

# WHAT IS COOL?

## From the exhibition: Cars & Guitars

*What is Cool?* is a three-lesson unit plan designed in conjunction with the *Cars and Guitars* exhibition at the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts.

Present the [Cars and Guitars Exhibition Preview PowerPoint](#).

### Themes

- *Theme in Life:* Life is full of choices.
- *Theme in Art:* Artists create designs to influence us to choose (or like) one thing rather than another.

### Key Questions

Lessons approach the themes through two key questions.



How do designers and artists arrange elements to draw (grab) viewers' attention?



What makes one thing look “cool” (excellent) and not another?

### Community Connections

Everyday life in the Valley of the Sun is affected by past, present and future choices made by individuals, businesses, schools, community groups and city and state governments. Communities face important choices, such as how to improve and sustain the economy, education, the environment, safety and cultural resources. Leaders in these areas can use words and images in print and media to persuade people in their communities to support certain choices about these topics and issues. Learning how images and words influence us can help us make better, informed choices.

### Lessons

[One: What Shall I Choose? \(pdf\)](#)

[Two: Exploring the Cool Factor at the Tempe Center for the Arts \(pdf\)](#)

[Three: Design Your Own Fender® Stratocaster® \(elementary or middle school\) \(pdf\)](#)

[Four: Creating a Cool Cover \(high school\) \(pdf\)](#)

### Resources

[Cars and Guitars Exhibition Preview PowerPoint](#)

[What Shall I Choose? PowerPoint](#)

[What Shall I Choose? PowerPoint – Beginner's Version](#)

[Exploring the Cool Factor at the Tempe Center for the Arts worksheet \(pdf\)](#)  
[Design Your Own Fender® Stratocaster® PowerPoint \(elementary or middle school\)](#)  
[Stratocaster® Guitar Template \(pdf\) \(elementary or middle school\)](#)  
[Creating a Cool Cover PowerPoint \(high school\)](#)  
[Questor Questions about Stratocaster® Design \(pdf\)](#)

#### **Supplies (Elementary or Middle School)**

Assorted colors of construction paper  
Scissors  
Glue or glue sticks  
Butcher paper (or large bulletin board) for display of designs of the entire class

#### **Supplies for a High School Collage Project**

Construction paper or other colored paper  
Magazines  
Printed or hand-lettered text  
Photos or photocopies of photos of students  
Markers  
Scissors  
Glue

#### **Supplies for a Computer Project**

Internet connected computer lab  
Digital or scanned photos of students  
Image editing software such as Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Photoshop Elements

#### **Credits**

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation  
Sucker Punch Sally's  
Leanne Smith's students at McClintock High School  
Nicole Granese, Arizona State University intern  
Sally Carillo's 2nd grade students at Kyrene de las Brisas Elementary School

#### **Estimated Time (Elementary or Middle School)**

Previsit Lesson = 30-50 minutes  
TCA Visit Lesson = Field Trip  
Postvisit Lesson = 50 minutes

#### **Estimated Time (High School)**

Previsit Lesson = 30-50 minutes  
TCA Visit Lesson = Field Trip  
Postvisit Lesson = 300-600 minutes

## Lesson One

### Objectives

1. Students analyze how elements are organized to create balance within artworks.
2. Students identify focal points within artworks.

### Arizona Visual Arts Standards

RELATE: Artworld: PO 102, 202 & 302: Discuss how artworks are used to communicate stories, ideas and emotions.

EVALUATE: Art Issues & Values: PO 202 & 302: Debate whether art is different from visual culture in general.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 101: Identify an element or principle in an artwork that supports its meaning and/or purpose.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 201: Describe an artist's use of elements and principles in an artwork to support its meaning and/or purpose.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 301: Using established criteria, judge the effectiveness of an artist's use of elements and principles in an artwork to support its meaning and/or purpose.

### Preparation

Preview the [What Do I Choose? PowerPoint](#). (If you teach younger students or beginners, preview the [What Shall I Choose? Beginner's Version PowerPoint](#) to see whether it is more appropriate for your students.) Assemble several print designs that you believe your students might see as being "cool," such as DVD covers, magazine ads, brochures or campaign buttons.

