

Animal Patterns

Blue Savanna by Dahlov Ipcar



Blue Savanna, 1978

Dahlov Ipcar (United States, 1917–2017)

Oil on canvas, 36 1/16 x 50 1/4 inches

THEMES

- Animals
- Pattern
- Movement
- The Real and the Imaginary

Content Areas and Standards Met

What Maine Ed Standards will this lesson meet?

What content areas does this lesson connect to?

MATH

Geometric Reasoning

GR.C.1 Identify, describe, analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes based on their attributes.

VISUAL ARTS

A2. Elements of Art and Principles of Design

Students identify and describe features of composition

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES

Social awareness: Perspective taking, empathy

Relationship skills: Communication and active listening, social engagement

Responsible decision-making: Reflecting

Objective

What will students do/experience/think about, etc? What is the overall goal of the lesson plan?:

Students will practice close looking and observation skills to examine Ipcar's *Blue Savanna*

Students will utilize the power of imagination to put themselves in the mind of an animal in the painting (Grades PK-2)

Students will explore the use of pattern in the painting to create their own tessellations (Grades 3-5)

Essential Question

What is the big question that this lesson plan seeks to explore or have students grapple with? Some activity guides may have similar essential questions:

How does imagination help us explore artwork?

What is this artist trying to tell us about the natural world?

How do artists use pattern?



Dahlov Ipcar (United States, 1917–2017)
Blue Savanna, 1978
Oil on canvas, 36 1/16 x 50 1/4 inches
Gift of the artist, 1987.58
Image courtesy of Pilar Digital imaging

Materials Needed

- Pencil or writing utensil (all)
- Paper or something to write on (all; 3-5 should be at least 8"x10")
- Access to a computer screen where you can see the image (all)
- Post-it note or square piece of paper (3-5)
- Scissors (3-5)
- Tape (3-5)
- Markers (optional 3-5)
- Colored pencils (optional 3-5)

Instructions:

Look

Let's start by just looking at this image. Spend about 1 minute silently looking. You can look from top to bottom, side to side, zoom in and zoom out. Take this minute to just look.

Respond

After you have had some time to look, think to yourself:

- What shapes am I seeing?
- What colors do I see?
- What types of lines do I see?
- This painting is filled with animals—what animals do I see?
- What am I seeing in the painting that helps me identify the animals I find?

Here are some ways to respond, or share your answers:

- Say your ideas out loud
- Share your ideas with someone in your home or with your classmates or group members
- Maybe there is another way you can share that your teacher told you about*

**Teacher's note: Use Google Classroom or another online platform where you could set up a chat function or a message board where students could share their responses. Find the way to respond that works best for you and your students.*

Learn

Use this section to learn more about the artist, the process, and the artwork.

Dahlov Ipcar lived in Maine and wrote many children’s books—maybe you have read one! She loved using her imagination to create artworks of animals and patterns.

Many of the animals in this painting live in different places in Africa, but Ipcar never traveled to Africa. She also created this artwork in a time without internet and did not look at photographs of these animals to know what they looked like.

She used her childhood experience of seeing these animals in the zoo in New York! She also used her imagination to think of and remember what these animals look like.

These animals look realistic, or how they would look in real life, and they also have some elements of Ipcar’s imagination sprinkled in.

Did you also notice the environment that the animals are in? Is this the type of environment you think these animals would live in? Ipcar loved using patterns and shapes to create her artwork and she was inspired by the natural patterns in nature to create her own patterns.



Dahlov Ipcar photo by Winky Lewis

“In both my painting and writing I create worlds of my imagination. I transform ordinary reality into a reality that has special meaning to me. I hope it will also have special meaning to others.”
—Dahlov Ipcar

Act

Animal Investigation (PK-2)

We are going to use our imaginations to pretend we are some of the animals in this painting.

Find one animal in this painting that you really like. Give this animal a name.

What sound would this animal make? Make that sound out loud!

How would this animal feel? Rough, soft, fuzzy...? Think of a describing word.

Look at the animal in the painting that you chose and notice how that animal is standing or sitting or lying. Where are its paws/arms/legs? Copy the pose that your animal is doing.

Make the sound that your animal might make again!

Find two animals that are close by each other in the painting. Create a dialogue between these animals.

Ask yourself:

What are they saying to each other?

What would they each like to do?

How do they feel about each other (are they friends or predator and prey)?

Patterns and Tessellations (3-5)

Let's look at the patterns in this artwork. What are patterns? What patterns do you see in this artwork?

Did you notice that the animals seem to be separated by different shapes that fit together, sort of like a puzzle? Each of the shapes fits together to create the larger rectangle shape of the whole painting. It almost resembles looking through a kaleidoscope.

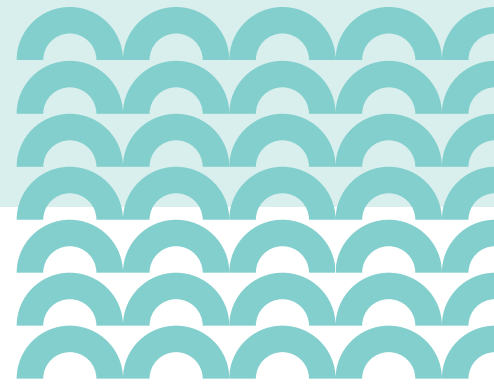
We are also going to create a repeating pattern, but we are going to create a repeating pattern using the same shape without any gaps, also known as tessellations.

1. Gather your materials (scissors, tape, square paper/sticky note, larger paper, and pencil)
2. Take your pencil and draw a simple shape on two sides of the square paper/sticky note
3. Carefully cut out one shape on one side and slide it to the opposite side, tape it in place
4. Carefully cut out the other shape and slide it to the opposite side, tape it in place)
5. This will be your template or starting shape!
6. Place your template anywhere on the larger blank paper and trace around it using your pencil
7. Then, place the template right next to where you just drew so that it fits together without any gaps and trace it

Repeat this step until the paper is covered

OPTIONAL: You can color the shapes in using any materials you'd like (colored pencils, markers, paint, crayons).

Or try to make the shapes into an animal! What animal does your shape resemble? Or is it an imaginary animal that you create? Give the shape some eyes, a mouth, and other animal features, like fur, ears, whiskers, or a tail. It's up to you and your imagination!



Reflect and Share

Let's reflect on or think about what we just did.

What was fun for you about this activity?

What did you notice about the artwork that you really liked?

What animal would you add to the painting?

If you could do the activity again, what might you do differently?

Share your thoughts with the PMA! Or, share your artwork with others in your home or class.

Resources

stemactivitiesforkids.com/2019/10/08/create-a-simple-tessellation

The World of Dahlov Ipcar www.dahlovipcarart.com



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