PICTURING HISTORY: The Medieval Period

A Teacher’s Resource Guide for Using Art to Teach 7th Grade Social Studies and ELA
How to Use These Materials
The materials presented here are developed with the middle school student in mind. The focus is on social studies, English language arts (ELA) and visual arts content. All lesson plans are aligned to the Common Core Standards.

Tips for Using This Guide
- Review the guide and lesson plans. Some of the lesson plans require you to select an image for discussion. Images of art from the collection of the Toledo Museum of Art can be viewed online at http://emuseum.toledomuseum.org/collections. Consider showing these works of art on a smart board in your classroom.
- To make the most of this guide, we recommend completing the pre-visit lesson plan before your visit to TMA. You can customize these lessons with the suggested extension activities to enhance students’ connections with social studies, ELA and visual arts content.
- Take your tour experience back to the classroom by completing the post-visit lesson plan after your TMA field trip. Use the post-visit lessons to help stretch your student’s critical thinking and descriptive writing skills.

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WHAT IS PICTURING HISTORY?

Picturing History is a field trip program offered by the Toledo Museum of Art for 6th-8th grade students. The program aims to support students’ visual literacy, historical thinking and writing skills through the exploration of the TMA collection. During a Picturing History visit, Museum docents engage students in a series of gallery-based activities designed to help them develop descriptive language and become excited about social studies.
How were these resources developed?
The materials presented here are the result of the Teacher Leaders program, a year-long collaboration between the Toledo Museum of Art and social studies, ELA and visual arts middle school teachers from the Northwest Ohio area.

Why use works of art to support social studies and ELA?
Research has shown that when works of art are a part of arts-integrated efforts to teach social studies and ELA content, students develop new connections to the material by absorbing the visual content and translating it into new knowledge. In this way, the visual arts offer students a unique window to other places and times. Arts exposure cultivates students’ reflective and multi-sensory thinking, allowing for insightful connections to previous knowledge (schema) while stimulating students’ creative and analytical thinking.

Benefits include:

- **Excitement and motivation:** Museum objects motivate students to learn about the past.
- **Active participation in the learning process:** Participating in hands-on guided experiences in the Museum allows students to take full ownership of their learning experience.
- **Construction of historical knowledge:** Students develop historical thinking skills connecting social studies content to a larger framework of knowledge.
- **Improved student writing:** Research has shown that pre-writing experiences can foster critical thinking and lead to more precise vocabulary use.

What are the benefits of looking closely at art?
Taking the time to observe works of art develops the imagination while improving visual and reading aptitudes through visual literacy. It allows for a different way of learning about the past and making knowledge relevant in a tangible fashion.

“Students love anything hands-on and collaborative and these types of visual activities truly grab and keep their attention.”

– Dawn Pieper (Harvard Elementary)
Where can I learn more about the benefits of arts-integrated approaches to teaching ELA and social studies?

Here are some additional resources you may wish to review:


Toledo Museum of Art School Partnerships website, schoolpartnerships.toledomuseum.org

**St. George and the Dragon**

**About this Lesson:**

*This lesson was developed by:*

- Katie Coffey (Toledo Early College)
- Ashlie Dempsey (Byrnedale Elementary School)
- Jeniene Hall (Harvard Elementary School)
- Kim Miller (Wayne Trace Jr./Sr. High School)
- Laura Rusch (Ottawa River Elementary School)
- Andrea Schak (Fassett Jr. High School)

**Goals:**

To comprehend grade level texts related to the manuscript and then synthesize the information creating a label for the artwork.

**Objectives:**

- The student will compare and contrast a fictional legend to an informational account.
- The student will compose an informational text to explain an art piece.

**Common Core Standards Addressed:**

- **ELA.RL.7.9:** Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.
- **ELA.W.7.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

**Materials:**

The Golden Legend texts.

**Suggested Resources:**

- High Level Reading: https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/stgeorge1.html
- Low Level Reading: https://images.scholastic.co.uk/assets/a/20/a9/dragon-pcps-217327.pdf

**Step 1:** Discuss the importance of myths and legends during the medieval time period with the students.

**Step 2:** Either as a class or in small, differentiated reading groups, read “The Golden Legend”. Have students write a summary of the story after finishing the reading, this information will be valuable in the creation of the art label.

**Step 3:** Display the image of *Saint George and the Dragon*. As a class, look closely at the image and determine which scene from the legend is depicted in the painting.

**Step 4:** Have the students read the Publication Entry from the TMA website and ask them to write an objective summary of the text.

