



Lesson
4

Southern Utah Landscapes: The Arches Horizon Line, Foreground, Background

LESSON OVERVIEW/OBJECTIVES

This lesson introduces the art of drawing landscapes by exploring Southern Utah Landscape icons, the Arches. Students will learn about the horizon line, the foreground and background of landscape images. By learning how arches are formed, students will incorporate new art skills with geographic information to create their own landscape drawing of an arch located in the Arches National Park in Utah.

KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO VISUAL ARTS CORE CURRICULUM:

Based on Utah State Visual Arts Core Curriculum Requirements (3rd Grade)

Standard 1 (Making): The student will explore and refine the application of media, techniques, and artistic processes.

Objective 1: Explore a variety of art materials while learning new techniques and processes.

- a. Practice using skills for beginning drawings.
- b. Use simplified forms, such as cones, spheres, and cubes, to begin drawing more complex form.
- e. Create the appearance of depth by drawing distant objects smaller and with less detail than objects in the foreground.
- f. Establish more natural size relationships among objects in drawings.

Objective 3: Handle art materials in a safe and responsible manner.

- a. Ventilate the room to avoid inhaling fumes from art materials.
- b. Dispose and/or recycle waste art materials properly.
- c. Clean and put back to order art making areas after projects.
- d. Respect other students' artworks as well as one's own.

Standard 2 (Perceiving): The student will analyze, reflect on, and apply the structures of art.

Objective 1: Analyze and reflect on works of art by their elements and principles

- a. Determine how artists create dominance in their work; e.g., size, repetition, and contrast.

Objective 2: Create works of art using the elements and principles.

- a. Identify dominant elements in significant works of art.
- b. Group some significant works of art by a common element or visual characteristic.
- c. Discover how an artist has thoughtfully used all of the space within an artwork.
- d. Create a work of art that uses all of the space on the paper.
- e. Create a work of art that uses contrast to create a focal point. Use that to convey the most important idea or part of the work.

Standard 3 (Expressing):The student will choose and evaluate artistic subject matter, themes, symbols, ideas, meanings, and purposes.

Objective 1: Explore possible content and purposes in significant works of art

- a. Explain possible meanings or interpretations of some significant works of art.

Objective 2: Discuss, evaluate, and choose symbols, ideas, subject matter, meanings, and purposes for their own artworks.

- a. Group significant works of art according to theme or subject matter.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

Visual Arts

- Learn skills to draw landscapes - introduction to perspective drawing.
- Learn about creating distance by understanding foreground and background.
- Understand space and distance.
- Understand and use a horizon line.
- Draw rock formations by understanding how the arches were formed.
- Understand how to apply pastels and blend to form new colors.
- Create a harmonious color palette inspired by the naturally occurring elements at Aches National Park

SUPPLIES

- 12" x 18" light brown paper or white paper
- Black oil pastel
- Colored chalk pastels or oil pastels
- Hairspray or chalk fixative
- Newspaper
- Baby wipes or damp kitchen sponges
- Photographs of arches
- Images of artist renditions of the arches as well as Southern Utah landscapes.
- White board to show examples and to draw samples.

ABOUT THE ARCHES AT ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

Arches National Park has the densest concentration of natural stone arches in the world. There are over 2,000 documented arches in the park, ranging from sliver-thin cracks to spans greater than 300 feet (97 m). Why did so many arches form?

First, you the right kinds of rock.

Sandstone is made of grains of sand cemented together by minerals, but not all sandstone is the same. The Entrada Sandstone was once a massive desert, full of shifting dunes of fine-grained sand. The grains are nearly spherical so, when packed together, they formed a rock that is very porous (full of tiny spaces).

In contrast, the Carmel layer just beneath the Entrada contains a mix of sand and clay. Clay particles are much smaller than sand grains; a lot of them can pack together and fill in gaps between the sand grains, making the rock denser and less porous than a purer sandstone.

Crack it into parallel lines.

Deep beneath the surface lies a thick layer of salts. Squeezed by the tons of rock above it, the salt flowed and bulged upward, creating long domes. The rock layers covering these domes were forced to crack, like the surface of freshly-baked bread, into a series of more-or-less parallel lines.

