

*Using Art to Tell our Stories*

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| **Introduction** | |
| Art is a way that cultures and communities preserve and pass down the messages and ideas that are important to them. They use art to commemorate people, places, things, or events that are important and that future generations should know about. By studying art, we can learn not only about what is depicted, but we can also gain insight into the minds of the artists themselves. Art tells stories about what people are passionate about and we can build connections with others by using art to better understand those passions. | |
| **Indiana Standards Connections:**     VA:Cn11.1.2a  Compare and contrast cultural uses of artwork from different times and places.  This lesson can also be connected to social studies or language arts standards that address community history, narratives, or myths. | **Compelling Question(s):**     How do we use art to tell the stories that are important to us? |
| **Lesson Objectives:**    Students will:  Examine different art pieces to see how art is used to tell stories that are important to a particular culture.  Students will conduct a search for art that is important to their community and will compare and contrast their piece with one of the examples provided. | |
| **Materials** | |
| 1. Images of the Bilingual Eye-Cup with Hermes and Nereids and the Red Figure Krater with Achilles 2. Student laptops/tablets with access to an image search engine 3. Venn Diagram worksheets | |
| **Learning Plan** | |
| **Activities**   1. Lead students in a discussion about the two pieces of Greek art. Start with big questions like “What kind of art are we looking at? Has anyone seen anything similar before? What are some of the things you notice about the details on each piece? What are they depicting? Why might the artists have wanted to portray these specific things?” 2. Discussion can develop around broader ideas of how art represents important people, places, and things to the artist and their culture or community. 3. Brainstorm with students about some things in their community or culture that some people might want to portray through art? This can be connected to social studies through historical events, or language arts if there are stories that have inspired fans to create art. The art we create can be inspired by any number of sources—it’s all worth examining because it tells us what is important to people. And even though over 2,500 years have passed and we live quite far from Greece, we also believe in preserving our stories in art. 4. After discussing the elements of the two Greek pieces and brainstorming some ways that we still preserve our stories, give students the chance to find a piece of art that tells a story that they are passionate about and that is culturally important for them. They can browse museum websites, or think about stories that they know and then search for images or art associated with that story/person/place. 5. Students can have the option to share out or even give a small presentation about their piece of art and the person/place/thing that it represents. | |
| **Assessment Suggestions**    Students can complete a Venn diagram that includes the similarities and differences between one of the Greek artifacts and their chosen piece of art. Some things they can compare are style, level of detail, medium, any utility (purely aesthetic, religious, does the item double as a tool), method of story-telling, audience, etc. This is an opportunity for students to utilize previously learned art vocabulary.  Alternatively, students can take their Venn diagram and turn it into some kind of visual presentation—either through electronic or hard copy. This can provide them with their own opportunity to use art and their creative capacities to pass along the stories that are meaningful to them. | |
| **Extensions**    This lesson can be extended beyond the geographic region of the ancient Mediterranean. You can use art as a way to talk about cultures across the globe—especially from marginalized communities who may not otherwise get much representation in your curriculum. Consider how Indigenous art from the Americas and Oceania or from sub-Saharan Africa could give students a perspective outside the context of colonialism or slavery.  Art can also function as a companion to talking about historical events in the social studies or works of literature in language arts. Art is incredibly interdisciplinary and can complement many other areas of learning. | |

Hermes Eye Cup 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 – Creating:**

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| VA:Cr2.1.5a | Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches in making works of art and design. |
| VA:Cr2.3.PKa | Create and tell about art that communicates a story about a familiar place or object. |
| VA:Cr2.3.IIIa | Demonstrate in works of art or design how visual and material culture defines, shapes, enhances, inhibits, and/or empowers people’s lives. |
| VA:Cr3.1.Ia | Apply relevant criteria from traditional and/or contemporary cultural contexts to examine, reflect on, and plan revisions for works of art and design in progress. |

*As students develop their sense of self as artists, work like the Greek pottery can be used as an example for many different purposes. It can be discussed as a medium of art and the process and technique involved to make a piece of pottery (ranging from simple to complex); it can serve as an example for students to try and make themselves, giving them practice with various raw materials and tools like a pottery wheel; think about how context impacts and influences the creation of works of art, using the Greek context as a reference point.*

**Visual Arts – Presenting:**

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| VA:Pr4.1.Ia | Analyze, select, and curate artifacts and/or artworks for presentation and preservation. |
| VA:Pr6.1.2a | Analyze how art exhibited inside and outside of schools (such as in museums, galleries, virtual spaces, and other venues) contributes to communities. |

*Art cannot be understood in a vacuum—it is important to understand the context around its presentation. What stories are told in the way that an artifact is presented and described? Whose voice is used? What might be missing? What is the importance of having art presented and viewed as part of the community? As part of our culture?*

*These are all questions that students can think about as they search online for pieces of art that they would want to put together in an art exhibit. What story do they want to tell with the items they choose? How do they justify those decisions? Students can begin to develop argumentation skills by having to articulate why certain pieces of art (and the cultures they represent) should be included or excluded.*

*As students develop their exhibit, they can also practice writing the labels that would appear alongside the item. What information is critical for the audience to have? How can you take the narrative behind your exhibit and best convey it to your audience? There can also be a spatial/visual component by asking students to actually design their exhibit space and describe a particular narrative that they want to accomplish through the construction of the space and the ordering of the objects.*

**Social Studies**

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

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| 6.1.1 | Summarize the rise, decline, and cultural achievements of ancient civilizations in Europe and Mesoamerica. Ex: Greek, Roman, Mayan, Incan, and Aztec |
| 6.3.4 | Describe and compare major cultural characteristics of regions in Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Ex: Language, religion, recreation, clothing, diet, music/dance, family structure, and traditions. |
| 6.3.11 | Differentiate between the terms anthropology, archeology, and artifacts while explaining how these contribute to our understanding of societies in the present and the past. |