### Resources

[What Shall I Choose? PowerPoint](#)

OPTIONAL: [What Shall I Choose? Beginner's Version PowerPoint](#)

OPTIONAL: Sample "cool" ads

### Activities

Unit Preview: Introduce the theme in life, "Life is full of choices," by discussing how every day we make choices such as what to do, where to go, what to buy, who to vote for, what to eat, who to help, what to believe and much more.

Introduce the theme in art, "designers create designs to influence us to choose (or prefer) one thing rather than another," by showing examples of graphic design such as DVD covers, magazine ads, brochures or campaign buttons. Ask students which examples they are drawn to and why. For example, was something designed to say, "Buy this," "Go to this show," "Vote for this person" or "Give money to this cause?" Explain further that designers use elements and principles of design to make what they are presenting look "cool."

Explain that "cool" is a word people have used since at least the 1950s to declare that something is excellent, fine or great. Other words with similar meanings come and go through time, like the words: swell,

hip, nifty, rad, bad, awesome and sweet. Discuss what “cool” means to different groups such as high school students, children or adults. Break down these groups into sub-groups. For example, young children might call toys, games and/or cartoons “cool.” High school students might more likely refer to athletes, cars and/or sunglasses as “cool.”

Introduce the two key questions students will be working with in the unit:

1. How do designers and artists balance elements to draw (grab) viewers’ attention?
2. What makes one thing look “cool” (excellent) and not another?

Definition and Examples: If you selected the “What Shall I Choose PowerPoint” use it to:

- Introduce design in general and more specifically graphic design.
- Define and analyze four types of balance (Formal balance: bilateral, quadrilateral and radial symmetry and asymmetrical balance).
- Show examples of all four types of balance.
- Explain how balance affects focal points.
- Introduce the Cars and Guitars exhibition.

Definition and Examples: If you selected the “What Shall I Choose? Beginner’s Version Power Point,” use it to:

- Introduce design in general and more specifically graphic design.
- Define and analyze four types of balance (Formal balance: bilateral, quadrilateral and radial symmetry and asymmetrical balance).
- Show examples of all four types of balance.
- Check students’ understanding of all four types of balance.
- Introduce the Cars and Guitars exhibition.

Transfer to TCA: Explain that at the *Cars and Guitars* exhibition students will have an opportunity to see samples of a very successful product (Fender guitars) and see how they have been advertised through the years.

### High School Extension Idea

Ask students to make a list of products/ideas/events/celebrities they believe are “cool.” Do Google image searches for advertisements promoting these items. For example, type “Fender Guitar Ads” in the search box on Google. Discuss what the guitar (product) is and whether or not that is what is being promoted in the ad. Is the ad selling the product by appealing to the consumer’s desire for something else? Often this “something else” is the elusive quality of being “cool.” Analyze how the designer of the ad used balance and focus (focal point) in an attempt to influence viewers’ choices. You may want to collect student selections during one class period and bring search results for the class the next day, after editing out any not-school-appropriate selections.

### Vocabulary

**DESIGN:** to plan or arrange elements to create an interesting and compelling image or object. A good design is more than the sum of the elements from which it is formed. (Gestalt) *Synonym:* Composition – the arrangement of the image.

**FOCAL POINT:** the most important part of the picture or object. This is the place the viewer’s attention is most attracted. An artist/designer can create a focal point in many ways. One way is by the type of balance the designer uses when creating the image/object.

**BALANCE:** an arrangement of the elements in a design or composition that results in a feeling of stability or pleasing proportion.

**SYMMETRICAL or FORMAL BALANCE:** Symmetrical designs can be divided by lines of symmetry into many numbers of identical or nearly identical parts. Picture a balancing scale, like the one held by lady justice to weigh guilt or innocence. Symmetry can be thought of as putting the same number of identical objects in the opposing pan of a balance/scale. The combined weight of the objects is equal and the objects themselves are equivalent. There are three main types of symmetry.

**Bilateral symmetry:** One line of symmetry divides the image or object into two identical or nearly identical parts.

**Quadrilateral symmetry:** Two lines of symmetry that cross at right angles divide the image or object into four identical or nearly identical parts.

**Radial symmetry:** Multiple lines of symmetry divide the image or object into many identical or nearly identical parts. Radial designs can be thought of as similar to dividing a pie into many equal pieces.

