Introducing Cubism:
Two Activities for Elementary School Students

How to use this resource as a basic introduction to Cubism:

1. Print this document out for yourself.
2. Make two copies of the guitar template included at the end of this resource. You will use one copy to practice the activity and the second to demonstrate for your students.
3. Read through this document carefully before engaging your class in these two activities.
4. For the second activity, each student will need a copy of the guitar template, a sheet of clean copy paper, a glue stick, and a pair of scissors.

Activity One: Introducing Cubism

Please read the following questions and information to your students:

- Do you ever get bored doing the same thing over and over?
- Do you like new challenges?
- Do you ever get new ideas by talking to your friends?

The artist Pablo Picasso would have answered “Yes!” to all three of those questions. Pablo Picasso enjoyed learning from other artists, especially his dear friend Georges Braque. Picasso and Braque became so close that they visited each other’s studio almost every day. Like many close friends, sometimes they laughed. Sometimes they disagreed. Sometimes they challenged each other to think in new
ways. Together they came up with a new way of making art called Cubism.

Cubism involved looking at an object, like a guitar, and instead of painting it realistically, the artist would imagine the guitar broken into geometric shapes. Then, the artist would paint those shapes together in a new way, with different angles and different perspectives. Imagine a puzzle with all of its pieces mixed up.

Activity Two: Making a “Cubist” Guitar

Directions for the teacher

Once you have completed the activity yourself and you are ready to lead students through it, please do the following:

1. Give each student a clean piece of white copy paper, a copy of the guitar template, a glue stick, and scissors.

2. Read step-by-step instructions below aloud to the class.

Directions for students

1. One of Picasso’s favorite subjects was the guitar. Throughout his career, Picasso included the guitar frequently in paintings, prints, and sculptures.

2. Using your scissors, cut along the dotted lines of your guitar picture. You should now have one picture of a guitar and two strips of white paper. Cutting off those strips lets you get rid of some of the white background around the guitar. Discard your two strips of paper. You will not need them.

(Teacher Tip for Step 3: In the next step, students will be asked to cut their guitar template into 6 pieces. They should not cut along the black lines outlining the guitar, but should cut across the outlines of the guitar. They will end up with shapes that have curved or straight edges, or a combination. Please demonstrate this step using the second copy of your guitar template.)

3. Now, use your scissors to cut your piece of paper with the guitar picture into 6 pieces, like this.
4. With the drawing side facing up, rearrange your cut up pieces of the guitar on a blank, white piece of copy paper. Turning the shapes, overlap the edges a little, and experiment with the pieces at different angles until you find an arrangement of shapes that you like. You are not trying to fit your pieces back together so that they look like a realistic guitar. You are using the pieces to create a new composition.

5. Once you are satisfied with what you have made, glue your pieces down. Sign your work and give it a title.

6. Make sure you look at what your classmates made using the same materials. As a class, answer these questions together aloud:

   - What was this experience like for you?
   - How is your composition similar to the original drawing?
   - How is your composition different from the original drawing?