

**Discover
Negative Space in Art**

For ages 7 - 17

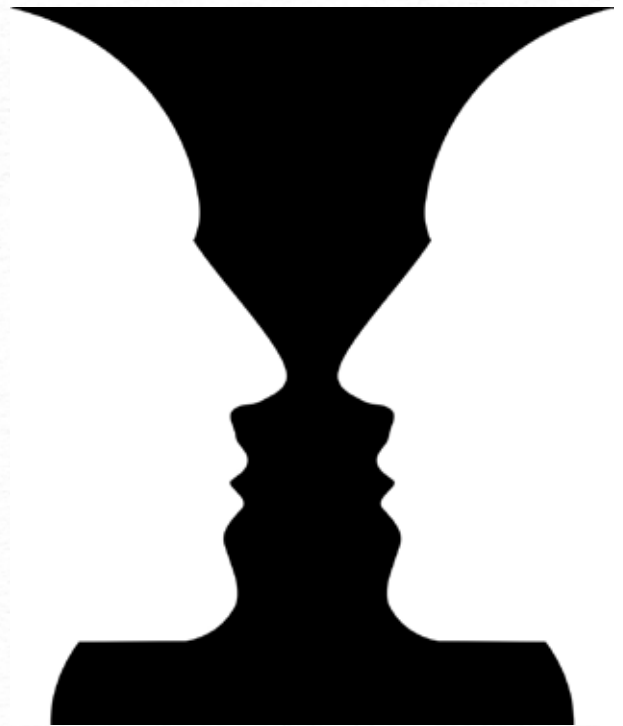
What image can you see in this optical illusion?

Ask others what they see, maybe they see something different to you.

Some people see a vase, others see two faces. Both are right!

In art 'negative space' means the space around and between things and 'positive space' means the objects in the pictures.

In this image it's difficult to see which is which!



Look at the picture below by the famous Japanese artist **Katsushika Hokusai**. You can see the space around the wave to the edge of the picture is as big as the wave itself.



Mount Fuji Seen Below A Wave At Kanagawa
Katsushika Hokusai Woodcut circa 1830 Wikimedia Commons

How an artist arranges the 'positive' objects on a page and the 'negative' space between them is called the 'composition' or design of the picture.





Materials Needed:

A pair of household scissors
A pencil
Coloured pencils or pens

Step 1

On a piece of plain paper trace around a pair of scissors.

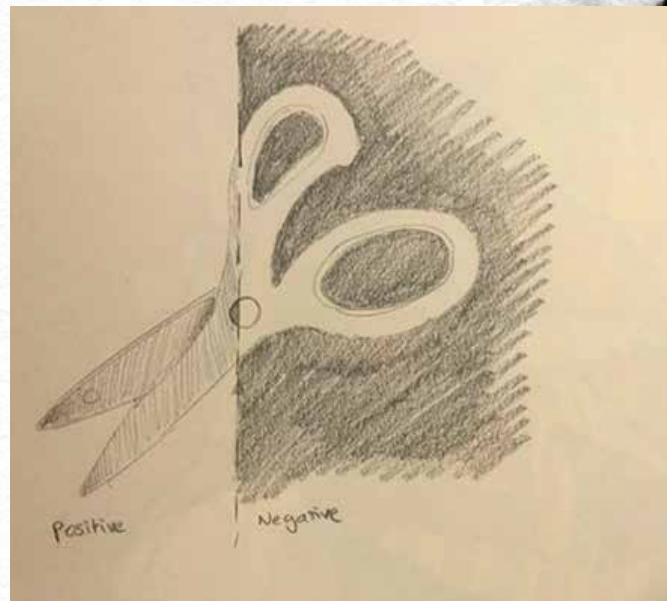


Step 2

Draw a straight line half way through your tracing.

Step 4

This time shade only the space around the scissors. This is what we mean by negative space.



Step 3

Shade one half of the scissors as above to show the positive space.



Step 5 - Experiment!

Can you trace the scissors in different position on the same page? Now you can colour the negative spaces in any way you choose. One colour or more or perhaps adding pattern as in the examples.



You could choose a different object to trace or you could use your hand. I have chosen to use a toy dinosaur. Try using colour to shade the different parts of the image. Colour the positive and negative spaces randomly to create your very own abstract picture.

