Lesson Plan: The Art Alchemist's Color Lab

Subject: Visual Arts (Acrylic Painting)

Grade Level: Ages 8-11 (approx. 3rd-5th grade)

Time Allotment: 60-90 minutes

Materials Needed

- Acrylic paints (at least Red, Yellow, Blue, White, and Black)
- Canvas, canvas board, or heavy art paper (e.g., watercolor paper)
- Paint brushes in various sizes
- A palette (a paper plate or plastic lid works well)
- A cup of water for rinsing brushes
- Paper towels or an old rag for blotting brushes
- Optional: An apron or old shirt to protect clothing
- Optional for Differentiation: Pre-drawn simple landscape outline, color wheel chart

Learning Objectives

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

- Define and identify hue, tint, and shade.
- Mix a variety of tints by adding white to a color (hue).
- Mix a variety of shades by adding black to a color (hue).
- Apply these new colors to create a painting with depth and variety.

Lesson Structure

Part 1: Introduction - The Color Scientist (10 minutes)

Hook

"Have you ever wondered how an artist can paint a whole giant picture with a million different colors, but they only start with a few tubes of paint? It seems like magic, right? Well, today, you're not just an artist, you're a *Color Scientist*! We're going to learn the secret formulas to create almost any color you can imagine."

State Objectives

"Our mission in the Color Lab today is to master three secret color-mixing powers. We will learn to create:

- **Hues:** This is just the fancy word for a pure color, like red, yellow, or blue.
- **Tints:** These are lighter, pastel versions of a color.
- **Shades:** These are darker, deeper versions of a color.

By the end, you'll use your new powers to paint a beautiful landscape filled with a whole range of

amazing colors you mixed yourself!"

Part 2: Body - The Color Lab Experiments (35-50 minutes)

I Do: Instructor's Secret Formula Demonstration (10 minutes)

Talking Points: "Watch me carefully as I show you the first secret formulas. Here on my palette, I have my main colors, my **hues**. Let's start with blue."

1. "First, I'll put a dab of pure blue on my palette. This is our starting hue."
2. "Now, for the first formula: creating a **tint**. A tint is just a color plus white. Think of it like adding a little milk to juice—it makes it lighter and creamier. I'll take a tiny bit of white paint on my brush and mix it into the blue. See how it becomes a lighter, sky blue? The more white I add, the lighter my tint gets!"
3. "Next, the second formula: creating a **shade**. A shade is a color plus black. This makes the color darker, like a shadow. I'll take a new dab of blue. Now, I'll add the tiniest speck of black—black is very powerful!—and mix it in. Look, now we have a deep, dark navy blue. This is a shade of blue."
4. "So, the secret is simple: **Hue + White = Tint**. **Hue + Black = Shade**."

We Do: Guided Color Mixing Practice (10 minutes)

Instructions: "Alright, your turn to be the scientist! Let's mix some colors together. On your palette, squeeze out a small blob of red, yellow, and blue, with plenty of space between them. Also add a larger blob of white and a small blob of black."

- "First, let's make tints of red. Take some red, and on a clean spot on your palette, mix in a tiny bit of white. What color did you get? (Pink!) Now, add a little more white to that pink. What happens?" (It gets even lighter!)
- "Great job! Now, clean your brush. Let's make shades of red. Take some fresh red and mix in the tiniest speck of black. What do you see? (A dark red, like maroon.)"
- "Let's try one more. Pick another color—yellow or blue—and try to make at least two different tints and two different shades of it."

(Formative Assessment: Walk around and observe. Ask questions like, "What would happen if you added more black?" or "How would you make a very, very light yellow?")

You Do: Create Your Landscape Masterpiece (15-30 minutes)

Instructions: "Now that you are a master Color Scientist, it's time for your main experiment! You are going to paint a simple landscape. It could be mountains at sunset, a field of flowers, or a stormy sea. You can choose!"

The Challenge: "Your mission is to use your color-mixing skills. Your final painting must include:

- At least **three different tints** you mixed yourself. (Example: light blue for the sky, pink for a flower, light green for grass).
- At least **three different shades** you mixed yourself. (Example: dark green for a tree's shadow, dark blue for deep water, dark purple for a mountain).

Remember to start with the background (like the sky) and work your way forward. Have fun and experiment with all the amazing new colors you can create!"

Success Criteria

- The painting clearly shows a landscape scene.
- The artist successfully mixed and used multiple light colors (tints).
- The artist successfully mixed and used multiple dark colors (shades).
- The painting shows a good range of color, not just the pure hues from the tube.

Part 3: Conclusion - The Gallery Walk (5-10 minutes)

Recap and Share

"Color Scientists, put your brushes down. Let's look at the amazing work you've done! Hold up your painting so we can see it."

- "Let's review our secret formulas. What do we add to a color to make a tint?" (White!)
- "And what do we add to make a shade?" (Black!)
- "Point to a tint that you used in your painting. What did you use it for?"
- "Now, point to a shade. Why did you decide to use a dark color there?"

Reinforce Takeaways

"You did an incredible job today. You learned that you don't need a hundred tubes of paint to be a great artist. With just a few main colors, plus black and white, you have the power to create an entire world of colors. Keep experimenting every time you paint!"

Differentiation and Adaptability

- **For Struggling Learners (Scaffolding):** Provide a pre-drawn, simple landscape outline on the canvas. The student can focus entirely on mixing and applying the colors without the pressure of drawing. You can also create "recipe cards" like "1 part Blue + 2 parts White = Sky Blue."
- **For Advanced Learners (Extension):** Challenge them to create a monochromatic painting, using only one hue plus its tints and shades to create the entire picture. Or, challenge them to mix secondary colors (like green) and then create tints and shades of that new secondary color.
- **For Different Contexts:**
  - **Classroom:** This activity works well in small groups. Students can share palettes and help each other describe the colors they are creating. The "Gallery Walk" at the end can be a formal classroom activity.
  - **Training:** This can be adapted as a creative thinking exercise for adults, focusing on how adding simple elements (white/black) can drastically change an outcome. The metaphor relates to problem-solving and resourcefulness.

Assessment

- **Formative:** Observe the student's color mixing during the "We Do" phase. Ask questions to check for understanding of the terms tint, shade, and hue.
- **Summative:** The final landscape painting serves as the summative assessment. Evaluate it based on the success criteria: successful creation and application of at least three tints and three shades to create a landscape with color variety and depth.