

# The Great Dot Detective: An Adventure in Pointillism with Georges Seurat

## Materials Needed:

- **For Learning:** A computer/tablet for a short video, or a children's book about Georges Seurat (e.g., "Sunday with Seurat" by Julie Merberg).
  - **For the Art Project:**
    - Heavy paper or cardstock (watercolor paper works well).
    - A pencil with an eraser.
    - Washable tempera or acrylic paints in primary colors (red, yellow, blue) plus white and black.
    - A paint palette or a paper plate.
    - Cotton swabs (Q-tips) - these are perfect for making dots!
    - Paper towels and a small cup of water for cleanup.
    - Optional: An old shirt or smock to protect clothing.
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## Lesson Plan

**Subject:** Art History & Studio Art

**Student:** Mia (Age 7)

**Time Allotment:** 60-75 minutes (flexible)

### 1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Mia will be able to:

- Identify Georges Seurat as the artist famous for Pointillism.
- Explain in her own words that Pointillism is a technique of painting with tiny dots of color.
- Create an original piece of artwork using the Pointillism technique to fill in a simple shape or scene.
- Demonstrate how placing dots of two different primary colors next to each other can create the look of a secondary color from a distance.

### 2. Lesson Activities & Procedure

#### Part 1: The Mystery of the Dots (10-15 minutes)

1. **Become a Dot Detective:** Start by saying, "Mia, today we're going to be art detectives! Our mission is to solve the mystery of a painter who didn't use brushstrokes. He used thousands and thousands of tiny dots! His name was Georges Seurat."
  2. **Meet the Artist:** Watch a short, engaging video about Seurat (like a "Art with Mati and Dada" episode on Seurat) or read a children's book about him. Focus on these key ideas:
    - He lived a long time ago in France.
    - He invented a new way to paint called **Pointillism**.
    - He used pure, unmixed colors.
    - He believed that if you put tiny dots of different colors next to each other, your eye mixes them together when you stand back. Let's test it!
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3. **The Eye-Mixing Trick:** Look closely at a picture of his most famous painting, "*A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*." First, look at it from far away. Ask, "What colors do you see in the grass?" (She'll likely say green). Now, zoom in very close or get close to the screen. Ask, "Now what colors do you see? Are there just green dots, or do you see yellow and blue dots making the green?" This is the "Aha!" moment where she sees the trick.

#### Part 2: Detective Training - Dot Practice (10 minutes)

1. **Set up the Art Station:** Prepare the paints on the palette, the paper, water, and cotton swabs.
2. **The Dot Warm-Up:** On a spare piece of paper, practice making dots. Dip a Q-tip into a paint color and press it gently onto the paper. Try making big dots, small dots, dots that are close together, and dots that are far apart.
3. **Color-Mixing Experiment:** Let's test Seurat's theory!
  - Make a small patch of yellow dots. Right next to them (and even overlapping a little), make a patch of red dots. Now, hold the paper far away or squint your eyes. Ask, "What color does it look like now?" (Orange!)
  - Try it again with yellow and blue dots to make green, and blue and red dots to make purple. Celebrate the discovery!

#### Part 3: The Main Mission - Create a Pointillism Masterpiece (30-40 minutes)

1. **Choose Your Subject:** Ask Mia to lightly sketch a simple design on her heavy paper. Give her choices to encourage ownership. Good ideas for a first project include:
  - A piece of fruit (an apple or a bunch of grapes)
  - A big, colorful balloon
  - A simple landscape with a sun and a hill
  - A butterfly or a flowerThe key is to have large, simple shapes to fill in.
2. **Start Dotting!:** Using the Q-tips, begin filling in the drawing with dots. Encourage her to think like Seurat.
  - "To make the green leaves on your apple, what two colors should you use?" (Yellow and blue).
  - "To make a shadow, you can add a few blue or even black dots, or just put your dots farther apart."
  - Remind her not to smudge, but to dot, dot, dot! It's okay if it feels slow; that was part of Seurat's process.
3. **Creative Freedom:** Let Mia choose her own colors and fill in the background. The goal is creativity and application of the technique, not a perfect replica. Let her experiment!

#### Part 4: The Gallery Opening (5 minutes)

1. **Sign the Artwork:** Every great artist signs their work!
2. **Host an Art Show:** Find a special place to display her finished piece. Do a mini "gallery walk." Step up close to see the individual dots, then step far back to see how the colors blend together.
3. **Review the Mission:** Ask, "Mia, the Dot Detective, can you tell me the secret name for painting with dots?" (Pointillism). "And who was the artist who invented it?" (Georges Seurat). Congratulate her on a successful mission!

### 3. Differentiation and Adaptation (For Mia)

- **For a Faster Pace:** If Mia is getting impatient with the tiny dots, suggest using the eraser end of a pencil to make slightly larger, uniform dots. This can speed up the process while still teaching

the concept.

- **For an Extra Challenge:** If Mia masters the technique quickly, challenge her to create a picture with a shadow. For example, if she paints a balloon, ask her to use darker colors (like blue and purple dots) on one side to make it look round.
- **For Fine Motor Support:** If using a Q-tip is tricky, she can also use her fingertip to make the dots. This provides a great sensory experience as well.

#### 4. Assessment (Informal)

- **Verbal Check-in:** Listen to Mia's explanation of Pointillism during the "Gallery Opening." Is she able to describe it in her own words?
- **Observation:** Watch as she works. Is she intentionally placing dots of different colors next to each other to create a new color?
- **The Final Product:** The completed artwork itself serves as the main assessment. Does it demonstrate an understanding and application of the dot technique? The focus is on the process and technique, not on the perfection of the final image.