Escher Lizard with Template
Home School Version
Fine Artists™ Lesson

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Overview: This lesson will introduce several concepts of lines and drawing. The famous artist, Maurits Cornelis Escher will inspire artists to create two lizards that connect in an unusual way. The concept is called tessellation which Escher perfected in his artwork. Mature artists may be interested in researching tessellations. Young artists can just enjoy the process using the Escher template provided. Artists will complete their lesson with a variety of lines. May also incorporate the concepts of warm and cool colors on the color wheel.

Art Supplies:
Preprinted lizard for younger artists, pre-cut by adult.
White paper, at least 10 X 11 inches for composition
Color markers (including black) older artists may use sharpie
Scissors (to cut template)
Pencil and magic eraser
Escher prints for inspiration (please google examples, including Day and Night by Escher)

Escher was born on June 17, 1898 in Leewarden, Holland. His father was an engineer. Escher’s Dad encouraged his son to learn carpentry. Though Escher showed an interest and talent for drawing as a young boy, his parents encouraged him to become an architect, a practical application of design. His passion, however, continued to be drawing and graphic art.

We see in his art an understanding of how things are built. He assembles objects together that show a unique vision of how shapes and objects interrelate. Space and volume are created that appears to be 3 dimensional, though on a 2 D surface. He twists shapes into objects with his drawing ability and imagination. There is often a sense of humor and many visual puzzles. By 1950 his art was of great interest to many scientists. It has been said that his work was a bridge between science and art. Escher liked math and geometry, which he used in his artwork.
Escher died in 1972 at the age of 73. Day and Night was completed in 1937. It is a woodcut. You can see it at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.

Look at artwork - Ask and answer questions - Cite your reasons - Explain and elaborate

- What sort of shapes do you notice first?
- Do the shapes overlap?
- Is there a pattern? Puzzle? Narrative?
- Does this make you think of anything besides a design?

Process:

Discuss words that describe line:

Curvy ♦ Fat ♦ Thin ♦ Horizontal ♦ Vertical ♦ Slanted ♦ Pattern
Begin by cutting out just one of the lizard shapes in the template. It is OK if the cutting is imperfect—even if a leg is cut—will still work. Please cut template for young artists. It does not matter if black or white lizard is used.

1. Lay one template on the white paper (background) leave enough room for a second lizard. Begin by lightly tracing one of the lizards in pencil.

2. Select the warm color markers: orange, red and yellow. Fill in one lizard with patterns and designs BUT only use the warm colors. (Young artists will be confused with two lizards. Outline one at a time and fill in with color marker, one at a time)

3. Trace the second lizard in pencil, so that it fits into the first lizard traced. Show how to do this. It is a visual puzzle some artists will not see. Only one side of second lizard needs to be traced.

4. Select the cool colors: blue, green and purple. Fill in the other lizard using patterns and designs but only using the cool colors selected.

Outline both lizards with black when completed.
Experienced artists may use sharpie
Option: add repeating shapes or outline more lizards in negative space. Embellish each with claws, tongues etc.

Option: warm colors on one; cool colors on the other.

A template is provided on page 5.
Advanced Example:

This example uses Escher template but morphs it and adds additional lizards. Sharpie only but up to artist to add color etc.
TEMPLATE: Cut out one and use for both lizards.
Student Samples: