  
*Represntation of Marriage Alliances*

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| **Introduction** | |
| This panel is the lid of a *cassone*, a large wooden chest that women would store textiles in when they got married. This cassone was given to the daughter of Giovanni Borromei when she married into the Pazzi family. The Pazzis and Borromeis were both influential noble families in Renaissance Italy. The wedding between them was a political event as much as a personal one. As shown on the panel, the putti (child figures) riding on dolphins were symbols of the Pazzis, and the banners display the Pazzi and Borromei coats of arms.  During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, being from a noble family meant more than just being wealthy. The nobility formed a social and political unit, where members served in positions of power in government, economics, and the arts. Rather than emphasizing cash flow, family power often came from a variety of different sources, including marriages like the Pazzi/Borromei wedding. This resulted in a system of governing where personal relationships had political consequences. Noble families were at the center of progress and development during this time.  Symbols and coats of arms were very important to noble families. Noblemen often met on battlefields, where suits of armor and helmets made it difficult to tell each other apart. To make it easier, knights painted specific patterns, symbols, and animals onto their shields. This slowly developed into standardized and well-known family heraldry. A noble person from the Renaissance could see the design on the cassone lid and immediately know that it was for the Pazzi/Borromei wedding, simply because they were trained to read and recognize their coats of arms. Today, the lid does the same for us, and helps us to understand more about power and nobility during the Renaissance. | |
| **Indiana Standards Connections:**  6.1.4 Identify and explain the development and organization of political, cultural, social and economic systems in Europe and the Americas.  6.1.8 Compare the diverse perspectives, ideas, interests and people that brought about the Renaissance in Europe.  WH 3.8 Analyze the consequences of the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the development of feudalism and manorialism in Europe.  WH 4.2 Trace the origins and developments of the European Renaissance and its impact throughout Western Europe.  WH 4.3 Discuss the emergence of nation-states as well as the **increased impact of the citizen** as a result of the decline of the European medieval period. | **Compelling Question(s):**  What role did symbols and coats of arms play in distinguishing noble families, and how did they help maintain social and political order during the renaissance?  How did noble families in Renaissance Italy use marriage to build political alliances, and why was this important for maintaining their power?  How can understanding the significance of heraldry and political marriages help us better understand the social and political dynamics of the Italian Renaissance? |
| **Lesson Objectives:**   Students will:  Learn about symbolic power and social capital through close observation of the Cassone lid. Connect the importance of marriage alliances to social and political structures in Renaissance Italy. Students will also analyze the connection between art as a tool for political influence and power, and politics during the Renaissance. | |
| **Materials** | |
| * W2W Cassone Lid Lesson Plan * W2W Medal of Cosimo de Medici Lesson Plan * [Coat of Arms Activity Pack & Template- Museum of Dufferin](https://www.dufferinmuseum.com/wp-content/uploads/Coat-of-Arms-Activity-Pack.pdf) * [Heraldry- Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/topic/heraldry) * Pens, colored pencils, markers * Cardboard paper * Scissors | |
| **Learning Plan** | |
| **Activities**  This lesson plan can be used to complement the Medici Medal Lesson Plan. It can be used to compare how families rose and maintain power as exemplified through the Medici and the Pazzi and Borromei union.   1. Observe the figures on the lid, ask students to describe what they see. They might mention the two babies riding on dolphins and blowing a trumpet with a flag. Explain that these symbols represent each family. 2. Break students into small groups. Ask them to examine the cassone lid and discuss the figures represented.  * What symbols are shown on the cassone lid? What might they represent? * How could marriage between the Pazzi and Borromei families affect their political power? * Why do you think it was important to represent the union of two families? * Consider that this panel was painted on inside lid of a wooden chest given to the bride on her wedding day, reflect on the personal motifs and social institutions.   Explain how marriages between noble families like the Pazzi and Borromei were used to strengthen political power. These unions were strategic, helping to build alliances that could influence government, economics, and culture.  Design your own coat of arms  Students will design their own family coat of arms using symbols they feel represent them. (You can provide a template for students to draw on). This [guide](https://www.dufferinmuseum.com/wp-content/uploads/Coat-of-Arms-Activity-Pack.pdf) provides templates and examples of symbols with their meanings to aid students with this task.  Ask students to design their own coat of arms using symbols that represent their family, interests, or values. They can use animals, shapes, or objects that are meaningful to them.  The coat of arms must include:   * Coat or arms silhouette * Symbols or text that represent the figures power, influence, or values * A brief description explaining why they chose the figure, and the symbols used   Reflection  Have students share their coat of arms and discuss why they chose the symbols, colors, and motifs. What political or social messages are conveyed through their designs. Ask them to explain the significance behind the symbols they chose.  How do their designs compare to those used in Renaissance Florence? | |
| **Assessment Suggestions**  Evaluate students’ coat of arms based on creativity, understanding of symbolism, and explanation of the design. Assess their ability to connect historical and modern concepts of political influence through art. | |
| **Extensions**  Students can tie this lesson to the Medal of Cosimo de Medici lesson plan to study other forms of how objects function to signal symbolic power in Renaissance Italy. | |

Cassone Lid Activity Possibilities

Some of the best opportunities for education are *integrative*—meaning that students are able to make connections across disciplines to reinforce the knowledge that they are developing. For example, they may be learning about Renaissance Italy in World Studies at the same time that they read Dante’s *Inferno* in English class while also studying Botticelli in Art. Feel free to combine and adapt some of the ideas across disciplines and standards to best suit your particular context. You can also collaborate with other teachers at your school or supplement the resources provided by contacting your librarian.

