



Colors, Shapes, and Spaces in the Most Important Places

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.01.04
by Christine Elmore

In this curriculum unit we will examine some of the most elementary features of symbolic meaning in my students' immediate environment (i.e. the neighborhood and the classroom). One of the most significant places in many of my students' lives is the weekly community center, be it the neighborhood church or,—an ever more common enomenon in Black urban neighborhoods which I focus on—the mosque or place of gathering for prayer or meeting. A study of a simple mosque and its decorative elements will provide the occasion for taking a closer look at some of the salient features of Islamic design in general and, in particular, the Arabesque.

We will begin with a brief overview of Islamic religion's influence on the art and architecture of Muslim peoples. Then we will move on to a look at the mosque, its origin and basic elements. In the final section we will investigate two types of ornamentation typically, but not exclusively, used in mosques' geometric patterns and Arabesque designs, analyzing the ways which they conform to basic principles of ornamentation.

Although designed for second-graders, this unit, which incorporates critical reading, mathematics, and art skills, can easily be adapted to other grade levels.

(Recommended for Art, Mathematics and Social Studies, Grade 2)

Key Words

Islamic Architecture Ornamentation

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>