Foundational Skills Progressions for visual Arts



**The Arts: Foundational Skills Progressions**

# Acknowledgments for All Arts Disciplines

**Project Facilitators**

Jonathan C. Rappaport, Project Director/Editor, Arts|Learning, Inc.

Jacqueline Carvey, Project Coordinator, Westwood Public Schools

Dr. Charles Combs, President, Arts|Learning, Inc.

Dr. Nancy Moses, Executive Director, Arts|Learning, Inc.

**Project Writers**

Joshua Streeter, lead writer, Theatre. Assistant Professor of Theatre Education, Emerson College

Sarah Ploskina, associate writer, Theatre. Adjunct Faculty, Music, Theatre and Dance, Salve Regina University

Donna Dragon, co-writer, Dance. Associate Professor of Dance, Bridgewater State University

Danielle Bazinet, co-writer, Dance. Adjunct Professor of Dance and Dance Education, Bridgewater State University; Instructional Designer, UMass/Dartmouth

Dr. Lois Hetland, Visual Arts, Professor Emerita, Massachusetts College of Art and Design

Dr. Brian Michaud, Music, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District

Dr. Sandra Nicolucci, Music, Associate Professor Emerita, Boston University

Jonathan Rappaport, Music, Arts|Learning, Inc.

Margaurita Spear, Visual Arts, Massachusetts Art Education Association Board

*Singing Skills Progression adapted and expanded from the sequence by Jonathan Rappaport ©* 2019 *and used with his permission.*

**Content Advisors**

Jacqueline Carvey, Westwood Public Schools

Jonathan Rappaport, Arts|Learning, Inc.

Kristin Voccio, Department Head, Unified Arts, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District

**Arts Education Advisory Council Members**

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Dawn Benski, Arts Content Support Lead

Erin Hashimoto-Martell, Associate Commissioner of the Center for Instructional Support

Katherine Tarca, Director of Literacy and Humanities

**The Arts: Foundational Skills Progressions**

Table of Contents

[Acknowledgments for All Arts Disciplines 2](#_Toc167094549)

[Introduction 4](#_Toc167094550)

[Overview 4](#_Toc167094551)

[About the Foundational Skills Progressions 4](#_Toc167094552)

[Foundational Skills Progressions for Visual Arts 6](#_Toc167094553)

[Visual Arts Foundational Skills Progression 1: Materials and Tools 6](#_Toc167094554)

[Visual Arts Foundational Skills Progression 2: Intent and Idea 12](#_Toc167094555)

[Appendix: Visual Arts—Selected Short List of Resources for Teachers 17](#_Toc167094556)

**The Arts: Foundational Skills Progressions**

**(Arts Disciplines: Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts)**

# Introduction

## Overview

The ***Foundational Skills Progressions*** model how two specific skill areas may be developed across grades PreK-12 in each discipline of the arts. This document is written to assist arts educators in identifying and teaching some of the competencies that allow students to achieve fluency in the language of the arts, including the lifelong ability to communicate freely in one or more arts disciplines. Teachers are encouraged to provide a variety of hands-on, participatory activities through which these skills are instilled through joyful learning and intentional artistic expression.

The ***Progressions*** document is not intended to suggest that these are the only, or the most important, foundational skills that should be developed in any particular arts discipline; rather, these selected skills should be seen as examples.

**Foundational skills contain critical elements of a comprehensive arts education. Students advance over time through each skill progression, acquiring competencies, habits of mind, dispositions, and understandings necessary for artistic accomplishment and mastery. These skills often result in vital, enduring behaviors and capabilities that informed and engaged adults possess and use throughout life.**

A stated objective of the [2019 MA Arts Curriculum Framework](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/arts/2019-08.docx) is the development of artistic literacy, defined as “…the knowledge and understanding required to participate authentically in the arts. Fluency in the language(s) of the arts is the ability to create, perform or present, respond, and connect through symbolic and metaphoric forms that are unique to the arts.” (p. 13[[1]](#endnote-2)). The “language” of the arts goes beyond solely verbal communication—it also may include movement, sound, form, expression, symbolism, and any other means that artists or performers utilize to convey their ideas. For example, theatre, which relies heavily upon the spoken word, uses the “vocabulary” of body language, facial expression, vocal inflection, lighting, and other visual and auditory effects to communicate the full weight and power of drama.

 **“It is not technique that is the essence of art, but the soul. As soon as the soul can communicate freely, without obstacles, a complete musical (artistic) effect is created. Technique sufficient for a free manifestation of the child's soul can be easily mastered under a good leader in any school.” (Zoltán Kodály[[2]](#endnote-3))**

## About the Foundational Skills Progressions

This document is written to provide arts educators with concrete skill development learning strategies along the pre-K—12 education continuum. Each of the skill progressions is in a chart format, aligned to the Framework’s two-grade dyads from Pre-K through grade 8, and then the three high-school Foundation, Proficient, and Advanced levels. Each chart contains three to four columns that detail the development of the skills and habits of mind for that progression. Additionally, there is a final column that highlights potential skill applications within the four Clusters of Creating, Performing/Presenting, Responding, and Connecting. Here is an example using the header of columns for the
Visual Arts Intent and Idea Progression:

| **Visual Arts Foundational Skills Progression Area 2: Intent and Idea** |
| --- |
| **Grades** | **Play** | **Personalize** | **Inquire** | **Iterate** | **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** |

Artistic learning is often a messy process. Educators should be cautioned that the chart format used here was chosen to clarify different aspects of the skills being taught. It is not meant to imply that these activities occur in a linear fashion from left to right, or each category by itself. All of these facets of building artistic literacy are interwoven in a rich fabric of active thinking, listening, creating, questioning, modifying, rehearsing, presenting/performing, and connecting all learning.

As stated in the 2019 ***MA Arts Curriculum Framework***, “The standards define what all students should know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach. While the Framework provides an overall structure, it purposefully leaves the details of curriculum and instruction to the discretion of district teachers and curriculum developers. Educators are best equipped to design programs that are most appropriate in promoting excellence in their own communities.” (MACF, p. 11[[3]](#endnote-4)).

