

“Perspectives on America”

5
Grade Level

Educational Objectives

Students will compare and contrast the perspectives and historical influences of a variety of artists using inference and analysis, and will create their own art about America.

Completion Time:



Music / Arts Concepts

- Composition
- Dance/movement
- Lyrics

Subject Areas:



Materials

 Book: Celebrate America in Poetry and Art by the Smithsonian Institution

 CD: *America the Beautiful*

- Journals
- Rhythm instruments (from music teacher)
- Art supplies

Teaching Strategies

Session 1

Materials needed: Copies for each student of the following poems from *Celebrate America* – “America the Beautiful” (p. 10), “I Hear America Singing” (p. 58), and “I, Too” (p. 59); and recordings of different musical versions of *America the Beautiful*



- Distribute copies of the poem “America the Beautiful” to the class and listen to (or sing) the musical piece, *America the Beautiful*. Ask the students to pay particular attention to the descriptive words and lyrics.
- Discuss the inspiration for the piece: How does the composer use the poem as an inspiration for the music? What musical techniques does the composer use to get across the idea of the poem? (e.g. soaring melodies represent the descriptive language)

Competencies:

- Inference
- Descriptive writing
- Perspectives
- Compare and contrast
- Analysis
- Context clues

Teaching Strategies

- Introduce a current recording of *America the Beautiful* such as Whitney Houston’s version: How is her interpretation similar to or different from the original version?
- Read “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman and “I, Too” by Langston Hughes.
- Compare and contrast the two poems: What descriptive words stand out in each poem? How does the tone of each poem differ? What were the two authors’ viewpoints on America?
- How was America different when each of the authors was living? How does the time period in which each poem was written affect the author’s perspective about the country?
- Ask the students to brainstorm a list of their ideas about America: What descriptive words would you use to express your ideas? Are there any current events or cultural backgrounds that shape your opinion? The students should decide about their viewpoint by combining the artists’ perspectives they agree with and their own opinions.
- Have the students create a piece of artwork that represents their perspective on America. (Collaborate with the music, art, and physical education specialists.)
Students might:
 - **Compose** a piece of music using rhythm instruments, body percussion, vocal sounds, samples of other music, or sounds around the room. What instruments should you use? What kinds of sounds might create a mood that suggest your ideas?
 - **Create** a piece of visual art in an appropriate medium (sculpture, drawing, painting, collage, photography, etc.) How will you use your materials to get across your viewpoint?
 - **Choreograph** a dance. What style will you choose (hip hop, ballet, salsa, modern, etc.) What kinds of movements best express your perspective?
 - **Write** a poem, short story, essay, or play. What descriptive language will you use?
 - **Design** a web page. What content will you include? How will your layout and design express your ideas?
- Provide time for the students to create their artwork. Share works with the class. You might want to organize a small exhibition of student work and invite other classes, family members, and members of the community.

Teacher Tips
For more information on Walt Whitman and Langston Hughes, please see the related web sites. You might also want to find and share biographies of Hughes and Whitman.

Related Web Sites



Walt Whitman

www.iath.virginia.edu/whitman



Langston Hughes

www.poets.org/lhughes

Assessment Strategies

Performance Assessment

Use the artwork produced to assess comprehension of the educational objectives.

Curriculum Connections

This support unit satisfies the following objectives as outlined in the revised Ohio Academic Content Standards.

Arts



Music: Historical, Cultural and Social Contexts

- The learner will recognize, identify and demonstrate theme and variations in the music of various cultures and/or historical periods. (1)
- The learner will identify, listen and respond to music of different composers. (4)
- The learner will describe conditions under which music is created and performed in various cultures. (6)

Music: Analyzing and Responding

- The learner will evaluate and describe group performances. (5)

Music: Valuing Music/Aesthetic Reflection

- The learner will identify and discuss aesthetic qualities in his/her performances and the performances of others. (2)
- The learner will demonstrate how music communicates meaning through text, feelings, moods or images. (3)
- The learner will identify elements of music that contribute to aesthetic qualities in a specific music work. (4)

Music: Connections, Relationships and Applications

- The learner will interpret music through dance, drama and visual art. (1)
- The learner will identify the use of similar elements in music and other art forms and compare how ideas and emotions are expressed in each art form using the same elements. (2)
- The learner will discuss how culture influences music. (5)

Visual Art: Creative Expression and Communication

- The learner will identify and communicate sources of ideas (e.g., personal experience, interests, nature or common objects) for his/her artworks. (3)
- The learner will use current, available technology to explore imagery and create visual effects. (5)
- The learner will identify reasons for personal, artistic decisions. (6)

Visual Art: Connections, Relationships and Applications

- The learner will compare and contrast how visual art is used in musical, theatrical or dance productions and provide examples. (1)
- The learner will use artwork to communicate and enhance understanding of concepts in other subject areas. (3)

Drama/Theatre: Connections, Relationships and Applications

- The learner will use problem-solving and cooperative skills to dramatize a story, current event or a concept from another content area. (2)

Dance: Creative Expression and Communication

- The learner will create original material for a short dance study that expresses a theme or concept. (4)

More Curriculum Connections

Language Arts



Acquisition of Vocabulary

- The learner will define the meaning of unknown words by using context clues and the author's use of definition, restatement, and example. (1)

Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension and Self-Monitoring Strategies

- The learner will make critical comparisons across texts. (3)

Reading Applications: Informational, Technical, and Persuasive Text

- The learner will identify and understand an author's purpose for writing including to explain, entertain, persuade or inform. (9)

Writing Process

- The learner will generate writing ideas through discussions with others and from printed material, and keep a list of writing ideas. (1)

Writing Applications

- The learner will write responses to novels, stories, and poems that organize an interpretation around several clear ideas, and justify the interpretation through the use of examples and specific textual evidence. (2)
- The learner will produce informal writings (e.g. journals, notes, poems) for various purposes. (5)

Communication: Oral and Visual

- The learner will deliver informational presentations (e.g. expository, research) that use appropriate visual materials (e.g. diagrams, charts, illustrations) and available technology. (8d)

Social Studies



History

- The learner will describe the lasting effects of Spanish, French, and English colonization in North America including cultural patterns evident today such as language, food, traditions and architecture. (4)

People in Societies

- The learner will compare the cultural practices and products of diverse groups in North America. (1)

Citizenship, Rights and Responsibilities

- The learner will explain how an individual acquires U.S. citizenship; i.e., birth or naturalization. (1)