

Grade Level: Juniors

## Optical Illusions

**Medium:** Colored Pencils

**Visual Art Standard:**

Skills & Technique

Creation & Communication

Cultural & Historical Connections

Applications to Life

**Vocabulary**

Optical Illusions, Op Art

**Art Element:** Line, Shape, Space, Color

**Objectives:**

Introduce the basics of optical illusion art. Discuss the work of Bridget Riley. Apply perception techniques to their own creations in attempt to trick the viewer.

**Supplies:** paper, erasers, rulers, colored pencils, pencil sharpeners, laminated examples

**Preparation:** Prepare each station with paper, pencils, and other supplies.

Display laminated examples around the room.

**Procedure:**

Part 1: Lesson about Op Art

Part 2: Op Art Activity

Part 3: Discussion

## Part 1: Lesson about Op Art

There are things known and there are things unknown, and in between are the doors of perception. - Aldous Huxley

**Op Art**, short for optical art, is a style of visual art that uses geometric shapes to create various optical illusions. An optical illusion is something that plays a trick on your vision. What you see and what you think you see are different things. We live in a three-dimensional world, so our brains get clues about depth, shading, lighting, and position to help us interpret what we see. Sometimes our brains fill in gaps when there is incomplete information, or creates an image that isn't even there!

Op artworks are abstract. Abstract art has colors, lines, and shapes, but does not represent an image from everyday life. Abstract art portrays what an artist thinks or feels. Op Art pieces give the viewer the impression of seeing something that isn't actually there: movement, hidden images, flashing and vibrating patterns, or swelling or warping.

Artists create effects of movement through pattern and line. Often these paintings are black and white, or shades of gray

*Present each example to the group and ask the following:*

- *What effects do you see? (Movement, hidden image, flashing, etc.)*
- *What patterns and lines did the artist use to create each effect?*

*Pass the examples around the room. Encourage the girls to view each piece at multiple angles.*

Artists select patterns, shapes, and colors for their illusional qualities, rather than to form a subject or represent emotions.

Bridget Louise Riley was born April 24, 1931. She is an English painter who first became known for her black and white op art paintings. In 1965, she began producing color-based op art. Viewers of her work have reported feelings from seasickness to the sensation of sky diving.

## Part 2: Op Art Activity

Inspired by Bridget Riley, you are going to design your own Op Art.

Use geometric lines, strategic spacing, shading, and carefully-selected colors to create an optical illusion that will deceive the viewer.

You can place a hidden object, create a sense of movement, or a shadow.

## Part 3: Discussion

Take turns presenting their unique Op Art creations.

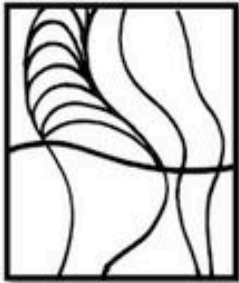
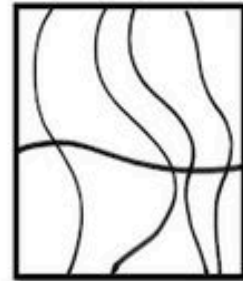
# op art tubes:

*a style of abstract art that creates optical illusions with lines, shapes, and forms*

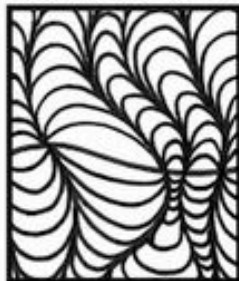
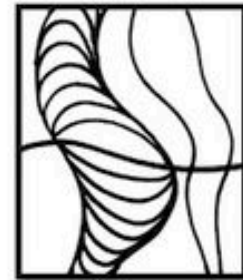


← 1. draw 4 wavy vertical lines

2. divide your paper in the middle →



3. add upward curved lines above the  
← middle line, and downward curved lines below →

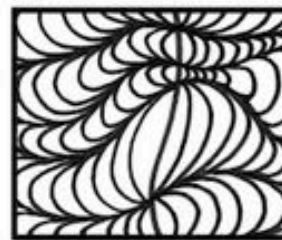


4. fill in the page  
← with curved lines

5. choose a color →  
scheme. create 3-d value by pressing harder near the edges and softer in the middle of each section.



make it your own!  
← draw diagonal lines instead of vertical for step 1, or horizontal lines instead of vertical →



# op art hands:

*a style of abstract art that creates optical illusions with lines, shapes, and forms*



↑ Step 1: Trace your hand lightly using a pencil. Do this step as lightly as possible because your original outline of your hand should not show when finished.



↑ Step 2: Start at the bottom of the page where your arm is and draw a curved line on the arm and then straight lines for the background.



↑ Step 3: Continue adding lines and moving up the paper towards the top. When doing the fingers, curve your lines in the opposite direction instead of adding straight lines.



↑ Step 4: The most difficult part of this project is ending the fingers. Try to flatten out your background line as much as possible so it no longer matches the curve of the fingers.



↑ Step 5: Choose three colors, using a color scheme, and color between your black lines using colored pencils.



↑ Make it your own! Try adding multiple hands or change the background.