Next, add the right amount of rain.

On average, the park receives 8-10 inches (18-23 cm) of precipitation a year. That might not sound like much, but it's enough to keep the engines of erosion working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Drops of rainwater soak into the porous Entrada sandstone easily and then slowly dissolve the calcite bonding the sand together – in other words, rotting the rock from the inside out. Water puddles just above the denser Carmel layer where it erodes a cavity, like food trapped between your teeth. In winter, water trapped between the two layers expands when it freezes and pries the rock apart.

If the park received too much precipitation, the sandstone could erode so quickly that arches might not have time to form. If it never rained here, the engines of erosion would stop.

Make sure your rocks don't rock & roll.

Luckily, earthquakes are rare in this area. If the ground shook often, these massive outdoor rock sculptures would splinter and collapse. The fact that over 2,000 still stand, waiting for visitors to discover them, tells us this area has been rather geologically stable for at least 50,000 years.

Lastly, pick the right time to visit.

The rock layers visible in the park today were once buried by over a mile of other rock that had to erode first to expose what lied beneath. Visitors one million years ago might have seen an endless flat plain dotted with vegetation. Imagine a visit 100,000 years in the future, when the Entrada and Carmel layers have fully worn away. What new rock shapes might you discover then?

Source: [nps.gov/about arches national park](https://www.nps.gov/about-arches-national-park)

VOCABULARY

Arch: An arch is a curved structure that spans a space and may or may not support weight above it.

Horizon Line: In art, the horizon line (also called eye level) marks the point where the sky meets the land or water below. It represents the viewer's eye level. You can see the top of an object if it is below eye level, below the horizon line. If an object is above eye level, above the horizon line, you can not see its top. The horizon line helps to put objects in a painting or drawing in their proper positions, and makes them appear realistic. Artists use the horizon line to make objects in paintings proportionate, and to set the stage for outdoor and landscape paintings.

Foreground: The foreground is what looks like the closest thing to you. It's in front of everything else in the picture, and it has the most detail.

Background: The area of an artwork that appears farthest away from the viewer; also, the area against which a figure or scene is placed.

Perspective: Method of graphically depicting three-dimensional objects and spatial relationships on a two-dimensional plane.

Hoodoo: A hoodoo is a tall, skinny rock formation caused by erosion. Some rock pieces are hard and some are soft, causing them to erode differently. The main characteristic of a hoodoo is the variable thickness of the spire which gives it a "totem" pole look. The rock at the very top is the hardest.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Before beginning the lesson, show some pictures of the arches in Arches National Park in Utah. Also show some artist renditions of arches, hoodoos and Southern Utah landscapes. Point out the colors that are found in this area such as the brown and red color palettes. Use these photos and artist renderings to illustrate and explain the ideas of horizon line, foreground and background.

To draw naturally occurring arches one needs to understand that these rocks are formed by the environment. At Arches National Park, the rocks and archways are formed by water, ice, extreme temperature and millions of years. Thus their shapes are rugged, always varied and varying.

Notice that in the Arches National Park, in addition to rocks, there are plants, trees and wildlife. All of it is varied and beautiful. There are such things as Pinyon pines, cactus, and Juniper Trees.

Lesson

- Start by placing newspaper and a sheet of brown or white paper at each student's place. Additionally have black and color pastels available.
- After showing photographs of arches and rock formations, draw a horizon line on the white board. Show how to draw arches by breaking down the images into square and rectangle shapes (see attached sample). As you draw you can talk about the geologic formations of arches.
- Introduce the foreground by drawing rocks and plants large and upclose.
- Identify the background by drawing the mountains etc. smaller to reflect distance and proportion.
- Have students draw their picture using either pencil first, or black pastel. If pencil is used, have students go over the pencil with the black pastel.

