

Examining Connections Between Literature and Photography

Grade

●12

Teacher-In-Residence

●Kristen Kurzawski

Subjects

●English, Art

Carnegie
Museum of Art

Objectives

- Analyze works of art through art engagement methodology and discussion.
- Connect works of art to literary texts.
- Use specific details from art and textual evidence from literature to support ideas.
- Analyze characters and examine characterization.
- Formulate statements explaining what an artist or author is trying to convey with their work.
- Write an essay that analyzes art and literature.
- Participate in large group discussions and develop listening and speaking skills.

Goals

- Develop critical thinking skills through art engagement methodology.
- Examine how meaning is developed in art and literature.
- Expand thinking and understanding of art and literature by finding connections between texts, art, and historical events.
- Develop speaking, listening, and writing skills.

Standards

National Standards:

- **VA:Re7.2.1a** Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.

- **VA:Re8.1.8a** Interpret art by analyzing how the interaction of subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, use of media, artmaking approaches, and relevant contextual information contributes to understanding messages or ideas and mood conveyed.

- **VA:Cn10.1.1a** Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas.

- **VA:Cn11.1.1a** Describe how knowledge of culture, traditions, and history may influence personal responses to art.

PA Common Core Standards

- **CC.1.2.11–12.G** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

- **CC.1.3.11–12.B** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support

analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and conclusions based on and related to an author's implicit and explicit assumptions and beliefs.

- **CC.1.3.11–12.H** Demonstrate knowledge of foundational works of literature that reflect a variety of genres in the respective major periods of literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

- **CC.1.3.11–12.K** Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

- **CC.1.4.11–12.A** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately.

- **CC.1.4.11–12.C** Develop and analyze the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic; include graphics and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

Artworks



Charles "Teenie" Harris, *Girl holding doll, possibly in Stevenson Doll Shop, ca. 1950–1960*, Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.23825



Charles "Teenie" Harris, *Roberta Thomas and Joyce L. Addaway (Harris) with former slave Sabre "Mother" Washington, in her home at 8141 Conemaugh Street, Homewood, ca. 1949*, Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.40321

Resource

- “Science, Civil Rights, and the Doll Test”
by Kristel Tjandra

Lesson

- 1.** Present the photograph of Sabre “Mother” Washington to the class and ask students to complete a See/Think/Wonder for the photograph. Students should silently record their ideas in their notebooks.
- 2.** Ask the students to share out their notes and discuss. If it does not come up in discussion, ask if this photograph brings out positive or negative emotions in the viewer and ask them to explain.
- 3.** After the discussion, tell the students the title and date of the photograph. Then ask if the title of the photograph and the knowledge of who is in the photograph changes their perspective of it. Discuss.
- 4.** Present the photograph of *Girl holding doll...* and ask the students to complete a See/Think/Wonder for the photograph, silently recording their ideas in their notebooks.
- 5.** Ask the students to share out their notes and discuss. If it does not come up in discussion, ask if this photograph brings out positive or negative emotions in the viewer and ask them to explain.
- 6.** After discussion, give students a copy of the article “Science, Civil Rights, and the Doll Test.” Ask students to read through the article and annotate it silently. This can be assigned as homework if time requires it.
- 7.** After reading the article, ask the students to discuss what they annotated. What was interesting or surprising to you? What questions did the article raise? What thoughts do you have after reading?
- 8.** After discussing the article, reflect on the Teenie Harris photo of *Girl holding doll...* Does the article change your thinking about the photograph or reinforce it? Explain.
- 9.** Finally, ask the students to write a one-paragraph response to each photograph explaining what they believe Teenie Harris was trying to convey with each one. They should use details from the photograph to demonstrate their thinking.
- 10.** Students will read the short play *Flyin’ West* by Pearl Cleage for homework over the next week. While reading, students should annotate (using Post-It notes) for

Lesson

characterization and the overall meaning of the work. Meaning of the work (MOW) is an AP English Literature term that asks students to explain what message the author is trying to convey, what questions the author is asking the reader to consider, and/or what change the author is trying to create in society.

11. After reading the novel we will discuss and analyze the characterization of Sophie, Miss Leah, Fannie, Minnie, and Frank. Students will use textual evidence from the play to support their thinking about each character.

12. After several days of discussion on characterization, students will come up with initial meaning of the work statements for the play. Example: Cleage is asking Americans to consider if it is possible to heal the generational trauma of slavery without family to support.

13. After writing meaning of the work statements, the teacher will post the Teenie Harris photographs again and ask the following questions:

- Do you see connections between the photographs and the play? Where? Explain.

- Are there connections between the message of the photographs and the message of the play? How? Explain.

14. After this discussion, students will have the opportunity to redraft their MOW statements for the play and will be asked to write a formal MOW statement for each photograph.

15. Finally, students will be asked to write an essay examining the connection between one of the Harris photographs and Cleage's play, and how these pieces are arguing, questioning, or asking the reader/viewer to consider some idea about America, society, and/or humanity. Students are expected to use specific details from the photograph they choose to demonstrate their ideas, and they are expected to use at least four direct quotations from the play to demonstrate their ideas.