

Teachers' Circle Lesson Plan Template

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Subject area: English Literature and Composition
Grade level: 9th grade
Lesson title: Symbolism and Theme in Literature and Art

Brief summary/lesson plan description

Every text (visual or literary) has a story to tell. Students will learn about symbolism and theme as related to literary texts in the classroom; specifically, how symbols represent abstract ideas and taken together contribute to a text's theme. They then will apply the same techniques to visual texts or artworks at the museum to find symbols in artworks and infer what theme those symbols are conveying. Students will carefully study and reflect upon art pieces at the Washington Pavilion, take notes and photos. Back at school students will write about their chosen works of art's symbols and the narrative they see being told with the art.

Prior Knowledge (What do the students need to know before they come to make this lesson meaningful?)

The terms "symbolism" and "theme." How to identify symbols and make inferences from texts, both literary and visual texts.

Common Core or State Standards Addressed

English Language Arts Standards:

9-10.RL.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

9-10.R.L.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

9-10.SL.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

9-10.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Visual Arts Standards:

HSp.VA.Cr.1.2 Use artistic investigation to choose from a range of materials and methods to plan works of art and design.

HSp.VA.Cr.2.1 Engage in making a work of art or design without having a preconceived plan.

HSp.VA.Pr.4.1 Analyze, select, and curate artifacts and or artworks for presentation.

HSp.VA.Pr.6.1 Analyze and describe the impact that an exhibition or collection has on personal awareness of social, cultural, or political beliefs and understandings.

HSp.VA.Re.7.1 Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.

HSp.VA.Re.7.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences (such as how one's understanding of the world is affected by visual imagery).

HSp.VA.Re.8.1 Interpret an artwork or collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the work and its various contexts.

HSp.VA.Cn.11.1 Describe how knowledge of culture, traditions, and history may influence personal responses to art.

Essential Skills and Strategies Addressed (Creativity/Critical Thinking/Communication)

Skills addressed are: critical thinking, oral and written communication, close reading of texts of different media, and analysis.

Instructional Strategies/Differentiation

I will provide students with questions to get them thinking about the works and looking for symbols. I may give some students more or less guidance, either on paper or orally, as needed.

Since there are no “right or wrong” answers the lesson is differentiated in that each student brings his/her experiences and knowledge to the discussion and as long as they support their inferences their claims are valid. They will transfer this strategy to the classroom and in reading and writing texts.

Lesson objectives (Students will understand...)

To read (or view) for understanding means to question what is being read (viewed).

To support their ideas with evidence. Sometimes what the author means is not directly stated in the text.

To demonstrate comprehension through summarization of details. That the author (or artist) intentionally uses story elements and specific detail to develop and reveal the theme as it develops throughout the text (art).

Discussion is a good way to talk over ideas with peers, even in a situation where viewpoints may differ from one another.

Essential Questions to guide this unit/lesson and focus teaching and learning:

The VTS questions:

1. What is going on in this picture?
2. What do you see that makes you think that?
3. What more can we find?

The students will then apply these questions to close reading texts, making inferences about texts, and supporting their claims.

Technology and Resources Needed

Paper and writing instrument to take notes and camera to take photos.

Procedure (learning activities)

Close reading, writing, oral discussion, inferring, supporting claims

Assessment Method

After the field trip students will produce a two page typed paper on their chosen art piece, analyzing the piece for symbols and making inferences about the piece, supporting their inferences with details from the piece.

After writing their papers, students will create their own works of art in collage form. Students will create their own narratives using symbols.

Museum Exhibits/Resources Utilized

Visual Arts Center (number of galleries depends upon time constraints).

Additional materials:

Guiding questions to use to take notes at the Visual Arts Center
Symbolism PowerPoint

After selecting a piece of art to analyze (at the Visual Arts Center at the Washington Pavilion if you went on the trip; if you didn't go on the trip you can select a piece by following the link).

After examining your visual piece for symbols and inferring what it is about, you will type a 375 word paper that explains what is happening in the art, and what it is you see that makes you think that. Your paper should be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced). We will work on the paper in class on Thursday as well and it is due on Monday.

Note: Your insights are personal and will not look like another's.

- What can you infer based on what you see?
- What more do you want to know about the artwork?
- What colors, lines, textures, patterns, do you see?
- Describe the visual balance of the image. Describe the size and scale.
- What medium is the work?
- Is there a focal point?
- What is the title?
- What is the subject matter?
- Whose point of view is it?
- What is the mood or feeling of the work?
- What is the big idea?
- What literary, art, film, or music connections can you make?
- Where is it?
- What is the setting?
- When was it made?
- Who made it? Why? What was the intention or purpose of the work?
- What factors influenced the creation (education, art movement, religion, politics, historical, etc)?