

Postcards From Utah Artists

Using Postcards in Lower Elementary Grades

Identifying kinds of artwork

Objectives: Students will demonstrate their understanding of drawings, paintings, sculptures, and prints by accurately choosing each from a group of images.

Students will demonstrate their ability to draw, paint, make, a sculpture, and a print, by completing artworks in each medium.

Students will demonstrate their understanding of critical analysis by identifying ways their artworks are similar to those by professional artists.

Many young children do not know what a painting is or how it differs from a sculpture or a print. The following lesson will help them identify several kinds of artwork. This lesson may take as many as five class periods.

Materials

- postcards: Choose 2–3 of the paintings from the Elementary Postcard set.
- 2–3 of the sculptures
- 2–3 drawings—make postcards from drawings such as *A Compromise of Freedom and Control*, Connie Borup or *Eureka*, B. F. Larsen, sma.nebo.edu or choose da Vinci drawings at artcyclopedia/artists/leonardo_da_vinci.html
- 2–3 prints such as *Full Bloom*, Trevor Southey (Postcard set), or *Jenni's Bookshelf*, Royden Card; *Blue Magnolia's XVIII third state*, Jenni Christensen; *Killer Bee*, Harry Taylor sma.nebo.edu

Drawing

Give the students sheets of good-quality drawing paper, pencils and rulers. Have students draw a border around the paper, using the width of the ruler and erasing the lines that overlap in the corner. Choose a subject for the students to draw or allow them the choice. Show the students how to use the side of the pencil lead to do some shading. Tell the students they have made a drawing. Show them the postcards you have made of drawings and have the students identify ways their drawings and the ones pictured on the postcards are similar.



Connie Borup,
A Compromise of Freedom and Control

Painting

Give the class sheets of heavy paper and watercolor or tempera paints. Have them draw a border around the paper, as in the drawing component of the lesson. Then have the students draw simple shapes on the paper such as circles, squares, and rectangles. The shapes should overlap and fill the space. Then students will paint the shapes and the background. They may paint the border or leave it the color of the paper. Explain that they have now created a painting. (The reason for having students make separate drawings for the drawing and the painting are so students do not think all drawings are a prelude to painting.)

Variation: Instead of shapes, have the students make a drawing inspired by a story you have read in class. They can then make a painting, as in the previous step.

Divide the students into groups of 4–5 and give the students the postcards of the paintings and drawings. Have them separate the drawings and the paintings. (If you have enough postcards so each member of the group gets one and has to decide whether it is a drawing or a painting, you will ensure participation by all the students. Have the groups compare and see if everyone in the class agrees. Have students identify ways the drawings and paintings are the same and ways they are different. Then, have students identify ways their paintings and the postcard paintings are similar.



B. F. Larsen, *Eureka*

Sculpture

Materials

- oil-based clay or salt dough
- paint (optional)
- photographs of animals—you can often purchase animal books at thrift stores and cut out the pages
- postcards of drawings, paintings, and sculptures

Give each student some oil-based clay or salt dough (recipe follows) and let them choose a photograph of an animal. Then the students will make the animals in clay. If you used oil-based clay, display the animals for a week or two before using the clay for other activities. If you used salt dough, allow the animals to dry, and then bake them at 350 degrees. After baking, the animals may be painted, or make the clay a neutral color such as a warm brown. Display the animals.

When the students have completed a drawing, a painting, and a sculpture, divide the class into groups (new ones) and pass out the postcards. Have students divide the postcards into Drawings, Paintings, and Sculptures. Discuss as in the previous activity.

Printmaking

Materials

- styrofoam meat trays, plates, or pieces of insulation (the blue kind), cut into 2" x 2" squares
- pencils
- postcards of drawings, paintings, sculptures, and prints

Have students divide a sheet of 4" x 4" scratch paper into 4 by folding it in half and then in half again. In each square students should make a simple line drawing. Each square needs to have at least one small change. Students choose which design they like best and go over the lines. (If you have drawing pencils, a dark pencil such as a 3b is good. Then the design will be placed face down on the piece of styrofoam and rubbed to transfer the design. Students will use their pencils to carve down into the blocks to make the design. Remind the students that the lines they carve in will be the part without ink. Having an example to show the students is helpful. Then have students print their designs. You may want to have them print the design once on white paper, wipe the printing block, and print again on a dark colored paper using a light colored paint or ink.



Royden Card, *Jenni's Bookshelf*



Ideas for designs:

Have students make a design from their initials.
Have students draw one item such as a piece of fruit.

Have students draw a person doing some activity.

You may also want to have the students print an edition. Printing an edition is how artists print: they make a group of prints at the same time, with the goal of making each print look the same. Prints should be signed at the bottom and numbered such as 2/5, which means the second print from an edition of five.

