

Teacher Resource:

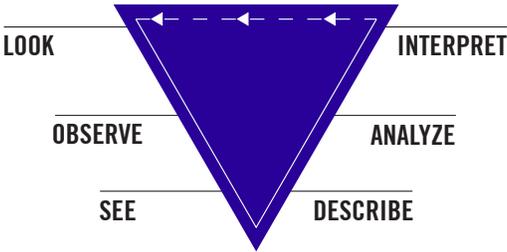
# Exploring American Art

Sponsored by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation



# Exploring American Art

This lesson was developed by Mr. Luke Fannin, an English Language Arts—gifted and talented teacher for Washington Local Schools, as a part of a collaboration project between the Toledo Museum of Art and area educators. It is intended for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Standards		
<p><b>CCRA-ELA-W1-2</b> Writing argumentatively and writing informative/explanatory text based on research.</p>		
Visual Literacy Connections		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="width: 60%;"> <p><b>Look:</b> American Art</p> <p><b>Observe:</b> Tone, color, emphasis, proportion, variety, movement, etc.</p> <p><b>See:</b> Something not easily noticeable</p> <p><b>Describe:</b> Using the vocab discussed</p> <p><b>Analyze:</b> Its intensions, anything subversive? Or is it obvious? Simple? Deeper? Etc.</p> <p><b>Interpret:</b> Argue its importance and/or its value</p> </div> </div>		
Assessment(s): Formative or Summative		
<p><b>Formative assessment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class discussion will occur and will be recorded using the six steps above. All students will be required to participate in small group discussion and then a whole-class discussion will occur after.</li> <li>Students will also be required to write an argumentative paragraph (or two) as a summative assessment.</li> <li>Also, a vocabulary quiz may (or may not) be given as a summative assessment.</li> </ul>		
Learning Intention We are learning to:	Note: Students may report on any piece of art they deem interesting	Success Criteria We will be successful when we can:
<p>We are learning new words and immediately learning how to put them into rich context. We are also using a relevant source of media to think critically and look closer; for details, for inner workings, for clues about the bigger picture.</p>	<p>They may use the <i>Dictionary of Art</i> books in the library to find a short essay to start or they may go beyond and look for more in depth research. Students also have access to the TMA <i>Masterworks</i> book and may find information there before the day of the trip, in order to give students more background.</p>	<p>Discuss with efficacy these ideas and build off one another. Also, can write a creative non-fiction report about a piece of artwork of interest to the student and include context about the artist, etc.</p>

## **Explore**

### **How will you help your students explore this new topic?**

During their extended visit to the Museum the students will spend time in the Museum's Art Reference Library researching a chosen work of art.

Exposure to the world of academia has been a primary goal of mine throughout my two years with this group of students. Students need to find multiple ways to engage with that world as often as possible, especially if they want to one day be a part of it. As gifted and talented students, it is likely many of them will attend a higher education institution at some point. I want to show them that there is a deeper level of understanding required to exist in this world and the Visual Literacy program here coaxes out the truth in that for each student individually. The ownership that exists in interpreting the works of art, simply for oneself, is a very powerful tool for any teacher to wield. I constantly look for ways to reach them on a personal level, so that this ownership becomes a conscious process for all the students. This happens in various ways i.e. talking to students in small groups or individually about the works, explaining how I might interpret it, finding as many connections as possible to their lives as I can.

#### **Materials/Technology:**

Students will have their own notebooks and cell phones (to take pictures) while visiting the Museum. They will also select a work of art during the visit that they are expected to find more information on while visiting the reference library.

## **Expand**

### **How can you broaden, deepen, or extend your students' understanding of this topic?**

Researching the context around a chosen work of art will help the students build their own interpretations of that work, thereby leading to a more engaged learning experience

# Field Trip Lesson Plan:

## 25 Adjectives Activity

**Goal:** To develop the ability to look closely at and describe an object.

**Objectives:** Students will look closely and notice the nuanced details of an object.

Students will use descriptive vocabulary to describe an object.

**Visual Literacy Skills:** Close Looking, Describing

**Materials:** clipboards, lined writing paper, and pencils

**Length:** 5–10 minutes

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### Step 1:

In groups of 3-5 students, ask students to select a work of art for the exercise and give each student a clipboard, piece of paper, and a pencil.

### Step 2:

Tell the students they will have 5 minutes to list at least 25 adjectives that describe the work of art.

### Step 3:

After 5 minutes is up, ask the students to compare lists.

### Ask the group to consider the following:

Which words were repeated on several students' lists?

Which words were unique?

What makes a good descriptive adjective?

How can selecting more precise or evocative adjectives enhance your writing?

# Field Trip Lesson Plan:

## Back to Back Drawing

**Goal:** To develop the ability to look closely at and describe an object for a sustained period.

**Objectives:** Students will orally describe works of art to another student.

Students will interpret oral descriptions into drawings.

**Visual Literacy Skills:** Close Looking, Describing

**Materials:** drawing paper, pencils, clipboards

**Length:** 30–35 minutes

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### Step 1:

Ask the students to find a partner.

### Step 2:

Assign one student in each pair (Describer) to describe an image\* to the Drawer. Try and select something that is unfamiliar to both students. \*Three-dimensional objects work best for this exercise, but photographs of objects or two-dimensional images can also work.

### Step 3:

Activity (5–10 minutes for drawing)

1. Place partners back to back. Describer: stands facing the image.
2. Describer: conducts object observation, describing the chosen image to the Drawer.
3. Describer can describe the object using any language or information they choose.
4. Drawer: draws image as it is being described.

### RULES:

The Drawer CANNOT ask any questions, even if it is just a question of clarification or asking the Describer to speak louder. The Describer CANNOT look at the Drawer's drawing.

### Step 4:

When drawing is complete, Drawer should reveal drawing to Describer.

### Step 5:

Switch roles and repeat Steps 2–4 with a new image.

### Ask the group to consider the following:

Ask the students to tell you some of the challenges they encountered.

Ask the students what strategies they used to create their descriptions.

What kinds of vocabulary did they use?

Did they encounter something that they didn't have an adequate word to describe?

How did they deal with this challenge?

# Field Trip Lesson Plan:

## Research Project

### Step 1:

Give the students 10–15 minutes to explore the Museum’s American galleries. During that time, each student should select a work of art that they would like to learn more about.

### Step 2:

After selecting the work of art, ask the students to examine the gallery label and take note of:

- Title of the work
- Artist’s name
- Date of the work
- Accession Number
- Three questions they have about the work of art

### Step 3:

Once all students have selected a work, as a group visit the research library to learn more about their chosen work of art.

### Step 4:

After the Museum visit, students will return to school and write an argumentative paragraph stating and defending their interpretation of the work of art.