Keeping this in mind, there may be differing approaches to teaching the foundational skills depending on the philosophy or training of the teacher. However, instructional delivery models are *suggested* in the ***Foundational Skills Progressions***. Along with the specific skills being developed, the ***Progressions*** show examples of how young artists can develop facility in the four key “Clusters” of *Creating*, *Presenting/Performing*, *Responding*, and *Connecting* as delineated in the ***Framework***.[[4]](#endnote-5) These categories are aligned to Framework standards, and exhibit vertical progressions of learning, cultural responsiveness, artistic intent, and developmental appropriateness for students while considering teacher usability.

Educators should note that the **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** at each level are *suggested* models which they are free to use, modify, replace, or omit as appropriate for their own arts programs. Integration of the arts with other arts disciplines or other across content areas under the *Connect* Cluster is recommended in the Framework; teachers are encouraged to make meaningful connections to other relevant bodies of knowledge whenever possible.

The **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** give rich examples of performing and visual arts creators and their works. These applications are not intended to be all-inclusive; we encourage educators to research their own choices. The preambles of each arts discipline suggest recommended ways to access these and other reliable resources. It is important to emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students in all five arts disciplines. The ***Progressions*** call for using artworks from a large variety of cultures, genres, and historical periods. It is up to each teacher, school, and district to utilize the unique cultural variety and assets in their own communities as well as the broader world, and to find exemplary, authentic resources to support this important goal.

**A Note on “Play”**

The term, “play,” is used frequently in this resource. It is the structured work of visual and performing artists and should not be misinterpreted as indicating random, amorphous activities. Attributes of “play” include:

* Open-ended exploration, risk-taking, and the embrace of errors as opportunities for developing new strategies and ideas using improvisation, games, and routines.
* Kinesthetic/full body learning, imagination, auditory processing, and visual representation as human beings learn most effectively through experiential encounters.
* A desire for deeper and different kinds of understandings in addition to reasoning and logic.[[5]](#endnote-6)

The concept of play is part of the Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten, which includes 8 different standards on how to approach Play and Learning, such as demonstrating eagerness and curiosity, exhibiting creativity, cooperating with others, and seeing multiple solutions to a question, task, or problem.[[6]](#endnote-7) These 21st-century skills are worthy of cultivation well beyond the pre-K and K age levels. As Dana Mitroff Silvers explains, “play is essential for innovation, creativity, and collaboration… the most successful design thinkers are the ones who embrace the notion of play.”[[7]](#endnote-8)

|  |
| --- |
| **“Play” is a term that has been used for centuries to describe various kinds of artistic work. Some examples: A “play” is a work created by a playwright; "wright” means work.[[8]](#endnote-9) Actors “play” a character in such a work through vocal inflection, speech patterns and accents, movement, facial expressions, gesticulations, and body language. Musicians “play” their instruments in a piece of music which is an opus—a work. And collaborative artists from all disciplines constantly “play off” one another, to affect, alter, and enhance their joint performances and shared creative work.** |

**Foundational Skills Progressions for the Arts, Pre-K—12**

# Foundational Skills Progressions for Visual Arts

This document suggests ways that two foundational skills in visual arts – (1) ***Materials and Tools***, and (2) ***Intent and Idea*** – could develop across grade levels. These two skills were selected to sequence because they are essential for understanding, viewing, and making in visual arts across the continuum from beginners to experts. The model learning experiences suggested in the **Instructional Examples Within the Clusters** column align with Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework standards for visual arts and connect to other disciplines such as science, ELA, History and Social Sciences, and the other arts disciplines. Standards identifiers follow each example (e.g., 7-8.V.R.09). Some examples of historical and contemporary artists and artwork are listed in this column. Contemporary and multicultural resources are encouraged because many teachers are less familiar with these artists and their work, and because these art forms can sometimes have more accessible connections to current issues in students’ lives.

Kimball and Stables’ diagram, “The Interaction of Mind and Hand” (2004, p. 21), articulates the connection between processes outside the head (the “hand,” represented by the ***Materials and Tools*** Progression that follows) and those inside the head (represented by the ***Intent and Idea*** Progression). These two selected foundational skills progressions always interact. A vague idea, in the head or as an open exploration with the hand, evolves in clarity through juggling back and forth, emerging at the end as a more complete idea and a better-realized object.

## Visual Arts Foundational Skills Progression 1: Materials and Tools

Engaging with visual art requires familiarity with ***Materials and Tools*** – what they are and how to wield them. This progression identifies four skill elements of ***Care, Play, Choice***, and ***Use*** and defined examples for ways to attend to each in every two-year grade dyad and high school course. ***Care*** refers to maintaining and organizing materials and tools so that they last, are accessible, and contribute to organizing ideas. ***Play*** involves exploration, risk-taking, and embracing errors as opportunities for new strategies and ideas. ***Choice*** addresses the thoughtful selection of materials and tools to suit the purpose of particular artmaking intentions and settings. And ***Use*** relates to how to work with materials and tools intentionally and with technical skill.

At the end of each grade dyad or course in the chart are suggested lists outlining a progression of material and tool use. It is not all-inclusive but is a starting point for teachers to understand a developmental continuum of these items. Each new material and tool expands upon what students may access for their artmaking intentions. As students advance through their art education, they further develop previously introduced skills and techniques with increased complexity and mastery. These material lists are tied to broader grade spans in order to allow flexibility for accommodating students’ developmental differences.