**ASSYMETRICAL or INFORMAL BALANCE:** Asymmetrical designs are created when one side of the design is not a reflection of the other side. Asymmetrical designs still feel balanced but they are balanced by the visual weight of contrasting elements such as, size, color, value, shape and texture. Picture a balancing scale, like the one held by lady justice to weigh guilt or innocence. Asymmetry can be thought of as putting different numbers and sized objects in the opposing pans of a balance/scale. The combined weight of the objects is equal even though the objects themselves are not equivalent.

#### **Assessment Checklist**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Students analyze how elements are organized to create balance within artworks.  
(Student responses to questions posed in What Shall I Choose? PowerPoint)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students identify focal points within artworks.  
(Student responses to questions posed in What Shall I Choose? PowerPoint)

## Lesson Two

### Objectives

1. Students analyze balance and focus in graphic design.
2. Students judge the effectiveness of ads for a particular product.

### Arizona Visual Arts Standards

RELATE: Artworld: PO 102, 202 & 302: Discuss how artworks are used to communicate stories, ideas and emotions.

EVALUATE: Art Issues & Values: PO 202 & 302: Debate whether art is different from visual culture in general.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 101: Identify an element or principle in an artwork that supports its meaning and/or purpose.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 201: Describe an artist's use of elements and principles in an artwork to support its meaning and/or purpose.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 301: Using established criteria, judge the effectiveness of an artist's use of elements and principles in an artwork to support its meaning and/or purpose.

EVALUATE: Quality: PO 203: Use established criteria to make and support a judgment about the quality of a work of art.

### Preparation

Read and make copies of "Exploring the Cool Factor at the Tempe Center for the Arts" worksheet.

Make arrangements for field trip to the TCA.

Before your visit, talk with assigned TCA docent, if possible. Provide the docent with a copy of "Exploring the Cool Factor at the Tempe Center for the Arts" worksheet in advance of your trip and discuss the extent to which students might complete any or all of the worksheet at the center or whether any or all of the questions or ideas might be addressed during their tour.

Read optional "Questor Questions about Fender® Stratocaster® Design" pdf and decide whether you might want to use it to follow up after a visit to the Cars and Guitars exhibition.

### Resources

[Exploring the Cool Factor at the Tempe Center for the Arts worksheet pdf](#)

OPTIONAL: [Questor Questions about Stratocaster® Design jpg](#)

### Activities

Review and Application: Distribute "Exploring the Cool Factor at the Tempe Center for the Arts" worksheets to all students and ask them to answer as many questions as they can during their tour. If writing responses on the worksheet is not practical or possible during the tour, use the worksheet to guide students in focused observation as circumstances permit. For example, you might use questions on the worksheet when students assemble or travel to the TCA or when they assemble for or travel back to school.

Take notes on any new information the docent presents, as well as interesting questions, observations or responses made by your students during their tour. If the circumstances of the visit do not allow students to complete their worksheets, explain that later, in class, you will lead a discussion of discoveries they made about how graphic designers use art to promote an image and a product in the exhibition (use the online *Cars and Guitars* Preview for this discussion).

### **Assessment Checklist**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Students can analyze balance and focus in graphic design.  
(Completion of “Exploring the Cool Factor at the Tempe Center for the Arts” worksheet)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students judge the effectiveness of ads for a particular product.  
(Completion of “Exploring the Cool Factor at the Tempe Center for the Arts” worksheet)

# DESIGN YOUR OWN FENDER® STRATOCASTER®



## Lesson Three (Elementary and Middle School)

“Design Your Own Fender® Stratocaster®” is appropriate for elementary or middle school students. “Create a Cool Cover,” Lesson Four, is appropriate for high school students.

### Objectives

1. Students design an object (guitar) specifically for themselves.
2. Students arrange visual elements to create balance.

### Arizona Visual Arts Standards

CREATE: Creative Process: PO 001, 102 & 202: Contribute to a discussion about ideas for his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Elements & Principles: PO 101: Identify and use elements and principles in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Elements & Principles: PO 102: Identify, select and use elements and principles to organize the composition in his or her own artwork.

### Preparation

Preview Design Your Own Fender® Stratocaster® PowerPoint

Assemble samples of designs on T-shirts, cell phone covers, lunch boxes, shoes, etc., that students will see as being “cool.”

### Resources and Supplies

Samples of designs on T-shirts, cell phone covers, lunch boxes, shoes, etc.

