

## Lesson Title

Georgia O’Keeffe Oil Pastel Poppy Drawing Lesson for Grades 3, 4, & 5 (Flowers That Go Off the Page!)

## Grade Levels

Grades 3–5

## Lesson Objective

Students will create an **extra-large, close-up poppy flower** inspired by **Georgia O’Keeffe**, using **oil pastels** to achieve **bold color saturation**, smooth blending, and clean outlines—filling the page so much the flower **crops off the edges**.

## NCAS Visual Arts Standards

- **VA:Cr1.1.3/4/5a**: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- **VA:Cr2.1.3/4/5a**: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
- **VA:Cr2.3.3/4/5a**: Refine and complete artistic work
- **VA:Re7.2.3/4/5a**: Perceive and analyze artistic work (interpret meaning from visual info)
- **VA:Cn11.1.3/4/5a**: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context

## Lesson Description

This is a “big impact, low mess” win: students draw a **simple poppy** with **large flowing petals**, then use **oil pastel layering + pressure control** to get that rich, O’Keeffe-style color. The key concept is **cropping**—making the flower so large it’s not “a flower on the page,” it’s **THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE**.

**Teaching note:** The secret sauce is modeling **slow coloring** and giving kids permission to take their time. Oil pastel rewards patience (and punishes chaotic scribble energy... which is also very on-brand for elementary art).

## Vocabulary

- **Cropping:** Cutting off part of an image at the edges to make it feel zoomed-in and dramatic.
- **Scale:** The size of something compared to the page or to real life.

- **Composition:** How the parts of an artwork are arranged.
- **Contour Line:** The outline that defines the edge of a shape.
- **Color Saturation:** Brightness/intensity of color (oil pastel can get *super* saturated).
- **Blending:** Smoothing colors together so transitions look soft, not stripey.
- **Pressure Control:** Pressing lightly or firmly to change how pastel looks and layers.

## Materials

- 9x12 or 12x18 **white drawing paper** (heavier paper is a bonus)
- **Oil pastels** (class set; even budget ones work)
- **Black oil pastel** or black crayon for bold outlines (optional but helpful)
- Scrap paper for “hand rests” (prevents smudgy palms)
- Paper towels (tiny clean-up + smudge control)

## Lesson Sequence

### Option A: Two 30-minute sessions (best for stronger results)

#### Day 1 (30 min)

- **Intro (5):** Georgia O’Keeffe + zoomed-in flowers + cropping
- **Guided Demo (10):** Draw the poppy big + outline decisions
- **Independent Work (12):** Students draw + begin first color layer
- **Clean Up (2):** Pastels back in order, hands wiped
- **Closure (1):** “Show me with your finger—where does your flower go off the page?”

#### Day 2 (30 min)

- **Warm-up (3):** Pressure control test swatches: light/medium/heavy
- **Demo (7):** Layering + blending + adding darker value near center
- **Independent Work (17):** Color saturation + background
- **Clean Up (2)**
- **Closure (1):** Quick gallery walk: “Find one artwork that feels HUGE.”

### Option B: One 45-minute class

- **Intro (5)**
- **Guided Demo (12)**
- **Independent Work (22)**
- **Clean Up (4)**
- **Closure (2)**

## [Step-by-Step Instructions](#)

## Lesson Videos

- [Short overview video \(1 min\)](#)
- [Full step-by-step lesson video \(5 min\)](#)

## Google Slides

[Slide-by-slide outline](#)

## Cross-Curricular & Extension Resources

1. **Art History / Biography (ELA connection):** Read a short artist intro and write 3 “I noticed / I wonder” sentences about her flower paintings.
  - Source: National Gallery of Art, “Close Looking: Georgia O’Keeffe” (student-friendly)
  - URL: <https://www.nga.gov/educational-resources/jack-in-pulpit-georgia-okeeffe> (National Gallery of Art)
2. **Visual Literacy / Photography connection (science-ish + media literacy):** Discuss how O’Keeffe used **cropping/close-up views**, similar to a camera zoom. Students take a “zoomed-in photo” of an object (or sketch a zoomed-in view) as a warm-up extension.
  - Source: Georgia O’Keeffe Museum teacher resource (mentions close-up abstractions and cropping)
  - URL: <https://www.okeeffemuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Teacher-Resources-for-Gallery-Experience.pdf> (The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum)

## Differentiation Strategies

1. **Break it into confidence-building chunks:**
  - Session 1: draw + outline + first color layer
  - Session 2: saturation + shading + background + final details
2. **Support for students who struggle with drawing:**
  - Offer a “petal guide”: draw 3 big petal shapes on the board they can copy, or provide a simple petal template for tracing *just to get started* (then they customize).
3. **Fast finisher upgrades (no busywork):**
  - Add a second background layer (dark-to-light gradient)
  - Create a “color mood” version: sunrise poppy, nighttime poppy, unusual colors
  - Write a 3–4 sentence **artist statement** about why they chose their colors and how cropping changes the feeling

## Assessment & Reflection

## Simple Rubric (4-point, teacher-friendly)

### 4 = Wow / Exceeds

- Flower is boldly cropped off edges
- Color is richly saturated with layering and shading
- Craftsmanship: clean, intentional coloring + strong composition

### 3 = Meets

- Flower fills most of page and crops in at least 2 places
- Mostly solid coloring with some layering
- Composition is clear and complete

### 2 = Developing

- Flower is smaller / little cropping
- Light coloring, lots of gaps, minimal layering
- Needs more time or focus on craftsmanship

### 1 = Beginning

- Minimal effort or incomplete
- Hard to identify poppy structure
- Needs guided support to finish

## Reflection options (pick what fits your day)

- **Quick informal share (2 minutes):**
  - “Point to your darkest area—why did you put it there?”
  - “How does cropping make your flower feel different than a small flower?”
- **More formal (exit slip):**
  - “I used cropping by...”
  - “One place I layered colors was...”
  - “If I did this again, I would...”

## Call to Action

If you teach this, I'd LOVE to see it in action—snap photos of kids working, your demo on the board, and a finished-work lineup. Submit your classroom pics (with school photo permissions, of course), and I may feature them as inspiration so other teachers can see how many awesome versions this lesson can become.