

Who is Cyrus Dallin?

Cyrus Edwin Dallin (1861-1944) Springville, Utah
Portrait of John Hancock, 1896
Sculpture-bronze cast, 34 " High

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING (History, Aesthetics, Criticism)

What makes an artwork interesting? What details do you see? What details have your friends found that you have missed? How might your answer to the first question affect the things you see? How can something that is only shades of brown have so many details? How would this sculpture differ if it was painted with color? Why do you think it is not in color? Can the subject of an artwork impact the way you look at it? How might an artist choose the details to include in an artwork? What might he need to know about the audience who will observe his or her art work? What catches your attention first about this portrait of John Hancock? What are a few of the historical events that took place during the time of John Hancock? What is a symbol? What symbols did Dallin use to portray the historical events? How does Dallin's use of these symbols in this sculpture make it more interesting for you?

ACTIVITIES

1. Visual Arts-making

Objective: Develop a legible and handsome cursive italic script. (Many schools are adopting italic as a total handwriting curriculum because it produces such a legible and attractive script.)

Introduce the students to italic calligraphy and cursive italic and provide them samples. Discuss the benefits of good handwriting. As a class, learn and practice the direction of the strokes to create each letter. Provide the following nonsense alphabet sentences to use as practice. The idea behind an alphabet chain is to use all 26 letters in as short a sentence as possible, as is done in the examples below:

1. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
2. Six of the women quietly gave back prizes to the judge.
3. The judge quickly gave back six prizes to the women.
4. Four women quietly gave the sixth prize to the judge.

5. Picking just six quinces, the new farmhand proved strong but lazy.
6. We could jeopardize six of the gunboats by two quick moves.
7. The six men had power to seize five Jags quickly.
8. Quickly pack the box with five dozen modern jugs.
9. The lazy judge was very quick to pay tax money for the barn.
10. Jack typed requisitions for white moving boxes (long size).

After some practice using the cursive italic script, have the students write "Weather Grams" (a short poem, 10 words or less). The topics can be seasonal, environmental, or a response to the beauty of nature. Have the students write their "Weather Grams" on pieces of brown paper bags using italic handwriting in permanent ink. (Higgins Black India Ink is the best. Students will need fountain pens or other pens with permanent ink. Some may want to try using calligraphy pens.) Students may tear the edges of the bag to create an interesting earthy shape to write on. Fold part of the paper over at the top and punch a hole as a place to attach a piece of natural twine for hanging purposes. Tie the "Weather Grams" in a tree for at least three months, and let nature help create a natural beauty to the paper.

When the "Weather Grams" have aged sufficiently, the students can display them, use them as bookmarks, give them as a present, exchange them with classmates, or take them home and put them on the refrigerator.

Other writing assignments can be done using the italic handwriting--poems, quotes, letters, memories, or song lyrics. Let the students experiment with different kinds and textures of paper and different colors of ink. Help the students to mat and or frame these writings and exhibit them in the school or public space like at the public library or a hospital.

Encourage students to use italic script in everyday assignments and writing.

2. Visual Arts-expressing

Objective: Students will understand the difference between the viewer's perception and the artist's original intent by viewing and interpreting various artworks.

While viewing an artwork have the students do the following:

- Express feelings about the artwork and discuss how those feelings might be related to the observer's own experiences.
- Describe what the artist's intent may have been at the time the artwork was created.

Discuss with the students that often the viewer's perception and the artist's original intent are similar, but differences may exist. Advanced students might research to locate a statement by the artist as to their original intent.

3. Visual Arts-contextualizing

Objective: Students will be able to recognize that art from various cultures, times and places have similar purposes or functions by connecting the artworks to a specific culture, time or place.

Describe and list examples of major uses or functions of significant works of art over various periods during our nation's history; i.e. philosophy or religion, utility and use, documentation or history, ornamentation or decoration, and/or self expression. Have the students locate two art works from differing cultures, times or places and compare the purposes or functions of the two artworks. Show the students several significant works from various cultures and have the student decide on the appropriate culture. Some examples of artworks are:

A Renaissance work, a Chinese landscape scroll ink wash, a Japanese vase, a Russian religious icon, a colonial portrait, a Oceanic tapa cloth, an African cult figure. Advanced students might also be able to identify the works according to time and place.

4. Visual Arts-contextualizing

Objective: Students will be able to recognize the importance and uniqueness of visual arts to depict the history and social conditions of a nation.

Have the students view artworks that depict the history or social conditions of a nation. The following are the suggested list of works and artists:

Paul Revere, John Hancock, Massasoit by Cyrus E. Dallin

Sun Rise, North Rim by Mabel Pearl Frazer

Fur Traders Descending the Missouri by Bingham

Dancing Class by Edgar Degas

Young Hare, Self Portrait by Dürer

Harvest Scene by Paul Gauguin

Have the students interpret the historical events or social conditions that are depicted in the artwork. Remind the students that the artworks are effective in depicting the history or social conditions only to the degree that the artist's interpretation is accurate.

5. Social Studies

Objective: The students will be able to list several inventions or discoveries that were originated during the colonial period.

Show the class *John Hancock* and ask if anyone knows who the statue is of and what he is famous for. Use the following information to initiate a class discussion about discoveries and inventions. Help the children to understand the link between our culture and innovation.

When the first European colonizers arrived in America, they faced continual challenges to their ingenuity and resourcefulness. A little more than 100 years after the beginning of

the colonization, Americans had developed a culture based on individuality and resourcefulness. When King George III of England levied more and more taxes on the colonists, it was not surprising that many of them rebelled.

This rebellion swelled into a movement to separate the new land from England and to become an independent nation. Beginning with the Stamp Act Congress of 1765, which declared the colonists' right to a voice in taxation, the movement gained momentum, and 11 years later The Declaration of Independence was written to officially separate them from British rule and to institute a new government based on the principle that all men are created equal.

When the document was presented to the Continental Congress for adoption, the men who would sign it knew their signatures on the Declaration would constitute an act of treason against the British crown. Accordingly, the men held back until John Hancock stepped forward and signed his name with a flourish. The rest quickly followed his lead, mutually pledging to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

After the successful end to the Revolutionary War, the culture of the new nation continued to produce independent men and women and to encourage innovative problem solving. Out of this supportive environment came many important discoveries and inventions that effect our lives today.

Have the students discuss what inventions or discoveries they think were originated during the colonial period. Have the students research the colonial period and make of list of appropriate discoveries.