

Mondays with MoMA



MoMA

Step 1 Look closely

Questions

1. What is your first reaction when looking at this image?
2. Read the word aloud. How do the colors and lettering relate to the word/sound “oof?”
3. Try imagining the letters written in a different color, position, or size– would it sound different?

Step 2 Learn more

The artist, Ed Ruscha, liked the kind of words you find in comic strips— the ones that stand for sounds and often made paintings of them. He was particularly interested in monosyllabic word sounds that seemed to have a certain comedic value to them. Here’s what he said about this painting: “This comes from when I was a kid and I would read cartoons and somebody would always be punching someone else in the stomach, and the sound that came out was always ‘oof!’”

Step 3 Illustrate a word or sound

1. Think of a word or sound that you find intriguing and say it aloud.
2. Type your word using Google Slides or any app or program that can design and customize text.
3. Select a font type and size that would best illustrate your word (for example: if it’s a “soft” word, you may want to use a small curvilinear font, or a large angular font for a “loud” word).
4. Try out different colors for the letters and the background (think of how the colors react to each other— colors similar might make an image seem subdued while contrasting colors could make the image more striking).
5. Take a screenshot or save the slide and share your illustrated word with a classmate, family member, or friend. Ask them to say the word out loud and see how they interpret the colors, fonts, and sizes you decided to use. Or, you can email it to us at MoMA: schoolprograms@moma.org



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