

Spooky Silhouettes: A Halloween Lesson in Color and Line

Materials Needed:

- Heavy paper (watercolor paper or mixed-media paper works best, 2-3 sheets)
- Watercolor paints or watered-down acrylic paints in fall/spooky colors (e.g., yellow, orange, red, purple, blue, black)
- A medium and a small paintbrush
- A cup of water for rinsing brushes
- Paper towels
- A fine-point and a medium-point black permanent marker (like a Sharpie) OR black acrylic paint and a fine-detail brush
- Pencil and eraser
- (Optional) Coarse salt for creating a starry texture
- (Optional) White paint or a white gel pen for details

Lesson Plan

1. Learning Objectives (Goals for Today)

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

- Use **warm** (red, orange, yellow) or **cool** (blue, purple) colors to create a moody, blended background that shows emotion.
- Identify and draw different types of **lines** (jagged, curvy, thick, thin) to create a spooky silhouette.
- Combine color and line to create a finished piece of Halloween art that expresses a specific mood (e.g., mysterious, scary, eerie).
- Explain your artistic choices and how they contribute to the overall feeling of your artwork.

2. Introduction & Warm-Up: What Makes Art Spooky? (15 minutes)

1. **Discussion:** Let's look at a few examples of spooky art online (search for "Halloween silhouette art" or "Tim Burton art style"). What do you notice? Pay attention to the colors. Are they bright and happy or dark and mysterious? Look at the lines. Are the trees drawn with smooth, straight lines or jagged, twisted ones?
2. **Line Practice:** On a scrap piece of paper, let's do a quick "line emotion" drill. I'll call out a feeling, and you draw a line that represents it.
 - "Angry" (probably a sharp, jagged line)
 - "Calm" (maybe a gentle, wavy line)
 - "Scared" (a shaky, thin line?)
 - "Spooky" (what would a spooky line look like? Twisted, gnarled, broken?)

This exercise shows how simple lines can create powerful feelings, which we will use in our main project.

3. Part 1: Creating a Moody Background with Color (25 minutes)

Now, let's create the setting for our spooky scene! We are going to paint a background that looks like a sunset or a night sky.

1. **Choose Your Mood:** Do you want a fiery, intense "haunted sunset" or a cool, mysterious

"eerie night"?

- For the **sunset**, pick 2-3 warm colors (yellow, orange, red, pink).
 - For the **night sky**, pick 2-3 cool colors (blue, purple, dark magenta).
2. **Wet-on-Wet Technique:** Lightly brush a thin, even layer of clean water over your entire sheet of heavy paper. This will help the colors blend together smoothly.
 3. **Apply Color:** Dip your medium brush into your first color and paint a section of the paper. While it's still wet, clean your brush and add your next color right beside the first one. Watch them bleed and blend together! Cover the whole page. Don't overthink it; the goal is a beautiful, blended wash of color.
 4. **(Optional) Texture Trick:** While the paint is still wet, sprinkle a little coarse salt onto the paper. As it dries, the salt will soak up the paint and leave behind a cool, starry or crystallized texture.
 5. **Set it aside to dry completely.** This is very important! We can't draw on it until it's 100% dry.

4. Part 2: Designing a Spooky Silhouette with Line (20 minutes)

While your background dries, we'll design the main event. A silhouette is the dark shape and outline of someone or something visible against a lighter background.

1. **Brainstorm:** What makes a classic Halloween scene? Think about things with interesting and recognizable shapes.
 - A gnarled, leafless tree with twisted branches.
 - A haunted house on a crooked hill.
 - A witch on a broomstick, a black cat, or flying bats.
 - A rickety fence or a creepy gravestone.
2. **Sketch Your Ideas:** On a separate piece of paper, use your pencil to sketch out your ideas. Focus only on the **outline**. Remember our line warm-up! Use jagged lines for a scary tree, curvy lines for rolling hills, and sharp points for a fence. Think about how the **character of your line** can tell a story.
3. **Refine Your Best Idea:** Choose your favorite sketch and finalize the design. Make sure it's bold and clear.

5. Part 3: Putting It All Together! (30 minutes)

Now it's time for the magic to happen. Your colorful background should be dry. (If you used salt, gently brush it off over a trash can first.)

1. **Transfer Your Design:** Lightly sketch your silhouette design with a pencil onto your painted background. Don't press too hard. Place it in a way that looks balanced and interesting. Maybe your tree is off to one side, or your haunted house sits at the bottom.
2. **Ink the Outline:** Using your black permanent marker or fine-detail brush with black paint, carefully trace the outline of your design. Take your time to get those spooky lines just right.
3. **Fill It In:** Fill in the entire silhouette with your black marker or paint. The goal is a solid, dark shape. The contrast between the vibrant background and the stark black silhouette is what makes this project so striking!
4. **(Optional) Add Details:** Once the black is dry, you can use a white gel pen or a tiny bit of white paint to add a few highlights, like a glowing window in the haunted house, stars in the sky, or a moon. Less is more!

6. Reflection & Share (10 minutes)

Let's look at your amazing work! Tell me about it:

- What mood or feeling were you trying to create with your color choices?
- Show me one part where you used a specific type of line to make something look extra spooky.

Why did you choose that line?

- What is your favorite part of your artwork and why?
- What story does your picture tell?

Differentiation (Making it Easier or More Challenging)

- **For Support:** If drawing a silhouette is tricky, we can find and print a simple template (like a bat or cat shape) to trace. You can also focus on just one element, like a single spooky tree.
- **For a Challenge:** Create a more complex scene with a foreground, middle ground, and background. For example, add a crooked fence in the front (foreground) and tiny bats flying in the distance (background). You could also try a "negative space" silhouette, where you paint the object and fill the background around it with black.