**Note: The following ideas are meant to give general guidance for teachers to include artifacts and other material culture in their classrooms. They are not meant to be treated as comprehensive activities or lessons that are one-size-fits-all for any classroom. They should be personalized to best fit the needs of a teacher’s individual context in accordance with prior student learning, student abilities, available resources, and any curricular guidance.**

**Art**

**Visual Arts – Responding:**

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| **Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work**  **Enduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed throughout engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.**  **Essential Question(s): How do life experiences influence the way you relate to art? How does learning about art impact how we perceive the world? What can we learn from our responses to art?** | |
| **VA:Re7.1.1a** | Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences. |
| **VA:Re7.1.6a** | Identify and interpret works of art or design that reveal how people live around the world and what they value. |
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| **VA:Re9.1.5a** | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society |
| **VA:Re7.1.Ia** | Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences. |
| **VA:Re7.1.IIa** | Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments |
| **VA:Re7.1.IIIa** | Analyze how responses to art develop over time based on knowledge of and experience with art and life |

**Visual Arts – Connecting:**

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| **Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.**  **Enduring Understanding: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.**  **Essential Question(s): How does art help us understanding the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures? How is art used to impact the videos of a society> How does art preserve aspects of life?** | |
| **VA:Cn11.1.1a** | Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.2a** | Compare and contrast cultural uses of artwork from different times and places. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.3a** | Recognize that responses to art change depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made |
| **VA:Cn11.1.4a** | Through observation, infer information about time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.6a** | Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.7a** | Analyze how response to art is influenced by understanding the time and place in which it was created, the available resources, and cultural uses |
| **VA:Cn11.1.8a** | Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity |
| **VA:Cn11.1.IIa** | Compare uses of art in a variety of social, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.IIIa** | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society. |

*Students can be asked to consider how art reflects time periods, beliefs, cultures, traditions, etc. In exploring the Cassone lid, students are examining how items such as this reflected class and stature in European society and why such items were seen as luxury. Students could also explore how luxury items have changed over time; how different cultures use art, artifacts, and props to demonstrate their interests, beliefs, and stature; how such items demonstrate social capital; etc.*

**Social Studies**

**Grade 6: History, Places, and Cultures in Europe and Americas**

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| **6.1.3** | ***Explain the impact of humans on the physical environment in Europe and the Americas.*** |
| **6.3.10** | *Explain the ways cultural diffusion, invention, and innovation change culture.* |
| **6.3.11** | *Differentiate between the terms anthropology, archaeology, and artifacts while explaining how these contribute to our understanding of societies in the present and the past.* |

**Ethnic Studies**

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| **ES.4.1** | *Students examine historical and contemporary economic, intellectual, social, cultural and political contributions to society by ethnic or racial group(s) or an individual within a group.* |

**Geography and History of the World**

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| **GHW.4.2** | *Use a variety of text (writing, maps, timelines and/or other graphic representations) to show the movement, spread and changes in the worldwide exchange of flora, fauna and pathogens that resulted from transoceanic voyages of exploration and exchanges between peoples in different regions. Assess the consequences of these encounters for the people and environments involved.* |
| **GHW.4.3** | *Identify and compare the main causes, players, and events of imperialism during different time periods. Examine the global extent of imperialism using a series of political maps.* |
| **GHW.4.4** | *Analyze and assess how the physical and human environments (including languages used) of places and regions changed as the result of differing imperialist and colonial policies.* |

**World History and Civilization**

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| **WH.7.3** | *Investigate and interpret multiple causation in analyzing historical actions and analyze cause-and-effect relationships.* |
| **WH.7.6** | *Formulate and present a position or course of action on an issue by examining the underlying factors contributing to that issue and support that position.* |

*Outside of the 6th and 7th grade Indiana standards, the exploration regarding how the Renaissance led to new representations in art and culture, influenced by its social and economic context. Students should be able to examine the role of institutions and individuals involved in the development of artistic movements reflected on the Cassone lid panel. There’s room for them to make connections to contemporary issues that are similar to and a consequence of economic systems and symbolic and political power.*

**Language Arts**

**Writing Skills:**

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| **4.W.5** | **Conduct short research on a topic.**   * **Identify a specific question to address (e.g., What is the history of the Indy 500?).** * **Use organizational features of print and digital sources to efficiently locate further information.** * **Determine the reliability of the sources.** * **Summarize and organize information in their own words, giving credit to the source** * **Present the research information, choosing from a variety of formats.** |
| **5.W.5** | Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic.   * With support, formulate a research question (e.g., What were John Wooden’s greatest contributions to college basketball?). * Identify and acquire information through reliable primary and secondary sources. * Summarize and paraphrase important ideas and supporting details, and include direct quotations where appropriate, citing the source of information. * Avoid plagiarism and follow copyright guidelines for use of images, pictures, etc. * Present the research information, choosing from a variety of sources. |

*Students could conduct research projects in which they examine examples of other items that have symbolic power and how these are transformed, representing personal taste while reflecting social and cultural instead of monetary value and explain their importance in society.*