

Teaching American History For All

A series of lessons incorporating literacy strategies for
Mt Diablo Unified School District
5th, 8th, and 11th grade teachers,
in partnership with
University Of California, Berkeley
History-Social Science Project

8th Grade Lesson: How do you look at art to discover its meaning?

Kathe Welch, MDUSD Art Educator

Contents: How do you look at art to discover its meaning?

- Lesson plan and introduction (Two pages)
- Analyzing Art (Introductory form for first time going through the process)
- Analyzing Art (Main form – for regular use)
- Writing about Art (Writing frame for leading students through basic paragraph construction)
- Analyzing Art and Writing about Art (Combined form – for use after previous forms are mastered)

**Teaching American History for All
MDUSD/UCB H-SSP**

8th Grade Lesson: How do you look at art to discover its meaning?

Developed by: Kathe Welch.

Teaching American History Grant Focus Question:

How do you look at art to discover its meaning?

8th Grade Year-long Focus Questions:

How do you look at art to discover its meaning?

Unit Focus:

Interpreting Art

Unit/Lesson Focus Question:

How do you look at art to discover its meaning?

Unit/Lesson Working Thesis:

Reading a work of art can involve considering the artist's creative intent, its historical context and its intended audience. Other considerations might include the artwork's place in the artist's oeuvre and its place within an art movement

Reading Strategy:

Observation and discussion of an artwork will teach students to look more closely at an image in order to derive meaning.

Example: "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte" by Georges Seurat

Writing Strategy:

Using Sentence-starters students will write about the meaning of a piece of art. Students will use a worksheet to gather information and organize their thoughts prior to writing their reports.

Suggested Amount of Time:

One class period each lesson, on going practice on a weekly basis throughout the school year.

Other Resources:

Primary source: Art work by Individual Artists

Context of the lesson in the unit:

Lessons will serve as an introduction to larger projects and occur on a weekly (or bi-weekly basis) basis throughout the school year.

Concept of citizenship embedded in the lesson:

These on-going lessons will teach students to take a closer look at art and images they see in order to gain deeper meaning. Training students to look for details and derive meaning on their own rather than leaving them to be told what to think will serve them well as they develop into active citizens and prepare to lead our nation forward.

Lesson Procedure:

1. **Introduction:** Show students an image and introduce them to the idea of interpretation
2. **Reading Strategy**
 - Use *Analyzing Art* worksheet to guide students in looking at the artwork.
 - Discuss first image together as a class.
 - Discuss second image together as a class, but break down as follows...
 - Show Image.
 - Have students fill in *I See...* section and discuss in a group of 2-3.
 - Have a groups share out ideas. Instruct students to write down the ides of other students.
 - Have students fill in *It tells me...*section and discuss in a group of 2-3.
 - Have a few groups share out ideas. Instruct students to write down the ides of other students.
 - Have students fill in *I Wonder...*section and discuss in a group of 2-3.
 - Have a few groups share out ideas. Instruct students to write down the ides of other students.
 - Discuss Third image together as a class, but break down as follows...
 - Show Image.
 - Have students fill in *I See...* section and discuss in a group of 2-3.
 - Have students fill in *It tells me...*section and discuss in a group of 2-3.
 - Have students fill in *I Wonder...*section and discuss in a group of 2-3.
 - Have a few groups share out ideas. Instruct students to write down the ides of other students.
 - Discuss Forth image together as a class, but break down as follows...
 - Show Image.
 - Have students fill in the *I See...*, *It tells me...* & *I Wonder...* sections on their own.
 - Have a few groups share out ideas. Instruct students to write down the ides of other students.
3. **Writing Strategy**
 - Have students write about one of the images using the writing frame and their chart. Use same method as above to ‘train’ students to use the writing frame to communicate their thoughts on the image.
 - Students will develop critical thinking skills as the practice picking apart an image, clarifying what they think they see, formalizing their ideas and then explaining their opinions to others.

Art Content Standards:

1.0 Artistic Perception, 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context, 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing & 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

History-Social Science Content Standards:

Draws on skills from all of the History-Social Science Content Standards

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills:

Chronological and Spatial Thinking, Research, Evidence, and Point of View & Historical Interpretation

Reading/Language Arts Content Standards:

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

ANALYZING ART

Name: _____

Visual Analysis Worksheet			
Title of Image: Artist: Media:	I see	It tells me	I wonder

WHY: Analysis
This painting tells me that ...

ANALYZING ART

Name: _____

Title of Image: _____ **Artist:** _____

Media: _____

Visual Analysis Worksheet		
I see	It tells me	I wonder
<i>Use the sentence starters below to discuss the image.</i>		
I noticed ... It looks like ...	It shows ... The painting describes ...	I think that ...
WHY: Analysis		
<i>This painting tells me that ...</i> 		

Writing about art

Name: _____

_____ shows that _____
(Name, title of image) (WHO? Artist)

thought _____
(WHAT? message regarding event)

because _____
(details of the image)

_____/10 points

Writing about art

Name: _____

_____ shows that _____
(Name, title of image) (WHO? Artist)

thought _____
(WHAT? message regarding event)

because _____
(details of the image)

_____/10 points

ANALYZING ART

Name: _____

Title of Image: _____ **Artist:** _____

Media: _____ **Date of work:** _____

Visual Analysis Worksheet		
I see	It tells me	I wonder
<i>Use the sentence starters below to discuss the image.</i>		
I noticed ... It looks like ...	It shows ... The painting describes ...	I think that ...
WHY: Analysis		
<i>This painting tells me that ...</i> 		

Writing about art

_____ shows that _____
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(details of the image)