



Artist Trading Cards

Lesson Description: Artist Trading Cards (ATC) are 2.5" x 3.5" cards which are traded around the world. Artists are free to do whatever they want with their card—paint on it, draw, collage, use whatever mediums they want, etc— and after creating them, they can swap them at organized “swap” events which happen in person in most major cities around the globe or online. ATCs are traded, not sold. Many artists collect these cards as well. The only rule is that the cards have to be 2.5" x 3.5”.

Let students explore their creativity by making ATCs! If you don't have access to an official “swap” event, have the kids trade the cards among themselves! Provide as many different materials as possible (buttons, strings, glitter, magazines for collaging, or anything else you have on hand) to enhance the card making experience.

Lesson Objective: By making ATCs, students will explore different mediums, including collaging (if the materials are available), and come up with creative concepts and ideas for their cards. Students will also get to see and appreciate their classmates' art during the “swap.” The main goal of making ATCs is to have fun, be creative, and appreciate other artists' cards!

Art History/Theory Relation: M. Vanci Stirnemann, a Swiss artist, started the ATC movement in 1997 when he created 1200 cards by hand as a part of an exhibit. At the end of the exhibit, he had others create their own cards and trade with him during the closing reception. The movement grew and now ATC swaps happen globally and there are also many online swaps.

Materials Needed:

NOTE: All for Art lesson plans are always flexible with materials and students can use whatever they have on hand! We always strive to make art available to everyone, no matter how limited the resources available to them are. Thus, the following list is simply an ideation of possible materials for the above project.

1. 2.5" x 3.5" cards



- a. These are available to buy at most craft stores (look for Strathmore Artist Trading Cards. Here's a link to one online store that sells them: [Quill's Strathmore Artist Trading Cards](#)) but are also easy to cut out on your own! They're best when made out of a sturdier paper, like card stock.
2. Colored pencils
3. Markers
4. Crayons
5. Paints (watercolors are fun for this project!)
6. Collaging items (buttons, string, magazines, etc.)
7. Whatever else you have on hand!

Step-by-Step Procedure:

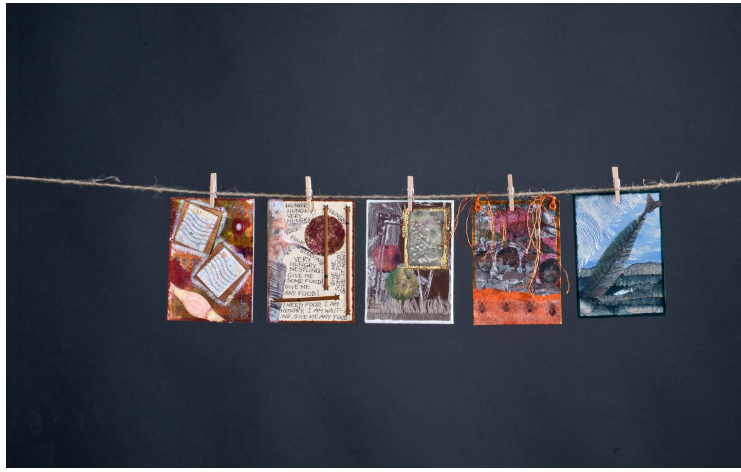
1. Prepare the ATC cards (either cut them out or have the kids cut them).
 - a. Like mentioned above, cardstock or other firm paper is recommended. The dimensions are 2.5" x 3.5".
2. Introduce ATCs to the students and show them examples to get their inspiration running! Remind them that they get full artistic liberty and can use whatever materials they want.
 - a. Here are some great examples:





all for art





3. Have the students create their ATCs. Swapping is a lot more fun when there are lots of cards, so encourage students to make as many as they want!
4. Once students are finished, organize a "swap" (or have them participate in an official "swap" event if there's one nearby!). During the swap, students can exchange their cards and start making a collection of ATCs.

What Students Should Aim to Accomplish with their Final Piece:

1. To have made some creative, fun ATCs.
2. To have swapped their ATCs with their classmates/in an official "swap" event (if applicable).
3. Most importantly, they should have fun with this project!