Figure-Ground Perception

Figure-ground perception is the ability to focus on one specific piece of information in a busy background. **Visual figure-ground** is the ability to see an object in a busy background; while **auditory figure-ground** helps a child pick out a voice or sound from a noisy environment.

When you find your favorite socks in a messy drawer, you are using figure ground perception.

**Preschoolers** who struggle with this visual perceptual skill may find it hard to find a specific toy in the toy box, or to find their favorite t-shirt in the cupboard. They may struggle to find a dropped item if it fell onto a similar colored background (eg a green button on the grass). **Jigsaw puzzles** may also be hard for one who has trouble with figure-ground perception.

**A school-going child** with poor figure-ground perception may struggle to find information on a busy blackboard. Copying work from the board may then be poor, as the child keeps losing his place when copying. Or she may lose her place while reading. It is hard to find a word in a dictionary when this skill is poor. This child may also find it hard to locate items in a cluttered place.

---

**3rd-4th grade**

**Title:** Figure-Ground Perception

**Objectives:** Students will learn about Figure-Ground Perception and how its importance relates to real life situations

**Learner Outcomes (align with State Goals):** 26.B.2d, 25.A.2d, 26A.2e

**Time to Complete:** 3+ classes

**Materials:** drawing paper, black markers, crayons, eraser, rulers and pencil.

**Introduction/Motivation:** Talk about Figure-Ground Perception. Make connections and relations to everyday life. Show examples of project.

**Instructional Procedure:**

1. Talk about Figure-Ground Perception

2. Pass out paper, rulers, and pencil (if needed).

3. Show students how to draw lines and shapes on their paper. Make sure their lines/shapes cross and are straight.

4. Once lines are drawn, have students trace over the lines with a black marker.

5. When finished tracing, Show students how to fill in boxes leaving the adjacent box white. This will create the look of Figure-Ground perception.
First and Second grade Birch Watercolor Paintings

Activity Title: Tape resist watercolor (Birch tree)

Objectives: Students will learn about Fall. They will create a watercolor painting of a Burch tree.

Learner Outcomes (align with State Goals): 25.A.1d, 26.A.1e, 26B.1d, 27b.1

Time to Complete: 2+ classes

Materials: Watercolor paper, brushes, water, watercolors, tape.

Introduction/Motivation: Talk about Fall, talk about nature. Show examples.

Instructional Procedure:

1. Talk about the fall season and nature.

2. Pass out paper and tape. Show students how to lay the tape to create our Burch tree. Tape will resist the watercolor. When peeled, it will resemble a tree.

3. Discuss fall colors and show students how to paint their picture using proper paint technique.

4. Show students how the watercolor resists the tape.

5. Once finished, peel the tape back and show students how to paint the black lines over the white paper to create the look of a Burch tree.

6. Set aside to dry.