VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Workshop:
Collage Basics

Explore the medium of collage while learning paper tearing and composition techniques.

Teaching Artist:
Jonathan Stein
jon@snowcityarts.org

Workshop duration: 25-45 min
1. **Gather your collage materials:** a glue stick, a pencil, some markers, some construction paper of various colors, and a magazine (if one is available).

2. **Let’s practice tearing paper.** It’s a skill we’ll use often when making a collage. Choose one piece of construction paper to work with, any color you like.

3. To help us tear the paper, we’ll fold it first. Folding is moving something over onto itself so that one part of it covers another. Folding our construction paper will make a straight line in the paper, which will help us to tear it.

4. **Fold the paper** so that the two corners of one side meet the two corners of the opposite side. Once you see the corners meet up, hold that area down with one hand.

5. Now, on the opposite side of where the corners have met, there will be a bend in the paper. It might look kind of rounded.

6. With your other hand, push down first in the center of the paper, then move your hand out towards the bend and over it to flatten it down.

7. Push down and move your fingers up and down along that rounded edge a few times, flattening the entire edge.

8. This technique of bending and flattening paper is called **scoring.** Bending and scoring is useful when tearing straight lines in paper.

9. Now let’s **tear the paper** along the line we have created. To do this we’ll hold and pinch the paper, with our hands close together and the **scored** line in between our hands.

10. Place your thumbs on the front side of the paper and your fingers on the back side. Keep pinching, and gently pull your hands apart from one another, using the tension created between the pinch points to guide your tear. The paper should tear along the line as you pull your hands slowly apart. Don’t worry if the line isn’t perfect, it takes some practice.

11. The way we pinched and tore the paper, with our thumbs held closely together on one side of the paper and with our fingers on the other, is always a useful technique for tearing paper **even** when you don’t score the paper first.
12. Let’s try tearing the paper again, without scoring it. What happens? The line is probably a little less straight, especially depending on if you pull harder with one hand or the other. With a little practice, you can begin to control the direction of a tear.

13. **Now, find your pencil and markers.**

14. Let’s draw some patterns or lines or images onto the pieces of construction paper this time before you tear them, to make the construction paper even more colorful and bold. You can take your time and draw carefully, or just draw randomly. 
   a. What could you draw? Perhaps lines, or dots, or dashes, a few squiggles, or anything else you like to draw.

15. Once you’ve finished drawing onto your construction paper, you can use the steps we’ve learned to tear those down to smaller pieces, and to organize them into your own piles of collage papers.

16. These smaller pieces of construction paper you’ve been making are the building blocks of your future collage. You’ll be able to tear them more later as well.

17. **Let’s talk about organizing your collage paper.** It will be helpful to have a variety of collage paper ready and separated into piles for when we begin to experiment and compose a collage. You can choose the way you want to organize your papers; perhaps by size, by color, or by shape.

18. Another type of image for collage can be found in a magazine or coloring book (if one is available to you). Take some time to look for pictures that you can tear out and add to your collage papers. Keep in mind you don’t have to use a whole picture; you can tear out any part you like.

19. **Collage** is a French word that means “to glue”. **Let’s practice gluing** one of your shapes down. First, take the cap off of your glue stick; is the glue inside sticking out a little bit from the tube? That’s good. If it isn’t, give the tube a twist at the bottom end--this will raise the glue up and out of the tube so it’s ready to use.

20. Can you find two pieces of paper that are extra pieces; ones that were left over from when we were tearing paper? We’ll practice with these next.
21. Choose one of these to be the top piece and another to be the bottom piece. If you want to do some quick tearing and transform these into shapes, go for it! You can also draw designs on them if you like.

22. Now, lay the bottom piece down first. Then, place the top piece where you would like it to go. Making creative choices about where the different pieces will go is the fun part, like putting the pieces of a puzzle together. Before you make your final decision, you can experiment with your composition by rearranging your pieces in different ways.

23. Once you’ve made your final decision about where your pieces will go, take a mental picture, like a photograph with your eyes, so you remember where you want your pieces to go. Click. Now, pick up the top piece of paper.

24. **The glue will go on the back side of your bottom piece.** So, with your mental picture in mind, turn it over and rub some glue on the back -- 2 or 3 strokes will do. Then flip your piece back over, and push it down so it sticks to your construction paper.

25. **Repeat this process every time you make a new creative decision** about where you would like a piece of your collage to go.
   a. Choose another shape and think about where you’d like to place it on your construction paper.
   b. Take a mental picture so you can remember where you’d like to glue it.
   c. Flip the piece over and add some glue to the back.
   d. Flip your piece back over and push it down onto your collage.
   e. Continue creating as many additional shapes as you like!

26. **Now, let’s make a collage:** we will make a head shape first, and then add some facial features onto that head shape. A head is a simple shape and an idea we all can recognize, so it will be a good place to start.

28. To start, we will **tear the head shape first.** Find another piece of construction paper, any color you like. This will be your head, and we will add facial features to it next.

29. To make the head out of construction paper, we’re going use the tearing technique again.
   a. Fold the construction paper in half.
   b. We are going to tear the shape of a half-moon, or half of an oval.
   c. The oval you tear can be any size you like.
d. Start your tear on the top of your fold.

e. Pinch the folded edge with both hands and start tearing down and towards the middle of the paper on a slight curve, turning the paper slightly and moving your hands along with the tear.

f. Is your tear starting to curve a bit? That’s good! Keep that curve going.

g. Move and tear in a curve down towards the middle of the folded paper first, then move and tear in a curve back up towards the folded edge at the bottom.

h. When you’re done, you can unfold it.

i. What shape did you make? Is it an oval, or circle? Is it something new, a shape that only you have made? That’s great, because making a collage can be all about surprising yourself.

j. This will be the head shape we will paste our collage face on.

30. Look at your head shape, and decide what type of head it will be.

a. Is it a person’s head, or an animal’s head, or an imaginary creature?

b. Deciding this may help with your decisions on the type of facial features you choose to add.

31. **Begin adding facial features.**

   a. You have so many cool things to decide:
      - Will your face have large ears?
      - Will it have different colored eyes?
      - Two eyes, or four eyes, or eight?
      - Will your face have a beard? Or long whiskers?
      - Lots of hair, or no hair at all? Purple Hair?

   It’s all up to you. Tear your papers into these unique shapes.

32. Experiment, compose and play. I encourage you to try new things, make unusual choices, and to surprise yourself!

33. Continue repeating this process until you are happy with your collage face. Create and choose unique shapes, thinking about where you’d like to place them on your collage. Experiment with moving the different pieces around before gluing them down.

34. When you are happy with your creative choices, it’s time to celebrate. You’ve made a collage! Great work today. I invite you to use the techniques you’ve learned to create new and exciting collages. Enjoy!
If you are interested in receiving school credit for the work you have completed in this workshop, please [have parent or guardian if under 18] contact Nakyung Rhee via email at rhee@snowcityarts.org.

If you would like to have the work you created displayed in a Snow City Arts exhibition space or virtual gallery, please [have a parent or guardian if under 18] contact Nakyung Rhee via email at rhee@snowcityarts.org.

Contact Chi Achebe, Snow City Arts Program Manager at chi@snowcityarts.org if you would like to continue working virtually with one of our Teaching Artists, if you have questions, or would like to offer feedback.

Snow City Arts inspires and educates children and youth in hospitals through the arts.

snowcityarts.org