CLASSROOM ACTIVITY
SHIFTING THE HORIZON

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How do artists use the horizon line to create a sense of space when creating an image of a landscape?

GRADES K–4

TIME One or more class periods

ART CONCEPTS Line, horizon line, point of view, perspective, depth, landscape, foreground, middle ground, background, layering

MATERIALS 140 lb watercolor paper, pencils, erasers, tempera paint, paint brushes, water, cups, paper towels; optional: colored pencils instead of paint

TALKING ABOUT ART Compare and contrast the printed images of *White Mountain Scenery, Franconia Notch, New Hampshire* by Asher Brown Durand and *Niagara Falls* by Louisa Minot

On a piece of paper draw a line down the center creating two vertical columns. At the top of one column write the letters WM for White Mountain and at the top of the other column write the letters NF for Niagara Falls. Working in pairs, catalogue your observations about White Mountain on the WM side of the paper and have your partner catalog their observations of Niagara Falls on the NF side of the paper. Next identify the elements in each column that are very different from one another, in other words how the paintings contrast one another. Not only are the environments of the landscape very different from one another, but the point of view, where the painter or viewer is positioned in the painting, and the horizon line, a line where the land and sky meet, are very different. Think of a time when you have noticed the horizon line- when is it easiest to see? When might it be hard for us to see?

MAKING ART Explore how to create the illusion of space within a composition by sketching and painting your own series of landscapes inspired by the artists of the Hudson River School. How will you transform this two-dimensional space using the horizon line?

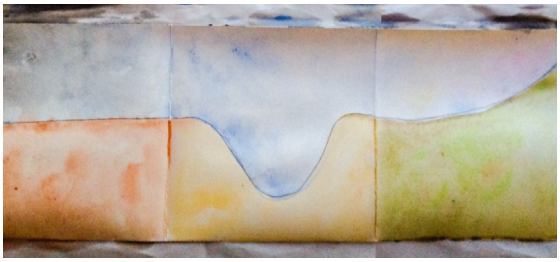
1. Fan-fold a sturdy sheet of painting or drawing paper (depending on the media you wish to use) into thirds to create the form of a double-sided accordion.

2. Draw a continuous line from the left side of the paper to the right side, dipping your line down and raising it up to different levels. Do the same on the other side of the paper as well.

MAKING ART

3. Demonstrate how to add color to the background first using colored pencils or paints. If you're using paint, wet the paper first, and then add dark and light tones to the sky and blend. The areas where the horizon line dips lower will show more sky and areas where the horizon line climbs higher will show less sky. Look at each panel as an opportunity to try a different kind of sky. What would a morning sky look like? Sunset sky? Night sky? How does the light change at those different times of day? How does that affect the colors that we choose to use for the sky?

4. After adding color to the background of the sky, add color to the middle ground where the horizon line is located. Browns could be used to paint in mountains or rocky cliffs, greens could be used for grassy hills and blues could be used to create waterfalls or rivers. Encourage students to paint all the way to the bottom of the page.



5. Lastly add details in the foreground such as trees, rocks, bushes, flowers, even animals.

REFLECTION

Display the screens in the classroom and have a gallery walk. Reflect on the art-making experience by responding to the following questions orally or in written form:

What kinds of environments did you paint in your landscapes?
(Show examples from your own artwork.)

Identify the foreground, middle ground, and background of your landscape.

How did you use color to define space in your landscape?

Describe in what way(s) your painting is similar and different from the Durand and Minot paintings?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.K-4.1
Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners. Language. K-2.6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversation. Language. 3.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships.

CCSS.MATH-MEASUREMENT AND DATA.K.2
Directly compare two objects with measurable attribute in common, to see which object has "more of"/"less of" the attribute, and describe the difference.

CCSS.MATH-NUMBER AND OPERATIONS.3.1
Understand a fraction a/b as the quantity formed by a part of size 1/b.