



# COLLABORATIVE TAPE ART WORKSHOP

**IT HAPPENED ON THE TRAIN**

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## Assignment Title: **IT HAPPENED ON THE TRAIN**

### Recommended Level:

Grades 6–12

### Exercise Run-time:

55min–90min

### Materials:

PiktoTape™: 1 roll minimum per student

PiktoTape™ comes in 3 widths. Ideally students have access to a roll of each width. The more PiktoTape™ available, the more students will feel free to draw with reckless abandon.

### Introduction:

The prompt for this workshop deals with figure drawing. We recommend its use with older students. One way to modify this exercise for younger students is to draw the outline of the train car(s) on the wall in advance of the class and have students focus on the figures and objects inside the train car. This will immediately give students a clear boundary and sense of scale.

The general outline of this PiktoTape™ workshop can be adapted to any content prompt. Prompts that lean towards the drawing of foliage or animals may be more successful with younger students. Groups of older students can tackle more complicated prompts or even brainstorm their own themes. However, we recommend students steer away from creating design-oriented or abstract works and focus on exploring the narrative possibilities of this medium.

### Drawing Prompt:

"Today you are drawing the interior of a train as it travels from one location to another. This can be any type of train, but the big questions are, where is this train going and who is traveling on it? You will work with your group to draw what is happening on the journey. This can include, but is not limited to: people, objects, and animals. Maybe a story is unfolding as the train moves down the track."

Additional boundary options to consider:

1. Students should draw life-sized. This allows them to use their own bodies as reference for proportion and scale.
2. You can require students draw a minimum number of human figures in their mural. We recommend a 2:1 ratio, with at least one figure for every two students drawing.



## Instructions:

### Setup:

1. Determine the wall area for the mural(s). There should be enough room for all members of a group to stand shoulder to shoulder along the wall in the area they will be drawing in. The best walls for this drawing prompt (life-sized train cars) are long, straight hallways. Interruptions such as doors, windows, and display cases can be integrated into the drawings or drawn over.
2. Divide students into groups of 5-10. If you have a large class or multiple classes, each group can draw their own train car. If you are working in a hallway or on a long wall, the train cars from multiple groups can connect into one long train mural.
3. Either distribute the rolls of PiktoTape™ along the wall or provide a central pile of PiktoTape™ rolls for all students to pull from during the exercise.

### Exercise:

1. Introduce the activity and prompt to students and demonstrate drawing with PiktoTape™. Give instruction based on your students' needs. However, we recommend giving limited instruction so that students can experiment with the medium. For standard demonstration instructions, reference our book, *Collaborative Tape Art: The PiktoTape Method*.
2. Each group should brainstorm what they want to draw in front of the wall they will be drawing it on. The brainstorm should include big-picture thoughts about their drawing, such as:
  - What type of train car is this?
  - Where is this train car headed?
  - Who is in this train car? What are they doing?

If students plan their mural with a quick sketch before they start putting tape on the wall, we strongly recommend not spending a lot of time on this sketch or trying to plan out every detail. Remind students that they can stray from the sketch, have new ideas, and respond to what is happening on the wall in real time. Do not be tied to the sketch!

3. When students are finished brainstorming, they can hit the wall and start to draw. Encourage them to talk to their peers on their left and right to make sure their drawings connect and that they work together to create a complete image. Again, have students draw life-sized so that the proportions across the entire image are consistent.
4. At the end of the drawing period, students should present their work to the rest of the class and talk about the decisions that the group made and how they created their work. This is an excellent opportunity to practice critique in a setting not focused on individual students.
5. Students who made the work should return the PiktoTape™ rolls to a designated area and clean up any PiktoTape™ scraps from the floor to be recycled, disposed of, or used for another project. Each group of students should also be responsible for removal of their artwork. We recommend removing the murals between one day and a week after their creation.



## Additional Considerations:

1. Recommend that students be constantly aware of what others are drawing in their train car. This will allow them to respond to what their collaborators are making. Maybe a new idea will occur, or maybe they will realize that the initial idea needs to be tweaked or rethought.
2. Let students know that they can work on all parts of the drawing. Remind them to help other students, ask for help themselves, move from drawing a figure to drawing the background, and switch places to give patterns drawn by many different hands a more unified look. Every student in the group is responsible for the entire drawing, not just their individual area.
3. Remind students to draw the entire time, even if they feel like they are done.

## Discussion Ideas:

- How does the composition of figures work both narratively and visually? Is the visual effect compromised for the narrative or vice versa? How could the visual composition reinforce a narrative?
- Did students take the opportunity to tackle perspective or scale? Were there any successful examples of groups using the interior of the train car as foreground and exterior as background (through the windows)? Did the things drawn outside the windows give the effect of depth or distance either through size or line weight?
- There are so many things you can talk about with just the figure drawing: proportions, posing and body language, faces (profile versus straight-on-view) and how figures interact with each other.
- Compare and contrast different drawing styles. Were different effects created using thinly ripped lines versus thick, bold lines versus areas of pattern or fill? Is there a visual emphasis in one area of the drawing due to the amount of tape used there?
- Discuss the group's decision making and drawing process. Did they try to mimic each other's taping style or talk about trying to employ one style in advance? Is there evidence of many different drawing solutions within one mural? Can you clearly see where one student worked in comparison to other students?

## Assessment Thoughts:

- Did the student(s) move around and draw in more than one place on the wall?
- Did the student(s) help other students who needed help?
- Did the student(s) draw for the entire drawing period?
- Did the student(s) collaborate well within their group (listen to and respect others' ideas, ask and give help, make others feel included, maintain a positive attitude)?
- Did the group create a cohesive image?
- Did the group complete a unified background?
- Were there explorations into alternative uses of the tape for creating images of three-dimensional elements?
- Was there an effort to draw characters with details that tell the viewer about the characters' personality?



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