While materials and tools have been separated here, it should be noted that (1) separating materials from tools is somewhat artificial, because tools are sometimes used as materials (e.g., glue or tape paintings), and materials are sometimes used as tools (e.g., cardboard tubes for stamping); and (2) some supplies can be both materials and tools (e.g., pencils, crayons, craft sticks, and chenille stems).

| **Visual Arts Foundational Skills Progression Area 1: Materials and Tools** |
| --- |
| **Grades** | **Care** | **Play** | **Choice** | **Use** | **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** |
| **Pre-K and K** | • Reset personal workspace and put personal materials and tools away with prompting and support.(HSS. PK.T1) | • Transform materials and use tools independently through personal experimentation and shared decision making with others.e.g., “What happens when I paint on top of crayon marks?” or “How can we put these recycled pieces together?” | • Select materials and tools for making personal works.Decide what to work with.e.g., “I want to paint my picture,” or “I’m using blocks to build something.” | • Work with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials and tools as intended with guidance, e.g., “I can hold my scissors safely and slowly nibble the paper to cut out a shape for a collage” or “I used the toothbrush on the clay to score and slip.”  | **Creating:*** When presented with a variety of loose parts, including recyclable materials, construct collages, assemblages, or other artworks. e.g., Artist:  **Louise Nevelson** (PK-K.V.Cr.01)

**Presenting:*** Arrange and rearrange loose parts and tell a friend about the arrangement. e.g., Assemblage artists**:  Betye Saar: *Sojourn;* Vanessa German: *You Bring Out the Savage In Me #1*** (PK-K.V.P.05)

**Responding:*** Compare and contrast the wearable artwork of two artists who use unusual materials. e.g., Artists: **Cyrus Kabiru: *C-Stunners Series;* Nick Cave: *Sound Suits*** (PK-K.V.R.07)

**Connecting:*** Go on a scavenger hunt to find artworks such as mosaics made from shattered pottery, painted murals, or public sculptures and apply what they found when selecting materials for their own artwork. (PK-K.V.Co.11)
 |
| **1-2** | • Maintain basic materials and tools, such as paints and brushes, in a personal workspace after teacher models.• Maintain shared space, materials, and tools by completing assigned tasks, i.e., wiping tables/emptying water cups. |  • Experiment with a teacher-curated variety of materials, such as natural and manmade loose parts.e.g., “I can use cloth and string and wood pieces to make different scenes in a shoebox.” | • Pick preferred materials and tools for making personal artistic works.e.g., “I like to combine fabric, yarns, strings, and straws to make my funny people.” | • Use a variety of developmentally appropriate materials and tools to learn basic techniques for different artistic inspirations, which may include personal interests, outside sources, or suggested prompts, among others. e.g., “I can attach cardboard spikes on my papier mâché dinosaur.” | **Creating:*** Create works of art using shapes by freeform drawing, stenciling, rubbings of found objects, or stamping. e.g., Artist: **Ed Emberley** (1-2.V.Cr.03)

**Presenting:*** Sort works in a personal portfolio by a self-selected theme. e.g., “These are all my family paintings,” or “These are all my collages.” (1-2.V.P.05)

**Responding:*** When viewing artwork, speculate about what materials and tools the artist used. e.g., ”I can see marks from a brush; I think this artist used paint.” (1-2.V.R.07)

**Connecting:*** When viewing images of place-based art, share places to see public art and the materials they are made of, e.g. the sculptures and paintings at a local festival(1-2.V.Co.11)
 |
| **By End of Grade 2** | ***By the end of Grade 2***, students may be introduced to these suggested **materials and tools**: **Drawing** - graphite and colored pencils, crayons of assorted sizes, oil pastels, markers of assorted sizes, chalk or chalk pastels, charcoal, pens; **Painting** - daubers, watercolor pans, liquid paints, crayons, and pencils; tempera cakes, liquid paints, and paint sticks; inks; **Printmaking** - water-based inks or paints or markers, stamps, monoprints, Styrofoam etchings, cyanotypes, collagraphs; **Collage** – assorted papers, fabrics, found ephemera; **Sculpture and Modeling** - modeling, air dry, or earthenware clays; blocks, cardboard, ceramic glazes or finishes, papier mâché, found objects, and recyclables; **Fibers** - yarn, felt, fabric, fiber-fill, strings, burlaps, threads, simple stitching; **New Media** - simple cameras, stop motion animation apps, digital collage apps; **Miscellaneous** - craft materials, such as feathers, beads, chenille stems, poms, ribbons, wooden shapes, brads; **Paper Types** - drawing, watercolor, tag board, construction, decorative, tissue, origami, newsprint, kraft. **Related Tools** includeerasers, sharpeners, scissors, glue sticks, liquid glue, various tapes, hole and shape punches, paper crimpers, stencils, texture rubbing plates, brayers, barens, basic clay tools including toothbrushes, garlic presses, and hand-made tools, rulers, novelty edge scissors, assorted paint brushes, paint cups, palettes, blunted sewing needles, simple looms, sponges, staplers. |
| **3-4** | • Maintain personal workspace, materials, and tools following verbal instruction. • Maintain shared space, materials, and tools to complete more involved, assigned tasks, such as reorganizing supply storage.  | • Achieve innovative results by using a variety of different materials and tools, such as atypical tools like cotton swabs, paper towels, forks, and old gift cards. e.g., “I can paint tempera over an old painting and use a tool to scrape the new paint away to show the color underneath.” |  • Demonstrate how materials and tools were selected for making personal artistic works.e.g., “This is how I mix any colors I want with watercolors. I start with, say, yellow, and then add…” | • Alter and manipulate a variety of materials and tools to develop techniques that capture a specific artistic intent.e.g., “I tear roll paper to get soft edges on my collage, but the same paper makes crisp folds for origami.”  | **Creating:*** Manipulate materials to create textures. e.g., “I can cut foam or erasers, or I can crumple paper to stamp textures on my collage.” (3-4.V.Cr.01)

**Presenting:*** Photograph first sketches and/or clay models and organize into a portfolio that showcases a variety of materials and tools. e.g., Artist: **Leonardo da Vinci: *Sketches*** (3-4.V.P.04)

**Responding:*** When viewing and talking about art, infer why particular art materials were chosen for their relationship to colors, lines, textures. e.g., Artist: **Jen Stark: *Tunnel Vision*** (3-4.V.R.07)

