

Workshop Notes

Like most coding environments, TurtleArt has a bit of a learning curve. That's what makes it 'hard fun'! Follow our brief introductory workshop guidelines to help you plan yours.

We have found that the sweet spot for a workshop is making it about 4-5 hours with a lunch break somewhere in the middle. This ensures that learners stay on task and don't get overwhelmed with the material. It also gives learners enough time to experience deep learning. You may also want to recruit a few facilitators to help out during the workshop, as you will find that many learners will request one on one assistance.

Set up your space rather informally. If you can work in a library or group study room that's great! If you'll be working in a classroom, place the desks together or have students work at round tables to encourage discussion and sharing.

Devote the first hour to playing with the white technique cards from your card set. Directly copying these cards will help explain the user interface in TurtleArt. It will also give learners the tools they need to navigate the coding environment and understand the math in the app. You may wish to review the cartesian plane, angles, and circles with students during this time depending on their grade level.

Once students feel comfortable, they can begin to experiment with the art cards. Encourage them to ponder the logic behind the code and to remix the pieces to see what unique things they can create. This usually takes about an hour. Once this part of the session is complete, you can conduct a short sharing period to view learner's progress and then a break.

After the break, have students complete an activity where you ask them to manipulate a shape in different ways. You can suggest a square, a star, a heart, or even a letter from their name. Their first challenge is actually creating the shape and their second challenge is changing it to make something interesting. You will find that some of the students will continue to refer to the cards to help them when they get stuck.

Once the activity has been completed, offer learners the opportunity to experiment on their own. Provide paper and pencils so they can sketch out ideas before trying to recreate them in Turtleart. At this point, facilitators should circulate to monitor progress and answer questions.

End the day with a sharing session where students show off their work to one another and talk about their process and challenges faced while creating their pieces of art.