Jenni Christensen

Blue Magnolia's XVII third state

Divide the students into groups and pass out the postcards. Have the students select the prints from the group of postcards. If the students have difficulty, help them identify traits of the prints. (One reason they may have difficulty is that artists use drawings to make prints and so some prints look very much like drawings. For example, compare Trevor Southey's print *New Bloom* with the da Vinci drawing on the right. On the other hand, *Killer Bee*, by Harry Taylor is easier to distinguish. Help the students figure out where they could get information that would help them know whether it is a print or drawing. They can look at the label, which includes what medium the artist used for the artwork.)

Review the terms the class has learned: drawing, painting, sculpture, print.

Extension: Have a local artist or advanced student come and demonstrate for the students and show some of his or her work in one of the media you've explored. Or show a video of an artist painting, drawing, sculpting, or making prints.



Leonardo da Vinci, *Head of the Virgin*
image from metmuseum.org



Resources

Videos: Check your district media center.

Web Sources:

sma.nebo.edu

artcyclopedia.com

askart.com

artincontext.com

Extension for older students: Have the students choose one media they're most interested in and do a unit on that media. Make more complex or extended artworks, learn about an artist, learn about the history of the medium, discuss and critique artworks, etc.

Harry Taylor, *Killer Bee*

Using Postcards to Review the Elements and Principles of Art

The postcards make reviewing concepts the class has learned simple and fun. In addition, using them in groups offers students the chance to learn from each other.

For color: Divide the students into groups and pass out postcards to each group. Have the students find postcards with the color scheme you call out such as complementary, analogous, monochromatic, etc. When they have found a postcard that fits the category you have given, they can hold up the postcard. Then you can check for accuracy. Students can validate each other's choices, too.

Do similar reviews with line and shapes by asking for different kinds of examples. You can also have the students review vocabulary such as pattern, realistic, landscape, etc.

These reviews can be used to assess and evaluate student learning about the concepts, terms, and ideas you have studied in art lessons.



Drawing, Advanced

Objective: Students will learn to draw freely, leaving all lines.

Materials

Postcard-sized reproductions of *Madonna and Child*
Charcoal, neutral-colored pastels
Drawing paper
Model

Give the students postcards of *Madonna and Child*. Ask them to comment on da Vinci's approach to drawing. Challenge them to complete three figure drawings of the model, leaving all lines and drawing as freely as possible.

Have students look at their drawings as small groups and describe what, if anything, has happened to their drawing style. Have students keep the drawings in their portfolios and revisit them periodically.

Leonardo da Vinci

Madonna and Child

image from thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

Standing Up for Shape and Color—But Make it Abstract

Objective: Students will understand 3-dimensional and abstract art so they can create their own abstract sculpture.

Materials:

- Examples of both 2-D and 3-D art
- Scissors, glue
- Construction paper and/or other colorful paper,
- Small pieces of cardboard
- Elementary Postcard sets

Discussion: Display the examples of the 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional art.

Ask: What is art? After their responses, discuss the examples so students understand the difference between 2-D and 3-D art with questions such as:

How was “this one” made?

What is the difference between the 2-dimensional and the 3-dimensional art?

Which kind of art do you think is better?

Which do you like the best?

Why? or What do you like about it?

Tell: One of the things we know about the people who lived on the earth thousands of years ago is the kind of art they made. When men were living in caves they drew art on the walls of the cave. Every civilization we know about has created art. Some of the art has been 2- D and some has been 3-D.

Activity:

Explain the postcards

Divide students into groups.

Pass out postcards

Have students find the pictures of three-dimensional art

Ask: What do you think these works of art are made of?

Tell: Three-dimensional art is called sculpture.

Write Cyrus Dallin and Mahonri Young on the board. Have the students separate the postcards.

Read the bio information on the back. Then have students look one at a time at the Dallin pictures and read the information about the sculpture.

Ask: Do you know any of the people he made these sculptures of?

All of his sculptures are of real people in history.

Now look at the Mahonri Young’s sculpture. This sculpture is called *Factory Worker*. How is that different from the Cyrus Dallin sculptures?

Tell: Artists make art about the things they are interested in.

Look through the postcards and find the one that is only shapes and colors.

(*Chelsea VI*, by Donald P. Olsen)

Ask: This is a painting.

What do you like about this picture?

Why do you think the artist painted this kind of picture?

Read the bio on the back of the postcard.

Which of the works of art (the sculptures and *Chelsea VI*) do you like the best?

Let students tell why they chose the one they did.

Tell: This artist liked to make shapes and colors. Using colors and/or shapes that are not like real things is called abstract art.

Show: The supplies you have for the students to use.

Ask: How do you think we could make a sculpture (3-D work of art) that is abstract, out of these things? Discuss various ways of folding and rolling the paper to make it stand up in a 3-dimensional way.

Project: Students will use the cardboard as a base to create a 3-D work of art using the colors they like.

Assessment: Let the students show and talk about their work.