**Connecting:*** Compare materials and tool selections in personal artworks to those chosen by friends and family members. e.g., “I like to use texturing tools to press into clay. My friend rolls out clay to be really smooth. My sister starts with a smooth pinch pot and adds raised bumps with pieces of clay.” e.g., Artist: **Paul Briggs, *Ceramic vessels*** (3-4.V.Co.10)
 |
| **By End of Grade 4** | ***By the end of grade 4***, students may be introduced to these additional suggested **materials and tools**: **Drawing** - a broader range of hardness for graphite pencils; **Painting** - acrylic paints for specific limited use; **Sculpture and Modeling** - soft wire, plaster infused gauze, 3D printing; **Fibers** - wool roving, wet felting, twine, simple paper making;  **Miscellaneous** - simple bookbinding, scratch art, instant cameras.**Related Tools** include standard sewing needles and implements, cardboard saws, needle nose pliers, mathematical compasses |
| **5-6** | • Maintain personal and shared workspaces after verbal or written instruction, as the variety and complexity of materials and tools increases.e.g., sewing needles or plaster require greater attention to safety.e.g., complete assigned set-up and clean-up tasks and monitor workspace safety during artmaking. | • Combine familiar media with new materials and tools that require greater developmental dexterity to explore what they can do, such as combining sewing with painting media.e.g., “I can use embroidery to add to this painting by stitching through the paper.” | • Draft personal artistic works that demonstrate understanding of selected materials and tools after comparing and contrasting their potential. e.g., “I made a portrait using colored pencils, but it took so long, so I tried oil pastels to work faster.” | • Respond to the inherent properties of preferred materials and tools by using a selection of techniques they lend themselves to when executing a specific artistic intent.e.g., “I chose to use a larger paint brush to paint my sculpture of a cheetah but switched to a small brush for the spots.” | **Creating:*** Combine materials in unexpected ways to express a specific artistic intent. e.g., Artist: **William Kentridge: *Drawings for Projection short films***(5-6.V.Cr.01)

**Presenting:*** Title work and write an artist statement to explain the material choices related to your artistic intent. (5-6.V.P.04)

**Responding:*** When reflecting on personal work or the work of others, discuss what makes the materials good choices. (5-6.V.R.09)

**Connecting:*** Discuss how selecting and using materials can reflect the student artist’s preferences and style. e.g., “I use pencils when drawing comics because I can use light and dark values to show the mood, and I think color is distracting.” e.g., Artist: **Tezuka Osamu** (5-6.V.Co.10)
 |
| **By End of Grade 6** | ***By the end of grade 6***, students may be introduced to these additional suggested **materials and tools**: **Drawing** – better-quality colored pencils, dip pens; **Painting** – acrylic paints; **Sculpture and Modeling** – heavier gauge wire; **Fibers** – needle felting, rope, batik, reeds and basket-making;  **New Media** – video; **Miscellaneous** – metal tooling, leather, mosaics **Paper Types** – higher quality watercolor paper**Related Tools** include hot glue guns, felting needles, simple hand tools. |
| **7-8** | • Continue maintaining personal and shared workspaces, materials, and tools with peer management. E.g., Floor manager points out areas in individual workspaces to clean; tools manager monitors replacing cleaned tools in closet bins.  | • Use an increasing repertoire of techniques and dexterity to change the methods for using materials and tools beyond their expected applications. E.g., “I attached a six-foot dowel to my paintbrush and put paper on the floor – it really loosened up my brush strokes.” | • Decide how to select materials and tools in relation to personal artistic intentions and constraints.e.g., “I wanted to make a sculpture that I could wear and walk around in, so I chose cardboard, but used duct tape to join the pieces where they need to bend.” | •Experiment with assorted techniques using their preferred materials and tools to determine a variety of ways to achieve a desired result.• Plan for and execute artistic intent by selecting specific materials and tools to explore initial ideas versus refining finished works.e.g., “I practiced with modeling clay before using ceramic clay.” | **Creating:*** Consider multiple unexpected or surprising ways art materials can be used to expand on a repertoire of techniques e.g., Artists: **David Zinn: *Street chalk art****;* **Victoria Villasana: *Textile art.*** (7-8.V.Cr.01)

**Presenting:*** Prepare a student-curated art show centered on chosen materials, e.g., an exhibit dedicated to three-dimensional clay works or to miniature watercolor paintings. (7-8.V.P.04)

**Responding:*** Use material selection as criteria for selecting work for a student-juried exhibition. (7-8.V.R.09)

**Connecting:*** Discuss how the artist and viewer’s personal opinions about materials and tools can affect the art that is made and viewed. (7-8.V.Co.10)
 |
| **By End of Grade 8** | ***By the end of grade 8***, students may be introduced to these additional suggested **materials and tools**: **Drawing** – alcohol- or dye-based markers; **Painting** – tube watercolors, canvases, gessoed paper, wood panels; **Printmaking** – block printing, carvable block surfaces, oil-based inks, stenciling; **Sculpture and Modeling** – wood, soap, plaster, foam; **Fibers** – simple costume/clothing patterns, up-cycling, latch-hooking; **New Media** – graphic design apps; **Miscellaneous** – intermediate book binding; **Paper Types** – printmaking papers. **Related Tools** include a full range of basic hand tools, lino cutters, x-acto blades, cutting mats, sewing machines, pottery wheels, palette knives  |
| **High School Foundations** | • Continue maintaining personal and shared workspaces, materials, and tools with peer management, and frequently noticing  and addressing studio needs without prompting. | • Document exploration with materials and tools, such as keeping a sketchbook of material swatches or experiments. | • Justify and describe personal artistic material and tool choices and changes in preferences following new experiences. | • Compare the variety of techniques of their preferred artistic materials and tools in initial and finished works.* Explain changes made in technical use, mastery attained, or modifications to plans that their preferred materials and tools necessitated and/or facilitated.
 | **Creating:*** Create mock-ups, sketches, or prototypes to test out material applications before starting on a large or prolonged work. e.g., Artists: **Edward Hopper: *Drawings****, Whitney Museum;***Claus Oldenburg: *Notes at Gemini G.E.L.,*** *1968, photograph, National Gallery* (F.V.Cr.02)