[Design Your Own Fender® Stratocaster® PowerPoint](#)

[Fender® Stratocaster® template handout \(pdf\)](#)

Assorted colors of construction paper

Scissors

Glue or glue sticks

Butcher paper (or large bulletin board) for display of designs of the entire class

### Activities

Review: Review the theme in life, “Life is full of choices,” by discussing how every day we make lots of choices. Explain that we even can consider what we might choose in new or imaginary situations.

Remind students of the theme in art, “artists create designs to get us to choose (or prefer) one thing rather than another,” by showing examples such as surface designs on T-shirts, cell phone covers, lunch boxes and notebook covers.

Review the two key questions with which students have been working in the unit:

1. How do designers and artists balance elements to draw (grab) viewers’ attention?
2. What makes one thing look “cool” (excellent) and not another?



**Assignment:** Explain to students that they are to demonstrate what they have learned by imagining that they are performers designing a Fender® Stratocaster® guitar that will grab the attention of the audience members at a concert. They should make the design for the guitar based on something they like, for example, sports, music, a favorite place, etc.

**Step-By-Step-Instructions:** [Display the Design Your Own Fender® Stratocaster® PowerPoint](#) to show how:

- Fender has designed custom guitars for specific musicians.
- designers base guitar creations on things the designer might like.
- to design and cut out your guitar.
- to select a background and add details of a stage.
- to place your guitar on your stage.
- to balance all your classmates' guitars into a class display.

**In-Process Feedback:** After students have completed their guitars but before they design their background stage, ask them to partner with a classmate to 1) share how they used things they like in their guitar design, 2) describe their plans for their background stage and 3) ask their partner for suggestions.

**Group Planning and Presentation:** Help students arrange their guitars in groups by visual similarity and then organize them onto a piece of butcher paper to make a class display. Work with students, guiding them in brainstorming different ways to organize the guitars 1) to achieve balance and 2) to create a strong focal point in their display.

### **Assessment Guides**

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Both the guitar and background include details.

**Exceeds Expectations:** The student explains how at least one detail of both the guitar and the background relate to something he or she likes.

**Meets Expectations:** The student explains how at least one detail of the guitar or background relates to something he or she likes.

**Approaches Expectations:** Both the guitar and background include details.

**Fails to Meet Expectations:** Either the guitar OR the background includes details.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Students arrange visual elements to create balance.

**Exceeds Expectations:** The student effectively balances his or her design by placing the guitar in relationship to background elements. The student clearly explains how placing more than one guitar within the class display would contribute to the balance of the display.

**Meets Expectations:** The student balances his or her design by placing the guitar in relationship to background elements. The student suggests a way to place at least one guitar within the class to contribute to the balance of the display.

**Approaches Expectations:** The student balances his or her design by placing the guitar in relationship to background elements OR suggests a way to place at least one guitar within the class to contribute to the balance of the display.

**Fails to Meet Expectations:** The student glues his or her design to a background OR contributes to the discussion of balancing the class display.

## CREATING A COOL COVER CRITIQUE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Walk around the room and look at other students' "Cool Covers." Choose 4 that you believe are most successful. List the artists' names below. Answer each of the questions for each cover you chose.

Artist Name	What type of balance did the artist use?	What is focal point of the picture?	How does the type of balance in the picture help you find the focal point?	What did the artist do to make you believe that the CD is cool?

Look at your own "Cool Cover" image. On the backside of this paper answer the following questions.

1. What is the focal point or center of interest?
2. How does the type of balance in the picture help the viewer find the focal point?
3. What did you do to make others believe that your CD is cool?
4. What is the most successful part of your "Cool Cover?"
5. What do you believe could be improved?

# EXPLORING THE COOL FACTOR

at the Tempe Center for the Arts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Fender® Musical Instruments advertisement for 50th Anniversary jazzmaster



SuckerPunch Sally's custom shop advertisement.

1. Circle the ad that you believe to be the coolest?

SuckerPunch Sally's  
or  
Fender Jazzmaster Concert

2. Complete the following sentence: *The ad I chose is "cool" because...*

3. Circle the focal point in the ad you chose.

4. Circle the way/s the focal point stand out in the design.

Subject Matter	Color	Detail
Black & White Contrast		Other

5. Circle the kind of balance used in the design.

Bilateral Symmetry    Quadrilateral Symmetry

Radial Symmetry    Asymmetrical Balance

6. On the back of this paper, sketch your own version of the ad you chose. Use one or more similar elements, but change it by using a different type of balance.