**Step 5:** Individually or in groups, have students create a label that describes the work of art. The label should include a sketch of the painting, a summary of the legend behind the painting, and relevant facts from the museum text.

**Step 6:** Ask students to share their work with other groups or to the class.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Why were legends told during medieval times?
- How does the fictional portrayal of the story differ from the factual information?
- Why do you think the artist chose to illustrate this particular moment from the legend?

**Extension Activity**

Display an alternate depiction of the legend and lead the class in a discussion comparing and contrasting the two images. Have the students write a short essay on how these differences effect the meaning of the images.

**Suggested Image:** Master FVB, *Saint George and the Dragon*, about 1480-1490 (1987.189)
TOUR SUMMARY

Thank you for choosing the Toledo Museum of Art’s Picturing History program for your class field trip! Your Museum experience will be more fun from the start if you remember to do the following:

• Visit toledomuseum.org/visit/tours/school-tours/ to request your tour.
• If you have any children with special needs, please share any necessary accommodations when you make your tour request.
• Divide your class into groups of 12-15 students, and assign one adult chaperone to each group.
• Have each student wear a name tag with her/his first name in large print.
• Arrive on time.

What to expect during your visit?

The tour for this lesson explores the depiction of knights and legends in Medieval Art. Students will participate in multi-modal activities that help them become excited and engaged in learning about the Medieval world as well as making connections to the modern era.

“My students loved their visit to TMA! They couldn’t stop talking about what they saw.”

– Karen Angst (Eisenhower Intermediate School)
Comic Book Legends

About this Lesson:

*This lesson was developed by:*

- Katie Coffey (Toledo Early College)
- Ashlie Dempsey (Byrnedale Elementary School)
- Jeniene Hall (Harvard Elementary School)
- Kim Miller (Wayne Trace Jr./Sr. High School)
- Laura Ruesch (Ottawa River Elementary School)
- Andrea Schak (Passett Jr. High School)

Goals:

To synthesize information from the fictional and non-fictional articles along with the painting, in order to produce a comic strip that conveys the main ideas of the legend of Saint George and the Dragon.

Objectives:

- The student will analyze the legend to identify characters, setting, dialogue, and plot.
- The student will create or reconstruct a sequence of events from the story.
- The student will organize ideas on how to combine pictures, captions, and dialogue to tell about the legend.

Common Core Standards Addressed:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2:** Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
Materials:
A variety of comic books available for the class and the Golden Legend texts used in the pre-visit lesson.

Suggested Resources:
• High Level Reading: https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/stgeorge1.html
• Low Level Reading: https://images.scholastic.co.uk/assets/a/20/a9/dragon-pcps-217327.pdf
• Image: French, Saint George and the Dragon, about 1480-1490 (1843.30).

Step 1: Distribute the sample comic books to small groups. Help students analyze ways in which the comic-book creator combined text, quotes, and images to tell a story/event or convey a message. Explain that comic strips focus on the main idea and the most important elements of the topic, event, or message to be communicated.

Step 2: Have students identify the characters, setting, and plot on the sample comic-strips. Point out any captions that appear and explain that these are often used to provide a brief narration or give additional information.

Step 3: Have students identify speech and thought bubbles in the examples, and explain how these devices are used. For example, a speech bubble contains the character’s spoken words, while a thought bubble expresses the character’s unspoken thoughts.

Step 4: Review the story of Saint George and the Dragon with your students, discuss the main characters, settings, and theme for the students to include in their comic strip. Display the painting to the class and tell students to include elements from it in their comic strip.

Step 5: Pass out the comic template and ask students to use the six panels on the template to retell the legend.

Step 6: Ask for volunteers to share their work.

Discussion Questions:
• What are the main themes in the legend of Saint George and the Dragon?
• How are these themes connected to what we have learned about the spread of Christianity during the Middle Ages?
• Why might people want to convert to Christianity after hearing the legend?

Extension Activity
Have students use their experience creating comic strips to illustrate a scientific process or mathematical concept through the same medium.
"The Golden Legend"

Comic Worksheet

Create a comic strip illustrating "The Golden Legend". Be sure to include the most important events from the story and include an illustrated interpretation of the painting "Saint George and the Dragon".
Your Own Coat of Arms

About this Activity:

This lesson was developed by:

• Isabel Trujillo-Isaza (TMA Art Educator)

Goal:

To have students reflect on the attributes that represent them as individuals and the symbols linked to them through the creation of a personal coat of arms.