**Presenting:*** In a critique before exhibition, justify selection of and approaches to using materials and tools. e.g., Work that is to be displayed outdoors will require specific material considerations. (F.V.P.04)

**Responding:*** Utilize student-generated rubrics in combination with teacher-provided rubrics for evaluating the application of materials within artworks. (F.V.R.09)

**Connecting:*** Discuss why and how artists can work from the same prompt and have very different results, e.g., Artist: **Lenka Clayton: *One Brown Shoe Series***(F.V.Co.10)
 |
| **High School Proficient** | • Independently maintain personal and shared workspaces, materials, and tools without peer or teacher management, and consistently noticing and addressing needs without prompting. | • Explore and systematically document their investigation and mastery of their preferred materials and tools while executing their artistic intent in a given work.e.g., “In each cell of a chart, I document how watercolor pigment changes when I add salt, oil, rubbing alcohol, or sugar.” | • Intentionally choose materials and tools because of their intrinsic properties.e.g., “I’m choosing gouache, because it’s more opaque than watercolor, but I can reuse it from the palette, unlike acrylic.” | • Intentionally integrate a variety of learned techniques with their preferred artistic materials and tools to master specific outcomes. | **Creating:*** Develop artistic ideas using found materials as a constraint. e.g., Artists: **Joe Foreman: *Sculpt the World;* Andy Goldsworthy: *Digital Catalogue Part I, 1976-86*** (P.V.Cr.03)

**Presenting:*** Explain material and tool techniques used for evoking, expressing, or communicating. e.g., Give an artist talk or write an artist statement for an exhibition referencing the selection and use of materials. (P.V.P.04)

**Responding:*** Reflect on materials and processes for creating a work, and how the materials express meaning. e.g., Artists: **Ai Weiwei: *Straight;***

**Sun Yuan & Peng Yu: *Can’t Help Myself*** (P.V.R.07)**Connecting:*** Discuss how artists have used materials to comment on themes such as commercialization in their work. e.g., Artists: **Andy Warhol: *Brillo Boxes;*** **Lucy Sparrow: *Tampa Fresh Foods***(P.V.Co.11)
 |
| **High School Advanced** | • Maintain personal and shared workspaces, materials, and tools autonomously, taking full responsibility for access, maintenance. And storage.• Notice and address studio needs without direction, initiating, and dividing cleaning tasks equitably as would be expected of artists in a shared work environment. | • Systematically document material explorations in many ways, and refer to these while planning, making, and presenting works that showcase their artistic intent. | • Seek and respond to critique around material and tool choices within peer groups and with teachers. | • Work with their preferred artistic materials and tools to exploit their full potential and set criteria to judge quality in their mastery of the techniques they have learned. | **Creating:*** Plan and document material and tool applications throughout the creation and revision process. Assess which materials and tools were most or least effective. (A.V.Cr.03)

**Presenting:*** When proposing and planning an exhibit, consider the space, lighting, and other features as materials and tools for enhancing or creating art.e.g., *Site-based installations, participatory art or murals.* (A.V.P.05)

**Responding:*** Describe how materials can be transformed beyond their intended uses. e.g., Artists: **Tara Donovan: *Untitled (Styrofoam Cups);***

**Tim Noble and Sue Webster: *Shadow Art*** (A.V.R.07)**Connecting:*** Discuss how personal aesthetic or style persists across a body of work in different types of media. e.g., Artists: **Yayoi Kusama; Alexander Calder** (A.V.Co.10)
 |
| **By End of Grade 12** | ***By the end of grade 12***, students may be introduced to these additional suggested **materials and tools**: **Painting** – spray paints, tube acrylics, oil paints, solvents, mediums, canvas stretching; **Printmaking** – screen printing materials, etching, woodblock carving; **Sculpture and Modeling** – metals, higher firing pottery clays, plastics, surface treatments; **Fibers** – professional or self-made costume/clothing patterns, knit, stretch, and diaphanous fabrics, advanced paper making; **Digital Media** – advanced design programs; **Miscellaneous** – film cameras, holgas. **Jewelry**: enameling, soldering, patinas, glass and specialty beads, precious metals**Related Tools** – power tools, carving tools, gouges, heat guns, kilns, slab rollers, pug mills, extruders, wedging boards or tables, printing press, welding torches, soldering irons. |

**Foundational Skills Progressions for the Arts, Pre-K—12**

## Visual Arts Foundational Skills Progression 2: Intent and Idea

A visual arts education requires students to understand how to find ideas and imagine intentionality in their own works and those of others. Skill elements for this sequence are ***Play, Personalize, Inquire***, and ***Iterate***. ***Play***, as with materials and tools, involves open-ended exploration of ideas using planned and improvisational strategies. ***Personalize*** focuses attention on the core importance of the *artist* in art-making, including the individual’s unique artistic and aesthetic voice while both creating and engaging with the works of others. ***Inquire*** focuses on student artists’ ability to systematically find and document information and possibilities, visually and conceptually. ***Iterate*** describes how artists constantly weave between these various skill elements (play, personalize, inquire, and iterate) as students work.