*As students begin to explore the world at a young age, they can utilize tactile experiences to gain an understanding of the material processes that have been developed by ancient peoples. These artifacts could be paired with local artifacts such as Native American pottery to discuss how craft and design are culturally universal. As with other standards, these are conducive for pairing with Arts and Language Arts standards. These standards are well-suited to cross-cultural study. Students (either individually or in small groups) could be assigned a civilization for study and they could use that civilization as a lens throughout the semester to study things like art, science, religion, language, etc. Students could present on these findings periodically and expand their understandings of how various civilizations developed parallel to each other.*

**Geography and History of the World**

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| GHW.8.1-3 | Trade and Commerce |
| GHW.11.1-6 | Sports, Recreation, and Tourism |

**World History and Civilization**

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| WH.2.3 | Examine the development of Greek civilization including differing political and social structures as well as conflicts such as the Persian and Peloponnesian wars. |
| WH.7.2 | Locate and analyze primary sources and secondary sources related to an event or issue of the past. |
| WH.7.5 | Use technology and historical data in the process of conducting and presenting historical research. |

*The incorporation of these artifacts is broadly applicable when teachers are covering content from the Ancient Mediterranean. This portion of the curriculum is rich for its cultural implications including the enduring presence of religion and mythology and the Olympic tradition. Students can research the wealth of art and literature that arose from the ancient Olympic games, including pottery that is similar to the provided resources.*

*The Olympics are a great topic to explore the key social studies theme of change-over-time. The Olympics can act as a backdrop when studying issues such as nationalism, the American Civil Rights Movement, decolonization, international cooperation and the development of global cooperative endeavors. They can also highlight specific events, such as the Munich Massacre at the 1972 Summer Olympics, cancellations during global conflicts or from large-scale boycotts, or as recently as part of the global reaction to the COVID-19 crisis affecting the 2020 Tokyo games.*

**Language Arts**

**Grade 1 Reading Skills**:

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| 1.RL. 2.2 | Retell stories, fables, and fairy tales in sequence, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson |
| 1.RL.2.3 | Using key details, identify and describe the elements of plot, character, and setting. |
| 1.RL.3.1 | Identify the basic characteristics of familiar narrative text genres (e.g. fairy tales, nursery rhymes, storybooks). |
| 1.RL.4.1 | Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events |

*As students are introduced to stories and narrative forms, items like these Greek artifacts can be referenced as early methods of storytelling, prior to texts. Teachers can ask students to try and interpret what might be happening in the scenes on the pottery, and can ask how it is a different way to tell a narrative than through methods they are more familiar with.*

*Students could try drawing their own scenes that would go on a piece of pottery, or they can copy scenes from stories that are being told in class. (Tying in to Art as well) What elements of the story would need to be present in the scene so the story is understood?*

**Grade 5 Writing Skills:**

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| 5.W.3.3 | Write narrative compositions in a variety of forms that—   * Develop the exposition (e.g., describe the setting, establish the situation, introduce the narrator and/or characters. * Develop an event sequence (e.g., conflict, climax, resolution) that unfolds naturally, connecting ideas and events using transitions. * Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations. * Use precise and expressive vocabulary and figurative language for effect. * Provide an ending that follows from the narrated experiences or events. |
| 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 copywright guidelines for use of images, pictures, etc. * Present the research information, choosing from a variety of sources. |

*Students can use artifacts that have narrative components—like the Greek pottery—to begin to develop and practice their writing of fiction and the stylistic elements that go along with it. Teachers can separate students into small groups and each group has to write a story that would fit the scene happening on their piece of pottery. Students can work collaboratively, or they can work individually. If students work collaboratively, they can then present as a group to the rest of the class. If they work individually, they can “Jigsaw”, where new groups are formed by taking one person from each of the original groups and having students share their individual pieces in small groups.*

*There is also the option for students to learn how to conduct research on people, places, or things using the Greek pottery as a guide. The teacher can distribute artifacts to students (either individually or as groups) and can demonstrate how to conduct research. For example:*

* *Start with a research question: “How did the Greeks make pottery?”*
* *Information can be acquired by showing students how to use search engines and find reliable information online, or in print.*
* *Find and dissect a source together as a class by taking out important ideas, distinguishing between paraphrasing and direct quotation, and correctly citing the source.*
* *Brainstorm ways to present the answers to your question.*

*Once the teacher has demonstrated, students can work on their own projects. This activity also provides great connections to history and social studies standards.*

*Both of these options also provide teachers to assess conventions of standard English, as well as other language arts skills.*

**Grades 11-12 Literature**

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| 11-12.RL.4.1 | Analyze multiple interpretations or adaptations of a story and evaluate the extent to which multiple interpretations of a story, play, or poem stay faithful to or departs from the text or script, and analyze the impact of the interpretations on the audience. |
| 11-12.RL.4.2 | Analyze and evaluate works of literary or cultural significance in history for the way in which these works have used archetypes drawn from myths, traditional stories, or religious works, as well as how two or more of the works treat similar themes, conflicts, issues, or topics, and maintain relevance for current audiences. |

*As students begin interpreting more advanced texts, it is worth noting that the stories depicted on items like the Greek pottery are also interpretations of stories that may bear similarities or differences to other versions that they may be familiar with. These pieces of art can be starting points for students to interpret the stories across time—starting with visual depictions on pottery all the way to adaptations in film and television. Students can find adaptations and present their similarities or differences; describe enduring qualities and importance that some narratives have for communities; or develop their own adaptations that are unique from others that they have seen. This is also an opportunity to provide comparative aspects by letting students examine works from across the globe.*