
Activity: Framing Nature
Age range: Grades K–8
Artistic Skill: Visual Art
Culture: Any

Skills to Develop: To translate a visual and physical experience of nature into a drawing using observation, detailed description, and composition.

What you need:

- Examples of nature photography/drawings
- 10-20 minutes for a walk outside
- Paper, pencils, erasers
- (Could include shared disposable cameras)

Vocabulary to explore:

- frame
- landscape
- experience
- composition
- sketch

Directions:

1. Look at some examples of nature photography and/or nature drawings. What details do you see? Are the *landscapes* you see real or imaginary?
2. Take a 10-minute walk outside without talking. Look up at the sky, look down at the ground, look everywhere around you as you walk.
3. Make a *frame* with your fingers- as if you were taking a photograph. This sets up a *composition*.
4. When you come back inside, take 10-20 minutes to write down (or talk about) as many things as you can remember that you saw on your walk.
5. Then consider what you were thinking about as you walked. Now make a *sketch* of one of the places or things that you saw or *experienced*. How can your drawing show what you were seeing and what you were thinking about?

Goal/Outcome: Students are more observant and begin to understand that artists use observations skills to conceive of and execute their art.

Curriculum Link: Language Arts Curriculum Standard 2: "Students will demonstrate the interest and ability to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences." Curriculum Frameworks for the Arts: Visual Arts Curriculum Standard 6: "Students will make connections among the visual arts, other disciplines, and daily life."

Activity: Advertising Workshop

Age range: Grades 4–8

Arts Skill: Theater

Culture: American/European

Skills to Develop: To use a theater-based idea to apply multiple skills such as drawing, writing, working in a group, research, and so forth

What you need:

- Assorted paper and drawing tools
- Prop materials

Vocabulary to explore:

- storyboard
- skit
- casting/cast
- scene
- rehearse/rehearsal

Directions:

1. Divide into small groups. You'll need at least 3 people in each group.
2. Brainstorm a public message or advertisement. Is there a product you want to sell? Or is it an idea? (examples: no smoking, eat healthy, get fit, etc.)
3. Working as a group, begin to write down your ideas and develop a *Storyboard*- through drawing/coloring. You'll need a message in your *skit*, and you'll want to include 2-3 *scenes*.
4. Decide what characters you need in your skit, and create your *cast*.
5. Decode and create any props you'll need.
6. *Rehearse* your skit.
7. Present your skit to the rest of the class.

Goal/Outcome: Students understand the process through which a message or idea can be prepared for dramatic presentation

Curriculum Link: Language Arts Curriculum Standard 5: "Students will demonstrate competence in using the interactive language processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing, to communicate effectively."

Activity: A Picture Tells a Story
Age range: Grades 4–12
Arts Skill: Creative Writing
Culture: Any

Skills to Develop: To use abstract art to introduce students to ways of expressing their unique experiences through writing and storytelling.

“Learning to write is learning to observe, analyze, think, be open, and to value your own experience.”

Rebecca Rule

What you need:

- Paper, pencils
- Examples of abstract art

Vocabulary to explore:

- voice: *the writer’s presence on the page*

Directions:

1. Start by looking at abstract art.
2. Study the shapes, colors, brushstrokes, movements, and so forth.
3. Focus in on one small section of the artwork, and write about what you see, what it makes you feel, what it makes you think of. What kind of place is it? What could happen there?

Goal/Outcome: Students will make connections between visual art and creative writing.

Curriculum Link: Language Arts Curriculum Standard 2: “Students will demonstrate the interest and ability to write effectively for a variety of purposes.”

Activity: Movement Using Scarves

Age range: Grades K–2 (Extension: grades 2–4)

Arts Skills: Movement

Culture: Any (Extension: Chinese)

Skills to Develop: To get the children moving, demonstrate that dance is a way to communicate, and show how modern dance is different than other forms of dance.

What you need:

- A “scarf” (piece of colored fabric) for each student
 - A variety of music selections
- (Extension:)
- Long, wide fabric pieces
 - 12–16 inch dowels
 - A Chinese music selection

Directions:

1. Play music with a variety of moods and tempos.
2. Listen carefully to the music, and then begin to move around in space.
3. Think about how the music makes you feel and how you can show that feeling in the movement.
4. Use different kinds of movements: stop, go, high, low, fast, slow, rounded movements, and angular movements.
5. Make shapes with your body and the scarf while you listen and move to each music selection.