Usage of these four skill elements may be hard to see as students work, but it can be inferred and documented from student sketchbooks, process-folios (virtual and physical), critiques, reflections and artist statements, student-curated exhibitions and their signage, and artist talks; teachers will doubtless identify many other ways to make thinking visual. These skills are most likely to emerge when assignments extend over time and are open-ended, student-designed, and make use of the generous community within studio classrooms.

| **Visual Arts Foundational Skills Progression Area 2: Intent and Idea** |
| --- |
| **Grades** | **Play** | **Personalize** | **Inquire** | **Iterate** | **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** |
| **Pre-K and K** | • Name several imaginative possible meanings forobjects or images,e.g., “These colors could be a sunset or an explosion or a pattern on the water.”Or “The blocks could be my garden or a playground or a zoo.” | • Choose personally relevant topic(s) as the subject matter of their artwork. | • Generate artistic ideas by choosing easily accessible objects to stand for something else.• Share these symbolic ideas with others.e.g., “We could make the garden in the sandbox.” or ”What do you want to grow in the garden?” | • Make multiple artworks on a similar theme or topic.e.g., “Let’s put the garden in a desert.”or “Let’s make a garden in the fall after we pick the flowers.” | **Creating:*** Play with materials to make images or objects. e.g., Artists: **Nina Katchadourian: *Seat Assignment Series;*Meret Oppenheim: *Breakfast in Fur*** (PK-K.V.Cr.01)

**Presenting:*** Describe a creation to friends or classmates. (PK-K.V.P.04)

**Responding:*** Describe a classmate’s creation and infer what it could mean. (PK-K.V.R.08)

**Connecting:*** Look around a space for anything made by any person. Name those objects and group them by similarities. (PK-K.V.Co.10)
 |
| **1-2** | • Explore possible ideas, alone and with others, by using simple, open-ended strategies (e.g., spinners, dice). e.g., “The dice say, ‘add circles.’” | • Choose personally relevant abstract experiences to depict in their artwork and explain how they captured it visually. e.g., “I painted a storm about when we were on the porch, and I smelled the rain.”  | • Research several provided resources for information about a topic, including books, media, artworks, and others’ experiences. “I saw how all the storms begin, get worse, and then move on.” | • Draft several additional works about a topic after researching how other artists depict it to expand understanding.e.g., “These clouds are dark and fast like in the paintings I saw.” | **Creating:*** Make a “storm” under a classroom table or in a corner. e.g., Artist**:  Olafur Eliasson: *The Weather Project*** (1-2.V.Cr.01)

**Presenting:*** Share art made about weather, so others understand how to be safe in a storm. e.g., Artist: **Nathalie Mieback, *Storms, Gales, and Blizzards***

(1-2.V.P.04)**Responding:*** Describe how different weather pictures make you feel.

e.g., Artists:**William Blake: *Winter, 1820-25;* Jasper Johns: *The Seasons (Winter), 1987*.** (1-2.V.R.08)**Connecting:*** Make groups of pictures for different types of weather.

e.g., Artist: **J. M. W. Turner: *Snow Storm–Steamboat off a Harbor’s Mouth*** (1-2.V.Co.10; Science 1-ESS1-2) |
| **3-4** | • Explore multiple ideas for artworks using thinking routines (e.g., See, Think, Wonder or Looking 10 x 2).e.g., “I see disguised animals. That makes me think about camouflage. I wonder what they are hiding from?” | • Show how personally relevant subject matter relates to the greater context or visual setting within their artwork.  | • Use a wide variety of resources to explore and document their observations.e.g., “I showed the kangaroo rat with notes about his big ears that keep him cool in the desert.” | • Create works that manipulate components of a subject matter and apply in novel ways.e.g., Use characteristics of plants or creatures to create toys that mimic other species.  | **Creating:*** Sketch three trading cards for disguised animals. e.g., Artist: **Laurel Roth Hope: *Biodiversity Suits for Urban Pigeons*** (3-4.V.Cr.03)

**Presenting:*** Document all the forms of represented animals and organize them into an exhibition for peers. (3-4.V.P.04)

**Responding:*** Compare how individual designs made to disguise animals would work in different locations (e.g., city park, downtown, mountain stream).

(3-4.V.R.08)**Connecting:*** Discuss how an artistic work is different from a scientific illustration or model. e.g., Artists: **Albrecht Dürer: *Animal works;* Jason Freeny: *Cootie***(3-4.V.Co.11; Science 4-LS1.1)
 |
| **5-6** | • Expand artistic design solutions made by peers, trading works within a triad to suggest new possibilities to the artists.e.g., “I love your idea of modifying my wings, so they make sounds. What did you think of my changing your shoe design to Velcro instead of strings?”” | • Demonstrate an increasing awareness of 2-D and 3-D space as it relates to other personally relevant visual elements within their artwork.e.g., “Let’s design a movie theater with bean bags as seats, individual phone chargers, and food delivery chutes where you can order on your phone!” | • Collect references for locally significant objects or places through research, photography, or note taking. • Consider ways to improve these objects or places.e.g., “The ice cream parlor doesn’t have a place for kids to play. I’ll add a climbing wall with ice cream scoops for hand holds.” | • Modify a system by modeling or sketching it at different scales. e.g., “Let’s make the theater at different scales – matchbox, shoebox, and room-sized – to see how everything really works!” | **Creating:*** Design strategies (sketch, prototype, storyboard) to make a place described by a peer. e.g., Artist: **Sol LeWitt: *Wall Drawings***. (5-6.V.Cr.02)

**Presenting:*** Connect artwork to another discipline (science, social studies, literature) and explain the place to peers. e.g., Artists: **Margaret Wertheim** and **Christine Wertheim*: The Coral Reef Project*** (5-6.V.P.06)

**Responding:*** Think about precise words to describe the selected place, using vocabulary from two disciplines (art and one other). (5-6.V.R.08)

**Connecting:*** Compare historical and contemporary Persian works, with a focus on place. e.g., Artists: **Ala Ebtekar: *Coelestis; Persian Miniature Paintings***.(5-6.V.Co.11)
 |
| **7-8** | • Expand the complexity of possible solutions by juxtaposing objects or images randomly.e.g., “I cut up replicas of Guernica into random pieces and collaged them to make it feel peaceful.” | • Reflect on and identify unique personal and cultural influences, and why they matter., e.g., My grandpa and I love basketball, so I modified a jersey to customize it for him.” | • Respond to multiple resources that present ideas to work with differently; explain the differences. e.g., “In sculpture, space is real and can stand for time, but in animation, time is real, so maybe it can stand for space?” | • Draft artworks that explore new meanings of a topic by connecting a personal perspective with at least one other point of view.e.g., “Here I’m showing how I stay cool by drinking hot tea like they do in India, because it makes them sweat and cools them off, instead of wearing shorts like I do here.” | **Creating:*** Make a list of actions you can do, inspired by Richard Serra’s Verb List. Use action-verbs to work with the material for a piece that has stalled.

