

Calligraphy and Collage – March 2026 Capital Calligraphers monthly meeting

Introduction

The key to great collages starts with design. Use some of the fundamental principles of design and examples of great design to give you ideas for the layout of your collage. There are many different materials and techniques to create a collage, but don't let those overwhelm you – focus on the design first.

How to get started on a collage

Pick a theme for your collage. It could be a hobby, or a topic that you're passionate about, or a place. It could be a vision board for the year or further into the future.

Next, collect some items related to the theme of your collage. This could include magazine or catalog photos, newspaper clippings (which are harder and harder to find!), art papers, materials from nature, and pieces of fabric or cardboard.

One approach is to pick a focal point for your collage – it could be a larger photo cut from a magazine, or a large element of color or other item. Think about the placement of your focal point and the locations on the page that are the most visually pleasing. Then, arrange your other items around that item. Consider design elements like color, white space, and contrast.

Play with the arrangement of the elements on the page before you attach them. Once you're happy with the layout, then attach the elements using a glue stick, matte medium, Mod Podge, or other adhesive.

Another approach is to play with putting a bunch of elements on the page and attaching them. Then, create a small "viewfinder" – a square cut out of a piece of cardboard that you move around your finished collage while looking for a visually pleasing layout. If you find a view that you really like, cut that square out of the larger collage.

Five ways to mix collage and calligraphy

1. Calligraphy paired next to collage

Create a circular or rectangular shape and layer pieces of paper and other collage elements to fit the shape, or cut a circle or a rectangle out of a larger collage piece. Attach your piece of collage on another piece of paper. You can write around the perimeter of the shape or write a block of text next to the shape.

2. Calligraphy is one of many elements in a collage piece

Create a collage piece and include an element of calligraphy as one of the pieces in the overall composition. Cut up a calligraphy piece and attach some of the cutouts to the collage.

3. Pieces of paper create collage letters

Tear pieces of paper to create letters or words.

4. Calligraphy provides a collage backdrop

Use calligraphy, or even gestural writing motions with your pen or pencil, to create a background that you can layer over with pictures and abstract design elements.

5. Calligraphy is written on top of a collage piece

Layer collage over a background and then write calligraphic letters as the final layer on top of the piece.

Supplies

- Scissors
- Acrylic matte medium or Mod Podge (Don't worry if you don't have it, I'll have extra!)
- Glue stick
- Magazines or catalogs that have photos with the theme you have chosen
- White gel pen and/or black pen
- Pencil
- Extra supplies that you might like to use for collage (tissue paper, sheet music, elements from nature like leaves and feathers, brush for brush calligraphy, practice lines of calligraphy from classes you've taken, acrylic paint to add elements of color)
- Cheapie brushes for applying the matte medium or Mod Podge

More Ideas and Resources

[A Creative Collage Lesson for All Students - The Art of Education](#)

https://www.allartcraftdesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/the-fundamentals-of-good-design-a-guide-for-artists-crafters-and-designers_65c1d128.pdf

<https://annbmiller.substack.com/p/collage-and-handlettering>

<https://www.brodyneuschwander.com/>

<https://stampington.com/blogs/somerset-place/text-art-adding-depth-to-your-mixed-media-with-words>

[Collage for Beginners - What You Need To Get Started - Jackson's Art Blog](#)