



Paper chain pixel art

National Art Standards

Creating: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work (**Anchor Standard 1**). Organize and develop artistic ideas and work (**Anchor Standard 2**). Refine and complete artistic work (**Anchor Standard 3**).

Presenting: Develop and refine artistic work for presentation (**Anchor Standard 5**). Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work (**Anchor Standard 6**).

Responding: Perceive and analyze artistic work (**Anchor Standard 7**). Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work (**Anchor Standard 8**).

Connecting: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art (**Anchor Standard 10**). Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding (**Anchor Standard 11**).

Objectives

Students will:

- Plan and design a visually appealing pixel pattern
- Relate their artwork to their lives and/or culture
- Describe the thought process behind their design and how it relates to their personal identity

Planning

(Day 1, 45 minutes)

1. Explain the concept of pixel art and show examples. Discuss how pixel art can be created using different mediums, including paper chains.
2. Have students sketch ideas for their individual pixel art projects. Encourage them to think about themes or images that are meaningful to them or reflect their cultural backgrounds.
3. Then have each student select a design and plan it on grid paper. Ensure the design can be effectively translated into a pixel art format, especially with the limitations of the dowel size you are using. Encourage students to think about color combinations and refine their designs to enhance visual impact.

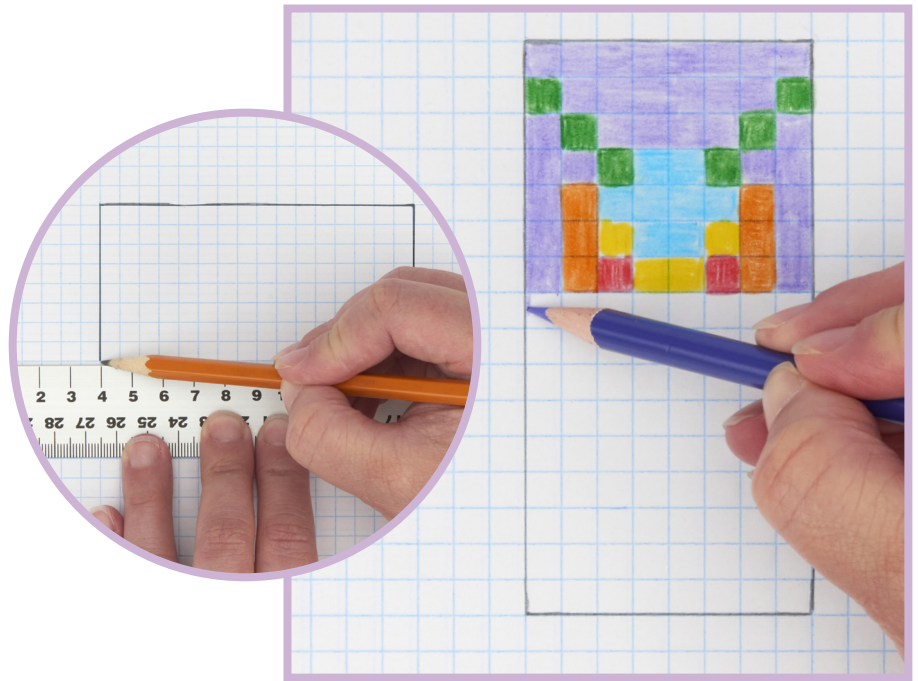
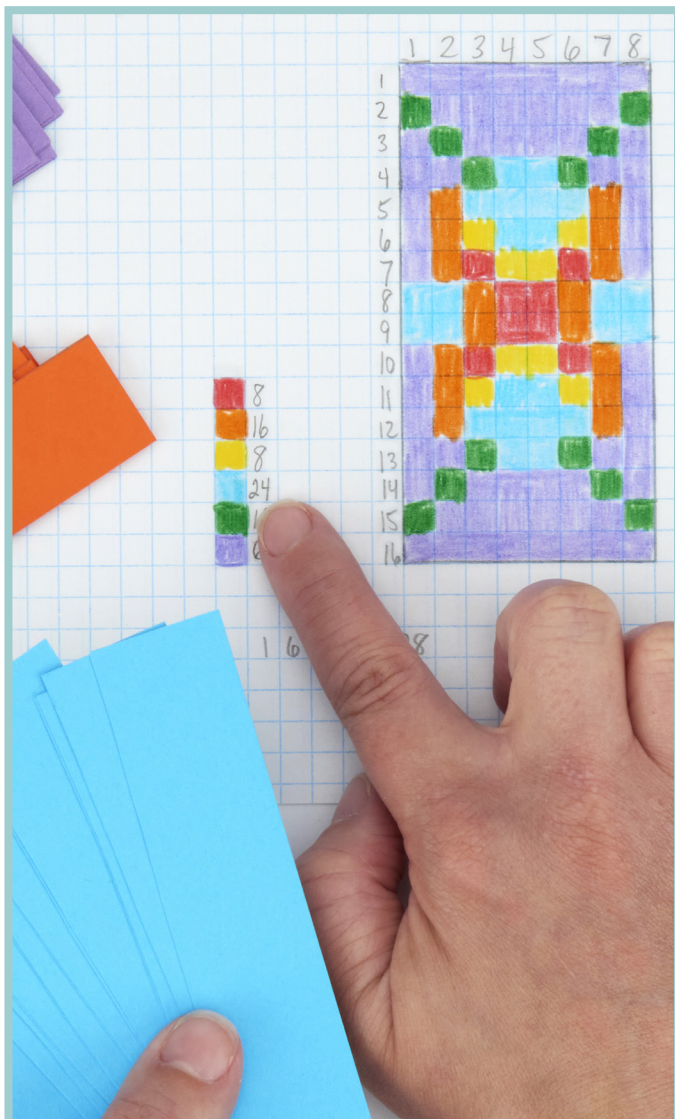


