

Teaching out of the box – English and art



Following on from my article, here are five more modules to think about.

6 Yayoi Kusama and pumpkins

English: This lesson, also featuring a vegetable, was a one-off and our creative way of celebrating Halloween. The main part of the lesson was devoted to describing (colours, sizes and basic adjectives) the different pumpkins. ([here: https://wordwall.net/resource/37544070](https://wordwall.net/resource/37544070)).

The artist of the day: The amazing Yayoi Kusama – I found her googling ‘pumpkins in art’ and immediately fell in love with her work. We introduced Yayoi and her favourite things, namely pumpkins and dots.

Craft: The craft activity was a combination of two activities from the Art Hub for Kids: the folding surprise with a pumpkin ([How To Draw A Fall Raccoon In A Pumpkin - Folding Surprise - YouTube](#)) and a mouse that replaced the original raccoon ([How To Draw A Mouse - Letter M - Preschool - YouTube](#))

Here you can find my blog post with more detail on how it was done in class. [Yayoi Kusama and Pumpkins. Art and English in Primary - Funky Socks & Dragons \(funkysocksanddragons.com\)](#)

7 Ed Emberly and his monsters

English: This lesson was part of the unit on body parts which focused on the phrase ‘has got’. We also practised a song from Super Simple Song (‘My teddy bear’), which was easily transformed into a description of toys, animals and monsters.

The artist of the day: Ed Emberly was the first storybook illustrator ever included in our lessons, thanks to his wonderful book *Go Away Big Green Monster* which was also used in class.

Craft: We used Ed Emberly’s manuals on turning fingerprints into monsters. However, since we had our classes online, a replacement for the fingerpaints had to be found. I decided to use scraps of coloured paper and newspapers. Creating the monsters involved: tearing off a piece of coloured paper, gluing it on the A4 sheet, drawing the eyes, arms and legs, then describing the monster and moving onto the next one. More details can be found here: [Ed Emberly and Monsters. Teaching English through Art - Funky Socks & Dragons \(funkysocksanddragons.com\)](#)

8 Edgar Degas and ballerinas

English: Ballerinas helped us move from the topic of body parts to simple sentences in the present continuous such as *I am sitting*, *I am dancing*, and *I am running*.

The artist of the day: The kids counted the ballerinas in various paintings by Degas and tried to describe the actions.

Craft: There are many ballerina craftworks but since our lessons were taught online, we needed a simplified version such as this one found on Facebook ([Watch | Facebook](#)). I simplified this even further (only simple white paper to be decorated by the students and replacing the harmonica skirt with a simple circle). The finished ballerinas were used as puppets and as they danced, ran and sat we described their actions.

[Edgar Degas and Ballerinas. Teaching English through Art in Primary. - Funky Socks & Dragons \(funkysocksanddragons.com\)](#)



Figure 1: Paper ballerinas from Edgar Degas and body parts



9 Andy Warhol and flowers

English: This was one of the lessons from the unit 'Shapes'. We did a lot of looking for shapes around us: 'I can see a circle' following the model from the Super Simple Songs 'Can you see a circle?'. We counted the shapes in the classroom, making the shapes with our hands when possible.

The artist of the day: Andy Warhol was introduced together with a few variations of his painting *Flowers* which we used to revise colours and to choose our favourite ones.

Craft: This lesson was an opportunity to introduce an alternative to the technique of fingerpaint printing with the use of a sponge, inspired by a blog post here ([Fall Sponge Painting - Easy Sensory Activity for Toddlers! - High Chair Chronicles](#)).

Before the lesson, a set of small sponges had to be prepared by cutting the small washing-up sponges into shapes: a triangle, a square and a rectangle (a few of each). The fingerpaints were provided on small plates to ensure that the kids do not take too much paint. The activity involves drawing and decorating a vase and then printing the flowers on it using specific shapes. The whole activity does not take a lot of time and some of my students managed to produce a few versions of the painting, just like Andy Warhol. The sponges and the plates can be washed and reused in the other lessons.

10 Kandinsky, Malevich and El Lissitzky make animals

English: This was another lesson devoted to shapes and at this point, we were quite proficient with naming them and finding them around us.

The artist of the day: This lesson featured a trio of the amazing artists: Malevich, Kandinsky and El Lissitzky. We looked at a selection of their paintings and tried to spot all the shapes we knew. We also expressed opinions regarding the paintings, too.

Craft: The focus here was a circle and I decided to use one of my favourite craft activities which I designed myself. The materials necessary include: a set of colourful circles cut out before the lesson, glue, markers and one piece of paper per child. During the lesson, the kids choose the colour of the circle, glue it to the paper and, copying the actions of the teacher, they add the little details, step by step, to transform the circles into cats, dogs, bees or snails. The activity can be easily adapted to the age of the kids or the length of the lesson. You can read more about it here ([Crumbs #6 The easiest craft in the world aka Don't you just love a circle? - Funky Socks & Dragons \(funkysocksanddragons.com\)](#))

Dear teacher, I hope that among all these words, links and photos you have found something that will inspire you to smuggle some art into your YL lessons! And if you do, please make sure you let us know about it.

Happy teaching!



Figure 2: Stamp print flowers from Andy Warhol and shapes