



## Beauty and the Natural World: Plant Shapes in Art

For Grades 9-12

In this resource, we will look closely at the features of a plant and use those features to create an art piece. This activity will help answer the question: How can the natural world inspire creativity?

**Supplies:** Handouts (provided), pen or pencil, art supplies, scissors, glue

### What to do:



1. Look at these three art pieces from The Huntington's collections. Think and talk about how the artists use plants in their artwork. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?
  - [Snake Amongst Flowers](#)
  - [Fox and Grape](#)
  - [Right Triangle of Rose Window Panel](#) from the David Healey Memorial Window from the Unitarian Chapel, Heywood, Lancashire
2. Select a plant with flowers. This can be done by walking in your neighborhood or choosing a houseplant in your home. Look closely at the plant and fill in [Handout A](#). Use [Handout B](#) to help you in describing your plant.
3. To notice new things about your plant, consider:
  - dissecting the plant parts (make sure this is allowed and safe first!)
  - using a magnifying glass or microscope to study small details.
  - using a flashlight to backlight the leaves and petals - this is a great way to see new details!
4. Use [iNaturalist](#) (or a similar app) to identify the plant

### Show and Share:

1. Using [Handout A](#) for reference, draw the plant parts (leaves and the parts of the flower). In order to have enough for your artwork, be sure to draw many of each plant part.
2. Cut out the shapes you observed in your plant and use these shapes to create an artwork (of something other than your plant).
3. Write your Artist's Statement using [Handout C](#).



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## Extend your Learning:

1. Watch this [video of an artist working with plants at The Huntington](#). How is this artist's project similar to what you did? How is it different? Is there anything this artist did that you would like to try?
2. Take a neighborhood walk and look for plants with similar features. Generate a hypothesis about which plants may be related.
3. Include additional plant parts (roots, stems, fruit, reproductive organs, etc.) in your observations and artwork.
4. Poetry is another way people make art inspired by natural beauty. Haiku are Japanese poems about nature. [Learn more about haiku and write one inspired by your plant](#).
5. Re-create your artwork using a different medium. How does this change your work?
6. [Take a neighborhood walk and look for fractals in plants](#).

Share and celebrate your work by emailing [Teachers@huntington.org](mailto:Teachers@huntington.org)

## This resource has some alignment with:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NCAS Anchor Standard 1-3 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work, organize and develop artistic ideas and work, refine and complete artistic work.

NGSS HS Structure and Function.

NGSS HS Inheritance and Variation of Traits.



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## Handout A: Plant Observation Sheet

Fill in the chart below with your observations of your plant. Note: Try to choose a plant with flowers.

Plant Part	Describe it! (You can use the Describing Plants sheet to help you.)	Sketch it! (Draw what you see.)
LEAVES	<hr/>	
FLOWERS (remember flowers have many parts!)	<hr/>	

Optional: What other parts of the plant do you see (e.g. roots, stem, fruit)? Use the back of this sheet to describe and sketch them.



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## Handout B: Describing Plants

### Leaves

When looking at the leaves of your plant, consider the shape, tip, base, margin, attachment, arrangement, and habit.

**ILLUSTRATED GLOSSARY OF LEAF SHAPES**

LEAF SHAPES									
linear	oblong	elliptic	lanceolate	ovate	obovate	reniform	spatulate	orbicular	

LEAF TIPS									
acuminate	acute	obtuse	truncate	emarginate	obcordate	cupidate	mucronate		

LEAF MARGINS					LEAF BASES					
undulate	entire	serrate	crenate	lacerate	cordate	rounded	squared	sagittate	cuneate	attenuate

LEAF ATTACHMENTS				
petiolate	sessile	sheath	peltate	clasping

LEAF ARRANGEMENTS						
alternate	opposite	whorled (3 or more leaves at node)	rosette (leaves radiate from center closer to ground)	even pinnate	palmate	bipinnate

HABIT				
ascending	erect	sprawling	climbing	creeping

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<http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/education>

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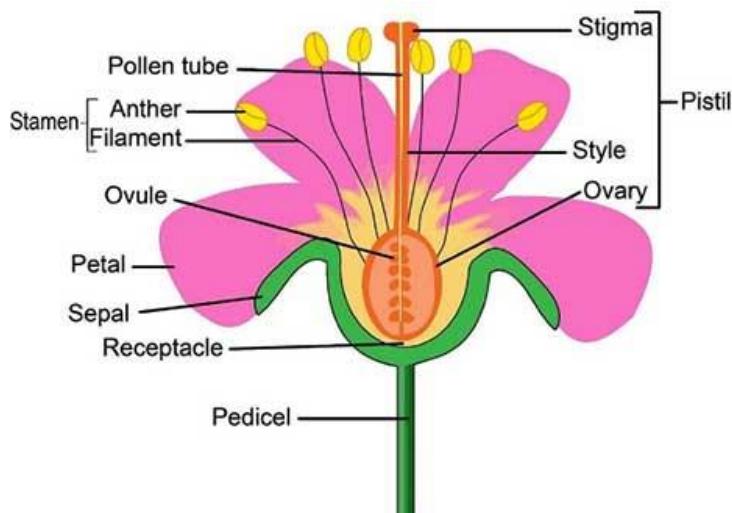
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## Handout B: Describing Plants

### Flowers

When looking at the flowers, consider the different parts of the flower.



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## Handout C: Artist's Statement

Artist's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Plant Inspiration: \_\_\_\_\_

This artwork is a...

Drawing

Painting

Collage

Sculpture

This artwork is about...

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I chose this idea/topic because...

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I hope people notice these things about this artwork...

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I learned these things while creating this artwork...

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