## Lesson Four (High School)

“Creating a Cool Cover” is appropriate for high school students. “Create Your Own Fender Stratocaster,” Lesson Three, is appropriate for elementary and middle school students.

### Objectives

1. Students organize compositions that use balance to create a compelling image.
2. Students create strong focal points for their compositions.

### Arizona Visual Arts Standards

CREATE: Creative Process: PO 202 & 302: Make and explain revisions in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Creative Process: PO 403: Demonstrate the ability to solve ... commercial problems in his or her own artwork.

CREATE: Elements & Principles: PO 201 & 301: Identify, select, and use elements and principles to organize the composition in his or her own artwork.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 101: Identify an element or principle in an artwork that supports its meaning and/or purpose.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 201: Describe an artist’s use of elements and principles in an artwork to support its meaning and/or purpose.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 301: Using established criteria, judge the effectiveness of an artist’s use of elements and principles in an artwork to support its meaning and/or purpose.

### Preparation

Preview [Creating a Cool Cover PowerPoint](#)

Choose a medium appropriate for your class. A beginning art or design class might use traditional collage materials. A computer art class might work digitally.

### Resources and Supplies for a Collage Project

[Creating a Cool Cover PowerPoint](#)

Construction paper or other colored paper

Magazines

Printed or hand-lettered text

Photos or photocopies of photos of students

Markers

Scissors

Glue

[Creating a Cool Cover Critique pdf](#)

### Resources and Supplies for a Computer Project

Internet connected computer lab

Digital or scanned photos of students

Image editing software such as Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Photoshop Elements

[Creating a Cool Cover Critique pdf](#)

## Activities

**Review:** Review the theme in life that “Life is full of choices.” and the theme in art that “Designers create designs to influence us to choose (or like) one thing rather than another.” Also review the unit’s two key questions: 1) How do designers and artists arrange elements to draw (grab) viewers’ attention? 2) What makes one thing look “cool” (excellent) and another not?

**Assignment:** Explain to students that they are to demonstrate what they have learned by designing a cover for a CD that includes a well-known song they believe is cool. Their challenge is to make their covers persuasive enough that teenagers will want to buy them. Assign each student one of the following types of balance: bilateral, quadrilateral, radial or asymmetrical. Also note that they may repeat any of the elements as many times as they need to make their designs successful.

The final album cover will:

- have a square format
- use your assigned type of balance
- use colors you chose
- include a picture of yourself
- include at least three other picture elements
- include a short title

**Step-By-Step Instructions:** Present “Creating a Cool Cover PowerPoint” to show the steps students will follow as generate ideas and they design their covers using “Mary Had a Little Lamb” as an example.

1. Select a piece of music that everyone knows and that you think is “cool” and that you would like to convince other people to buy on iTunes or other music website.
2. Play the song.
3. List key words that come to mind as you listen to words directly from the song itself.
4. List the colors that you think of as you listen to the music.
5. List images that come to your mind as you listen.
6. Review the type of balance you have been assigned.
7. View samples high school cover designs illustrating each type of balance.
8. Make a sketch of your design before beginning your final cover. (If students are working on a computer they can scan their sketches and use them as templates while creating their final image.)

**Self-Check:** Remind the students to review the requirements of the assignment to be sure their sketches meet them before submitting.

**In-Process Feedback:** Ask students to submit their sketches to you for suggestions for any revisions before beginning the final cover.

**Critique:** Distribute “Creating a Cool Cover Critique Worksheet.” Ask students to write positive feedback about several of their classmates’ covers and to identify areas for improvement in their own work.

## Assessment Guides

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Students organize compositions that use balance to create a compelling image.

**Exceeds Expectations:** The student has created a complex cover design that uses his/her assigned type of balance in a compelling way.

**Meets Expectations:** The student has created a complex cover design that uses his/her assigned type of balance.

**Approaches Expectations:** The student has created cover design that uses his/her assigned type of balance in some way.

**Fails to Meet Expectations:** The student has created cover design that does not use his/her assigned type of balance.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Students create strong focal points for their compositions.

**Exceeds Expectations:** The cover design has a strong focal point that reinforces the title of the cover or is particularly effective in capturing the attention of teenagers.

**Meets Expectations:** The cover design has a clear focal point.

**Approaches Expectations:** The cover design has more than one not particularly strong focal points.

**Fails to Meet Expectations:** The cover design has no evident focal point/s.