(7-8.V.Cr.03)**Presenting:*** Consider how work should impact the viewer. Design an artwork, installation or exhibition to achieve that impact. e.g., “*I wanted people to think about the stuff we buy; my art compares stuff to people to ask what matters more*.” (7-8.D.P.06)

**Responding:*** View works of historical or cultural significance. Consider why they were made and respond artistically in a way that incorporates a part of another culture. e.g., Artist: **Kathy Aoki: *Hello Kitty Monument Diorama*** (7-8.V.R.08)

**Connecting:*** Shift the lens of viewing historical artworks and artifacts to consider diverse perspectives. How does that change the meaning? e.g., Artist: **Fred Wilson: *Mining the Museum: An Installation***

(7-8.V.Co.10) |
| **High School Foundations** | • Push beyond initial possibilities by using a variety of open-ended strategies prompted and modeled by theteacher e.g., “I used 20 questions to brainstorm ideas.” | • Broaden perspectives for artwork topics by collecting and generating ideas, opinions, beliefs, and habits that are personally and/or culturally significant.e.g., “I made a list of what fascinates me about other cultures to use when I need a topic for an artwork.” | • Consider personal and cultural influences in response to multiple sources of information and interpretations related to selected ideas.e.g., “The resources made me wonder if everyone thinks about love the same way.” | • Draft artworks that connect personal, local, national, and global perspectives by exploring the various meanings of a single topic.e.g., “So, I was thinking about winds and what they mean for my yard, for our town, across the US, and all around the world.” | **Creating:*** Make works influenced by an artist from the global community, expanding on their concepts and visual qualities. e.g., Artist: **El Anatsui: *Proximately Series*** (F.V.Cr.01)

**Presenting:*** Propose an installation that transforms the experience of a space using elements such as lighting, sound, found objects, made objects, and raw materials. e.g., Artists: **Sarah Sze: *Triple Point;* James Turrell: *Aten Reign***(F.V.P.05)

**Responding:*** After learning about a particular art style, discuss elements in particular works that convey the style’s themes. e.g., Historical Surrealists: **Salvador Dali; Giorgio De Chirico; Jean Arp; Max Ernst**Contemporary Surrealists: **Julie Curtiss; Mary Reid Kelley; Nathaniel Mary Quinn** (F.V.R.08)

**Connecting:*** Find art styles that emerged in historical eras and locations and discuss ways their iconography is tied to the period. e.g., Artist: **Titus Kaphar: *Beyond the Myth of Benevolence*** (F.V.Co.11; Social Studies: USI.T5)
 |
| **High School Proficient** | • Challenge initial ideas with or without prompting, by engaging in open-ended strategies. .e.g., “My friend played “five whys” with me, asking “why” over and over about my decisions.” | • Consider how intended meaning changes or stays the same when work is seen in relationship with other artists’ ideas, opinions, beliefs, and habits. e.g., “I thought this was a new idea, but lots of people have worked with it!” | • Seek authentic resources with information and interpretations related to selected ideas; analyze their meaning in context of cultural/aesthetic styles.e.g., I realize that my race or gender may be affecting my thinking – what I like or don’t like.” | • Draft artworks and make informed revisions that address divergent perspectives in order to explore the meaning of a topic.e.g., “I worked with the idea of ‘home’ and showed it from four views: a person who lives on the street, a child, an undocumented immigrant, and a tourist from Japan." | **Creating:*** Plan and document the process for a unique, large scale or multi-step artwork that pursues an original approach to an idea. e.g., Artist:**Gabriel Orozco*: Yielding Stone*** (P.V.Cr.02)

**Presenting:*** Contribute to a themed art exhibit about a personally meaningful, contemporaneous topic. e.g., Create work for public display to raise awareness around a social justice issue of local, national, or global concern. (P.V.P.05)

**Responding:*** Compare and contrast how the properties of an artwork (e.g., scale, form, style, genre) influence the impact of the idea or meaning for the viewer. (P.V.R.08)

**Connecting:*** Recognize how ideas transfer between art and other subjects, such as social studies, science, and literature. e.g., Artist: **Kara Walker: *Silhouettes*** e.g., ***The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration; The National Memorial for Peace and Justice*** (P.V.Co.10)
 |
| **High School Advanced** | • Break conceived boundaries about big ideas using self- selected strategies e.g., “I made a list of ten ways cultures perceive beauty and used a spinner to choose when I worked with them in my collage.” | • Challenge the intended meaning of ideas, opinions, beliefs, and habits by viewing them through a variety of cultural, aesthetic, biased, and more or less privileged perspectives.e.g., “I looked at poverty from the cultural perspectives and aesthetics of Buddhism & Christianity.” | • Challenge and analyze ideas by seeking multiple interpretations of the topic’s meaning.e.g., “I looked at the idea of stereotypes in children’s books, advertising, Kerry James Marshall’s paintings, and characters on TV.” | • Resolve a work to impact viewers by making them think, using drafts and informed revisions to uncover layers of meaning.e.g., “The road is a metaphor for an opportunity, a journey, a boundary, and a barrier.” | **Creating:*** Transform connections to popular culture, art history, aesthetics, and personal style into works of art that exemplify those connections through original ideas. e.g., Artist: **Barbara Cleveland: *Performance Art. 2014*** (A.V.Cr.01)