(Extension: Chinese Ribbon Dance)

1. Attach a long wide fabric piece to the end of a dowel. (Duct tape works, or you can sew it on).
2. Listen to a Chinese music selection.
3. Chinese dancers use ribbon sticks to express emotions (happiness, energy, sadness) or landscapes (water, hills, waterfalls).
4. Move around the room exploring the gestures and motions that produce different ribbon effects.

Goal/Outcome: Students will learn about body language and moving through space in new ways.

Curriculum Link: Curriculum Framework for the Arts: Dance Curriculum Standard 3: “Recognize dance as a way to create and communicate meaning.”

Activity: A Family Testimonial
Age Range: Grades 3–6
Arts Skill: Visual Art and Storytelling
Culture: African-American

Skills to Develop: To use reading, discussion, and visual art to demonstrate the relationship between an African-American story and each student’s own family story.

What you need:

- A copy of *Jalani and the Lock* by Lorenzo Pace (New York: PowerKids Press, 2001)
- Personal objects from each student
- Paper
- Drawing materials

Vocabulary to explore:

- African-American: *A descendant of Americans who came from Africa. America is made up of so many different kinds of people that come from other countries and cultures.*
- Slavery: *When people are forced to work for no pay.*
- Freedom: *Being able to make your own choices about where to live, where to work, and who you want to be.*
- Testimonial: *Something that tells about a person or a family. It can be a trophy, a report card, a photograph. For Lorenzo Pace’s family, their testimonial is the lock.*

About the Book: The book *Jalani and the Lock* tells the story of Lorenzo Pace’s family. One of Dr. Pace’s ancestors was brought to America as a slave. *Jalani and the Lock* tells how this enslavement happened and how the family passed down the story from one generation to the next.

About the Author/Artist: Lorenzo Pace is an artist, a musician, and an author. He was born in Birmingham, Alabama, and grew up in Chicago, Illinois. He went to college to study art and arts administration. He now lives in Brooklyn, New York, where he has an art studio. One of his artworks is a large sculpture that is in New York City. The sculpture is called “Triumph of the Human Spirit.” It is very big and very heavy, weighing about 300 tons! It is made of granite.

Directions:

1. Find an object at home that means something special to you and your family.
2. Draw a picture of the object. You could also glue colored paper, magazine clippings, and other collage materials onto the drawing.
3. Then write a story about the object. Why do you like it? Why did you choose it? Why is it special to your family?

Goal/Outcome: Students will understand the idea of a family symbol, and they will understand the value of passing down a family story.

Curriculum Link: Curriculum Framework for the Arts: Visual Art Curriculum Standard 4: “Analyze the visual arts in relation to history and culture.”

Activity: Family Stories
Age Range: Grades 8–8
Arts Skill: Storytelling
Culture: Franco-American

Skills to Develop: To understand that family stories have different flavors, and that storytelling is an interactive a creative process that is deeply connected to history.

Historical Clues: Many Franco-Americans are descended from the explorers who came to Canada from France in the 16th and 17th centuries. In the late 19th century, because of hard times for farming, much of the population of Quebec headed south to live in New England and work in the textile mills. Today, there are 3 million people in the northeast United States that are of French heritage. Their heritage is kept alive through storytelling, music, and dance.

Vocabulary to explore:

raconteur: (rock-on-TUR) *storyteller*

voyageur: (voi-ah-JUR) *traveler, explorer*

chez-nous: (shay-NEW) *at our place, home*

Memere, Pepere:(memm-AIR, pepp-AIR) *Grandmother, Grandfather*

Allons-y!: (ah-lon-ZEE) *Let's go!*

Directions:

1. Is there someone in your family who likes to tell stories? Are the stories made up, or about real people and real events?
2. Think about a specific story. Write down a sketch of the story: What happens? What are the characters? How does the story end?
3. Tell the story out loud using your notes. Think about gestures, speaking loudly and softly, different voices, and pauses.
4. Did you change the story? Did you add new characters, new events, new ideas? How would you tell the story differently next time?

Goal/Outcome: Students will learn to improvise and elaborate stories told orally.

Curriculum Link: Language Arts Curriculum Standard 3: "Students will demonstrate the interest and ability to speak purposefully and articulately, as well as listen and view attentively and critically."