the same verbs, create a sketch prototype using the set of planar materials.

Activity:

6. One more round to go! You probably guessed it: you're going to use the same verbs again, and create a sketch model using your volumetric material. Give yourself 10 minutes for this round, too.
7. Alright! Now step back and look at your models side-by-side. See what other kids have made and share your work at #MadeToHack.

Reflection:

Your (3) models all express the same verbs - but they probably look very different from one another. Why do they look so different?

How was it making these models? Enjoyable? Challenging?

Give a sibling or parent the full list of verbs - can they guess your (2) verbs just by looking at your models?

What did you learn about materials from this activity?

Happy Making!

-Team Hack