Lesson continued

- Once their drawing is outlined, they are ready for the pastels.
- The idea with pastels is to color in an area and using their fingers, they can spread the color around. Encourage students to color up to the outline lines. To blend colors, apply one layer and smooth out, then add the next color on top. Smooth with finger to achieve blending.
- If time permits, draw the students' attention to some of the sample artworks to get ideas of how to color in their work.
- After the drawing is colored, have the students use the black oil pastel to outline everything again. The black brings everything back into focus and makes the colors pop.
- With the drawing on the newspaper, either spray the artwork to prevent smudging and/or cover the artwork with news paper until a time when it can be sprayed.
- Have the students share their artwork and help them discuss their horizon line, background and foreground choices.

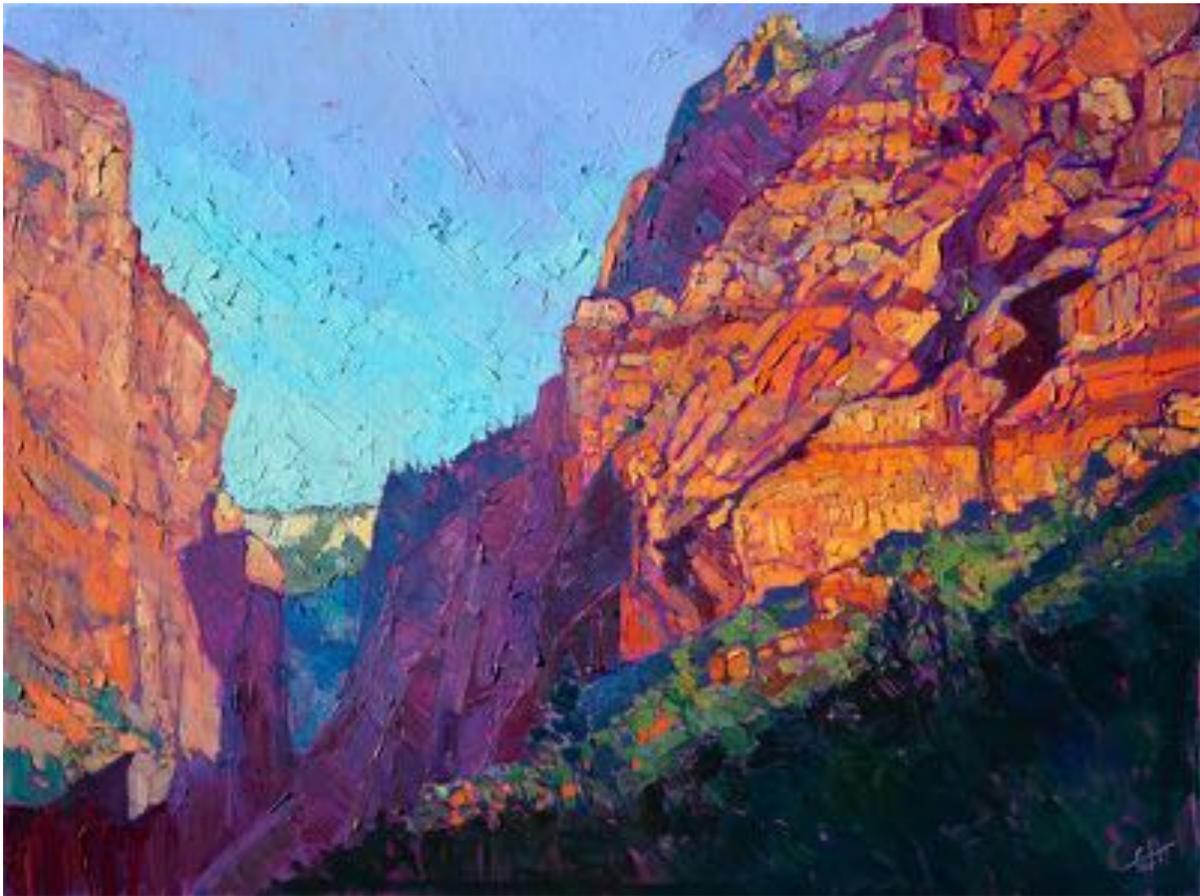
Additional Resources:

- For a vast array of resources about arches, go to www.nps.gov/archesnationalpark/curriculum

Images:



Larisa Aukon



Erin Hanson



Sven Birger Sandzen



Sample drawing from image into shapes that are recognizable and can be colored independently

