

POETIC INSPIRATION

Overview

Students will create works of art inspired by the poetry of Walt Whitman, Maya Angelou, Carl Sandburg, and Langston Hughes.

National Standards

- VA:Re.7.2.6a. Analyze ways that visual components and cultural associations that images suggest can influence ideas, emotions, and actions
- VA:Re8.1.6a. Interpret art by distinguishing between relevant and non-relevant contextual information and analyzing subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, and use of media in order to identify ideas and mood conveyed
- VA:Cn10.1.6a. Generate a collection of ideas reflecting current interests and concerns that could be investigated in art-making
- VA:Cn11.1.6a. Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.9. Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics

Materials/Works of Art

Images of works of art by Jennifer Borders

<https://jenniferbordersart.com/portfolio/owing-to-circumstances/>

<https://www.decontemporary.org/i-hear-america-singing>

Poems by Walt Whitman, Maya Angelou, Carl Sandburg, and Langston Hughes.

<https://whitmanarchive.org/>

<https://www.mayaangelou.com/>

<http://carl-sandburg.com/index.htm>



Discussion

Literary, visual, and performing artists draw inspiration from one another through collaboration across medium and disciplines. Writers and artists practice closer observation to details, reflect on observations, and generate new ideas for creating. Use the following questions to analyze and discuss works of art by Jennifer Borders.

How has the artist utilized poetry to create a work of art?

Describe and discuss the role of text as a visual element in a work of art. Which elements of art and design are utilized in the treatment of the text?

Describe and discuss the similarities and differences in the elements of art and poetry including mood, tone, weight, line, texture, and meaning.

Activities

As a class, select a poem to analyze for symbolic language and create a vocabulary list that can be used to brainstorm imagery or symbols for students to illustrate in sketchbooks or in preparation for creating their own works of art.

Experiment with using text as a visual element to create concrete poems in which the arrangement of linguistic elements and the typographical effect convey meaning. Explore the weights and varieties of lines along with the spacing of letters.

Individually or in pairs, select a poem to utilize as inspiration for student art-making. Students should consider the meaning and personal connections to the poem as they develop themes or ideas for their own works of art. Utilize a variety of materials and begin with the elements of art as students plan and create their works of art.

Reflection

How are the elements of art utilized in poetry and visual art?

What images and symbols are communicated through poetry and art making?

Describe and discuss the connections between poems and student works of art by displaying selected poems along with the works of art they inspired.

Extension

Collaborate with your English Language Arts teacher to further explore the connections between writing and art-making.

Utilize works of art by classmates and contemporary or historic artists as inspiration for writing ekphrastic poems.

Learn more about poetry memorization and recitation through Poetry Out Loud.

Research the work of contemporary poets and respond through art-making:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

<https://www.poets.org/>

