

# Pre-Visit Guide: *The Imaginative Worlds of M.C. Escher*

## Big Ideas & Major Themes

Here's some information relating to your program to review with your students before experiencing *The Imaginative Worlds of M.C. Escher*.

- M.C. Escher's artwork demonstrated that complex mathematical concepts can be expressed visually.
- Escher's interest in nature, architecture, and math helped him create his unique style of art and how over time he was able to create more and more complex images.
- Escher used variations in value and shading to attempt to depict depth or three-dimensionality in 2D works of art.

## SC Standards Addressed

Visual Art R.NH.5; C.NH.7.1;  
C.IL.7.1

Mathematics 7.GM.1; 8.GM.1;  
8.GM.2; 8.GM.3; GCO.2; GCO.3;  
GCO.4; GCO.5; GCO.11



Details of work by M.C. Escher

## In the Classroom

Prepare students for your visit with one or more of these activities.

- Have students predict how objects will look in convex and concave reflective surfaces (e.g. Christmas ornaments or spoons). Try each one, comparing the reflections with a regular mirror. Look at examples of M.C. Escher's [self-portraits](#) in spheres and ask them to create their own.
- Go on a nature walk (either together or at home) and see what small objects you can (safely) collect. Examine them closely, using magnifying glasses to make observations if possible. Look at Escher's detailed drawings of [nature](#) for inspiration to create similar sketches or prints.
- Discuss the difference between 2D and 3D objects. Gather examples of each and categorize them, listing names for geometric shapes and identifying the rules they must follow. Find examples of 3D objects in 2D works of art and note how artists give the illusion of depth.

## Resources

Want to explore more? Review these references to learn and share information with your students.

- M.C. Escher Life and Work [National Gallery US] <https://www.nga.gov/features/slideshows/mc-escher-life-and-work.html?view=grid>
- The Worlds of M.C. Escher Slideshow [NCMA] <https://ncartmuseum.org/exhibitions/view/11364>
- Escher Gallery – Symmetry [Escher Foundation] <https://mcescher.com/gallery/symmetry/>
- The Magical World of M.C. Escher Study Guide [Museum of Art Deland] [https://issuu.com/moartdeland/docs/m.\\_c.\\_escher\\_studycomplete?e=14075992/77292933](https://issuu.com/moartdeland/docs/m._c._escher_studycomplete?e=14075992/77292933)

## Museum Manners

School tours are limited to very small groups at the moment. Contact the CMA to see whether your group is better suited for an in-person or virtual experience. Please review these guidelines with your students before your visit to the museum.

- Touching can permanently damage works of art. Please don't touch the art or lean on the walls.
- Food, drinks, gum, pens, and large bags are not permitted in the galleries.
- Watch where you walk! Try to stay at least an arms-length from works of art.

Questions? Contact us at  
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[columbiamuseum.org/learn](https://columbiamuseum.org/learn)

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