Activities

Patterns All Around

Grades: 3–5

Overview
A series of Web sites builds pattern awareness: Patterns in Nature highlights patterns in plants, animals, water and minerals, Go Fly a Pattern teaches how to extend designs, Oddball is an interactive game to find objects that don't belong in a group, etc.

Patterns All Around
Have you ever looked closely at your classroom wall or the ceiling in your living room and seen a pattern? Have you ever seen patterns in a carpet or the eyes of a fly? Patterns can be found everywhere in the world. If you train your eyes to see them, you can find them in places you'd never think to look. Climb aboard the World Wide Web, you're about to see hundreds of patterns your students can identify, copy, and extend.

Curious eyes will be inspired to search for patterns wherever they go after they visit the photographic library of plant, animal, water, and mineral patterns at Patterns in Nature (http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/patterns_nature/).

Pattern-hunters can also check out the swirls, spots, and stripes of zebras, peacocks, butterflies, shells, honeycombs, adders, and spider webs when they click on animals (http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/patterns_nature/animals.htm).
Introduce students to a more formal pattern activity, with a simple lesson called **Go Fly a Pattern** (http://www.kid-at-art.com/htdocs/lesson20.html). Students learn to copy and extend patterns using kite-tail designs.

Learning about patterns involves careful observation. Intermediate learners are challenged to extend patterns. This means that students have to know what doesn't belong. A trip to **Oddball** (http://www.funbrain.com/oddball/index.html) yields an interactive game of finding the object that does not belong in a group.

For an advanced lesson with patterns, log on to **The Rug Gallery** (http://mathforum.org/geometry/rugs/gallery/) at The Art of Oriental Carpets. Here students can see 28 samples of beautiful textiles from the Far East. Each of the carpets pictured in the gallery provides a unique pattern to study and enjoy. Have students figure out the pattern using letters corresponding to each image. Extend the project, by having students make a rug with a pattern of their own.

- **Subjects:**
  - Math, Science, Visual Arts