**Presenting:*** Conceive and present art that engages the viewer in reflection and discourse around the meaning of the work. e.g., Artists: **Tanya Aguiñiga: *Metabolizing the Border*; Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: *Border Tuner;* Postcommodity: *Repellent FenceAr*t2**ason (A.V.P.06)

**Responding:*** When viewing and generating art, consider why particular themes or ideas resonate with you or particular audiences. e.g., “*Why do your ideas of work around the theme of women differ from someone else’s*?”e.g., Artists: **Janine Antoni: *Lick and Lather Series;* Mary Cassatt** (A.V.R.09)

**Connecting:*** View and create contemporary art in response to historical and cultural contexts that influence meaning. e.g., Artist: **Samuel Bak** (A.V.Co.11)
 |

# Appendix: Visual Arts—Selected Short List of Resources for Teachers

*This list of resources was curated with the intent of providing teachers with more understanding of how the outlined skills progressions may be taught and/or observed within visual art classrooms. They do not correlate specifically with either skills progression because the two progressions happen simultaneously within art and artmaking.*

*The suggested artists and works in this document were taken from these books: Teaching Contemporary Art with Young People: Themes in Art for K-12 classrooms, Integrating the Visual Arts Across the Curriculum, and Artmaking, Play and Meaning Making. The remaining resources support underlying values, beliefs, and techniques expressed in the documents.*

To access the examples of artists and their works outlined in the **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** column, it is suggested that teachers seek out websites that contain highly reputable background and reference sources. This includes official artist sites, artist foundation sites (e.g., [Andy Warhol Foundation](https://warholfoundation.org/), [Joan Mitchell Foundation](https://www.joanmitchellfoundation.org/)), art galleries (e.g., [Alexander Gray Associates](https://www.alexandergray.com/gallery), [Eli Klein](http://www.galleryek.com/)), museum sites (e.g., [National American Art Gallery](https://americanart.si.edu/), [Tate Modern](https://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern)), Art Fair Archives (e.g., [Venice Biennale](https://www.labiennale.org/en), [Documenta](https://www.documenta.de/en/about#16_documenta_ggmbh)), non-profit arts organization sites (e.g., [Art21.org](https://art21.org/), [NAEA](https://www.arteducators.org/)), and art-related articles and online journals (e.g., [Hyperallergic](https://hyperallergic.com/), [Big Red & Shiny](https://bigredandshiny.org/), [Art Forum](https://www.artforum.com/), [Juxtapoz](https://www.juxtapoz.com/)).

Barry, L. (2017). *One! Hundred! Demons!* Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly.

Barry, L. (2014). *Syllabus: Notes from an accidental professor.* Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly.

Barry, L. (2008). *What It Is*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly.

Desai, D., Hamlin, J., & Mattson, R. (2009). *History as art, art as history: Contemporary art and social studies education.* New York: Routledge.

Dewhurst, M. (2021). *Engaging youth in critical arts pedagogies and creative research for social justice: Opportunities and challenges of arts-based work and research with young people*. New York: Routledge.

Dewhurst, M. (2014). *Social justice art: A framework for activist art pedagogy.* Boston: Harvard Education Press.

Douglas, K., & Jaquith, D., (2018). *Engaging learners through art making: Choice-based art education in the classroom (TAB), 2nd Edition*. New York: Teachers College.

Hafeli, M. (2014). *Exploring studio materials: Teaching creative art making to children*. New York: Oxford.

Hara, K. (2015). *Ex-formation.* Zurich, Lars Müller.

Harmon, K. (2009). *The map as art: Contemporary artists explore cartography*. New York: Princeton Architectural.

Hogan, J., Hetland, L., Jaquith, D., & Winner, E. (2018). *Studio thinking from the start: The K-8 art educator’s handbook*. New York: Teachers College.

Kimbell, R. A., Stables, K., Wheeler, A. D., Wozniak, A. V., Kelly A. V., (1991).). *The Assessment of Performance in Design and Technology,* Schools Examinations and Assessment Council, HMSO, London, UK

Lowenfeld, V. (1987). *Creative and mental growth, 8th Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Marshall, J., Stewart, C., & Thulson, A. (2021). *Teaching contemporary art with young people: Themes in art for K-12 classrooms*. New York: Teachers College.

Marshall, J. (2019). *Integrating the visual arts across the curriculum: An elementary and middle school guide*. New York: Teachers College.

Mayer, R. (1991). *The artist’s handbook of materials and techniques, 5th Ed*. New York: Viking.

O’Donnel Wicklung Pigozzi & Peterson, Architects Inc., VS Furniture, & Mau, B. (2010). *The third teacher: 79 ways you can use design to transform teaching learning*. New York: Abrams.

Sheridan, K., Veenema, S., Winner, E., & Hetland, L. (2022). *Studio thinking 3: The real benefits of visual arts education*. New York: Teachers College.

Sobel, D. (2008). *Childhood and nature: Design principles for educators*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Sobel, D. (1998). *Mapmaking with children: Sense of place education for the elementary years*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Walker, S. (2021). *Art making, play, and meaning making*. Worcester, MA: Davis.

Walker, S. (2001). *Teaching meaning in art-making*. Worcester, MA: Davis.

1. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. *Arts Curriculum Framework, 2019*, p. 13 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Bonis, Ferenc, ed. *The Selected Writings of Zoltán Kodály*. NY: Boosey and Hawkes, 1974, p. 122 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. *Arts Curriculum Framework, 2019*, p. 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. IBID, pp. 19-20 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. Hans, James (1981), *The Play of the World*, Amherst: Univ of Massachusetts [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2015), *Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten* [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. #  Mitroff Silvers, Dana (2016), *Why play is essential to the design-thinking process.* https://designthinkingformuseums.net/2016/10/31/why-play-is-essential-to-the-design-thinking-process/amp/

 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. Shipwright (ships and boats), Wheelwright (wooden wheels), Wainwright (carts and wagons), and Arkwright (chests & boxes) are some other examples of “wright” (work) professions in addition to Playwright [↑](#endnote-ref-9)