Figure 1



Creation (Day 2-3, 45 minutes each)

4. If working with pre-cut strips, have students count and select the number of strips they need for their design. Remind them that each strip represents one pixel (**Figure 1**).
5. Tell students that they will work on one column of their design at a time. Remind them that they should try to make each loop the same size so that their design hangs correctly.
 - **Step 1:** Begin by placing glue on one end of the paper strip and looping it to secure the ends to each other and form a circle (**Figures 2 & 3**).
 - **Step 2:** Continue adding loops, linking them with white connector strips to create a chain. Each loop should represent a single color and pixel in the vertical column.
 - **Step 3:** As each strand is finished, number it on the back of one of the white strips (**Figure 7**).
6. Then, have students assemble their projects. They should start by tying one end of their string about 1" from the end of their dowel. They should then loop the first link in each paper chain over the dowel. Make sure students stay within their planned design and maintain consistency in color placement.
7. To stabilize the design, use glue or hot glue to glue the white connectors in each strand to the strand next to it (**Figure 8**).
8. When they have added all their paper chains, have them tie the other end of their string to the opposite end of the dowel to create a hanger to display their creation (**Figure 9**).

Figure 2



Figure 3

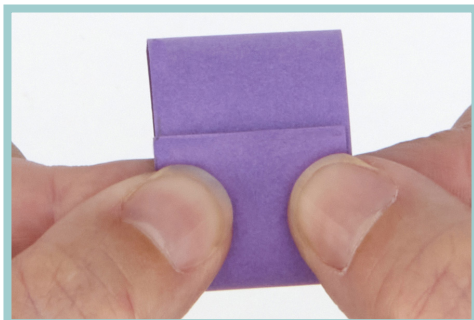


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

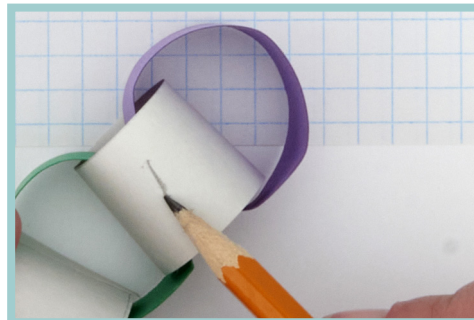


Figure 8



Figure 9



Conclusion (Day 3, 45 minutes)

- 9. Showcase:** Allow students to share their completed pixel art projects with the class. Encourage them to explain the thought process behind their design and how it represents their personal identity or cultural background. If possible, arrange to display the individual pixel art projects in the classroom or school to share students' work with a broader audience.

Extension activities:

- **Advanced pixel art:** For students interested in a challenge, suggest creating more complex pixel art, such as a character's face, and animal face, a mascot, or a detailed scene.
- **Thematic designs:** Encourage students to base their designs on themes such as nature, technology, cultural symbols, or emotional expressions.
- **Digital pixel art:** Introduce digital tools for creating pixel art and encourage students to experiment with digital designs.



Materials list

- Smooth wooden dowels, 1/2" x 12", dozen ([9734602](#))
- Mop cord ([6500178](#))
- Nasco assorted construction paper, 9" x 12" [[9727121\(AB\)](#)- 50 sheets or [9733560\(AB\)](#)- 2,500 sheets]
- Hard handle student scissors - 7" ([NE20513](#))
- Elmer's® washable school glue sticks classroom pack, clear ([9725433](#))
- Aluminum Ruler - 12" ([2100207](#))
- Examples of pixel art
- Economy graph paper, 8 1/2" x 11" sheets ([9719089](#))