



Teacher Resource:

American Identity

Sponsored by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation

Portraits

This unit was developed by Ms. Nancy Garand, a Social Studies teacher at Harvard Elementary School, as a part of a collaboration project between the Toledo Museum of Art and area educators. The unit consists of pre- and post- visit lesson plans to accompany a museum field trip. It is intended for 6th–8th grade students.

Standards Being Addressed

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
- Ohio's New Learning Standard, Content Statement # 16. Cultural biases, stereotypes and prejudices had social, political and economic consequences for minority groups and the population as a whole.
- Ohio's New Learning Standard, Content Statement # 17. Americans began to develop a common national identity among its diverse regional and cultural populations based on democratic ideals.

Unit Goals

- Students will think about how American identity is formed.
- Students will think about what contributes to the stereotypes and prejudices of the colonial period.
- Students will begin to think about economic, social and political consequences of cultural biases.

Museum Visit Type and Goals

- American Art with imbedded close looking and describing activities

Key Words

- Identity
- Modern images
- Classic
- Persona
- Adjectives
- Describe
- Close looking

	Lesson Title/Goals	Relationship to Unit Goals
Pre-Visit	<p>The American Mosaic: Art of the American Frontier</p> <p>Explore differences in perceptions of the American frontier.</p>	<p>Students will begin to think about how perspective shapes depictions and how stereotypes play into images.</p>
Museum Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art in the United States • Use close looking, description, adjectives, simulation, interpretation 	<p>Students will look closely at and describe a painting. Students will use descriptive vocabulary to describe the painting.</p>
Post-Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The American Mosaic pt. 2 	<p>Students will look closely at and compare and contrast a series of works of art. Students will consider how depictions of America have changed over time.</p>



Pre-Visit: Art of the American Indian Frontier

Step 1:

Post images of contrasting works of art depicting American Indians.

Step 2:

Ask the following questions, allowing time for discussion.

- Who is depicted in this image?
- What do you know about this person?
- Who made this image?
- Is the artist different than the person he depicted?
- How does this change the impact of this representation?
- What cultural stereotypes cause problems for this group?
- What would you change about this representation? Do you think you could make a representation of this group that would not perpetuate these same stereotypes? What would that look like?



Post-Visit: Timeline Activity

Step 1:

Print out images of a number of works of American art from the Toledo Museum of Art collection and label them with title, artist, and date.

Step 2:

Ask students what a timeline is. If needed, explain that a timeline arranges objects or events chronologically along an axis. Tell the students that they will be working together to create a timeline with some of the early American paintings and objects they have studied. (At this point you might have them make a practice timeline of their day. Using 3 or 4 volunteers, ask them to list things they do every day: wake up, eat breakfast, go to school, etc.)

Step 3:

As a group, establish the boundaries of the timeline. (Designate where the line will be and where the starting and ending points will be.)

Step 4:

Give each student one of your object cards. Ask them to look closely at their object and read the information on the back of the card.

Step 5:

After giving them some time to look, ask the students to work together to arrange themselves in chronological order by the dates of the objects on their cards.

Ask them to try to space themselves to reflect the amount of time between objects.

Step 6:

When they are finished, ask each of them to compare their object with the objects on either side and answer the following questions:

1. How is your object similar to the one that came before it?
2. How is your object different from the one that came after it?

As a group, discuss what the students observed about the timeline and the similarities and differences between the objects.