Objective:

Students will apply their knowledge of Medieval symbols to creating a personal coat of arms that is meaningful to them.

• The student will activate schema to create personally significant symbols.
• The student will apply the Elements of Art and Principles of Design to a design challenge.

Ohio Visual Arts Standards Addressed:

• Perceiving and Knowing 1: Explore how personal experiences, interest, cultural heritage and gender influence an artist’s style and choice of subject matter.
• Producing and performing 6: Demonstrate understanding of visual literacy, illustration and graphic communication.

Materials:

Pencils, color pencils, crayons, and coat of arms worksheet.

Step 1: Discuss the meaning of the coat of arms for the Medieval knights with the students. Tell them about how each of the symbols included had a particular meaning, even the colors were particular to a family or a specific place. Help the students think of contemporary symbols which are similar: sports logos, school mascots etc.

Step 2: Display some examples of Medieval coats of arms where the students can see them. Ask students to look closely at the symbols shown on each one, ask them to brainstorm possible meanings. Also ask the students to make observations about how the Elements of Art and Principles of Design are used in the images.

Step 3: Pass out the worksheets to the students. Have the students complete the questions on the first page. Encourage the students to use a combination of words and sketches in their responses.

Step 4: After the students have answered the questions, review the traditional Medieval symbols on the bottom of the page as a class. Let students know they can use this information as inspiration for their own designs or they can create their own set of symbols.

Step 5: Have the students design their personal coat of arms using the template provided on the second page of the worksheet.

Step 6: Ask the students to share their creations with the class. Have the students explain the meaning behind their chosen symbols, colors and text.

“...the TMA program has built my student’s confidence in respect to their ideas and thoughts.”

– Ashlie Dempsey (Byrnedale Elementary)
Some ideas from Heraldry:

- **Colors:** Yellow or gold mean generosity, white or silver mean peace and sincerity, black means constancy and grief, blue means loyalty and truthfulness, red means military fortitude, green means hope, joy & loyalty, purple means sovereignty and justice.
- **Animals:** Bear means protectiveness, bee means industriousness, dog means loyalty, eagle means leadership, falcon means eagerness, fox means cleverness, snake means ambition, tiger means fierceness.
- **Symbols:** Axe means dutiful, crescent means enlightenment, crown means authority, fire means enthusiasm, hand means faith, heart means sincerity.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Arthistory.net webpage: http://www.arthistory.net/medieval-art/
- Resource on historical knights: http://historylists.org/people/list-of-10-most-famous-medieval-knights.html
- Resources on creating comics: http://www.makingcomics.com/
- TMA Reference Library: http://www.toledomuseum.org/education/reference-library

GLOSSARY

- **Armor**: A covering of iron worn by knights for protection.
- **Chivalry**: The medieval principles including a religious, moral and social code which governed knightly conduct.
- **Clergy**: A person with authority to perform religious services.
- **Coat of arms**: A unique design painted on a shield. These designs may be inherited, meaning that they pass from a father to his children. Each symbol on a coat of arms will represent something which has an important meaning to the person or family.
- **Crusade**: A series of religious wars between Christians and Muslims started primarily to secure control of holy sites considered sacred by both groups.
- **Gothic**: Style of architecture developed in northern France that spread throughout Europe between the 12th and 16th centuries.
- **Heraldry**: The art of creating coats of arms.
- **Knight**: A man of honor who held a high military rank, only men who were well trained and showed good personal qualities were chosen by the lords to become knights.
- **Legend**: A narrative genre of folklore that features human actions believed both by the storyteller and audience to have taken place within human history.
- **Lord**: A well-to-do noble who owned an estate, usually living in a castle.
Museum Hours of Operation
Tuesday and Wednesday
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Thursday and Friday
10 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Saturday
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sunday
Noon – 5 p.m.
Closed Mondays, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day

Admission
Admission to the Museum is always free. Special exhibitions or events may require purchased tickets. Members are admitted free to all exhibitions and receive free admission and discounts for special programs, events, and Museum Store purchases.

Location
The Museum is just west of Toledo’s downtown business district, directly off Interstate 75, at 2445 Monroe Street at Scottwood Avenue.
☎ 419.255.8000
▶ toledomuseum.org

Our Mission
We believe in the power of art to ignite the imagination, stimulate thought, and provide enjoyment. Through our collection and programs, we strive to integrate art into the lives of people.

Thank You
This resource is made possible in part by a grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation.

More teacher resources from the Toledo Museum of Art are available online at toledomuseum.org