
THE ART OF SOCIAL CHANGE

15-20 days

SHARING, ANALYZING, AND UNDERSTANDING

CONTEXTUAL MESSAGES

OVERVIEW

Sharing a message in artwork gives students a low-budget, comfortable way to express themselves. Art is also a medium in which students can make a point without being overtly preachy. Sharing messages through art is, however, an intricate and difficult process that requires critical thinking and the ability to interpret works by others. Students should critically examine the portrayals around them and, in turn, the work they create.

This unit should give students the ability to critically analyze popular media, especially political marketing, and to create their own work. Lessons in interpreting diverse images and understanding the connotative meaning of the portrayal of people, animals, and ideas are critical to deconstructing the political world and thus necessary for students to gain a true political understanding. Likewise, exercises about directing messages to an appropriate audience, using suitable humor, and understanding the transient nature of shock value can help students build an art piece that truly furthers their cause and reflects their thesis.

The process of creating a group art project, even after months of working together, is a complicated one. Expect the process to be lengthy, and reserve plenty of classroom time for work on the pieces, even after the proposal process is completed. Access to equipment through the school is also beneficial. Many art departments are willing to share with ample advance notice and oversight.

Finally, all artwork should be shared at the final “event” – feedback is necessary for a successful completion of the unit. Of course, teacher and self-evaluations should also occur.

In preparation for the first lesson in this unit, students should bring in a piece of “art,” to be defined as they desire.

COLORADO CIVICS STANDARDS ADDRESSED: 4.3, 4.4

SAMPLE JOURNAL QUESTIONS

- What does the word *art* mean to you? Define the term or list the characteristics an object must have for you to consider it to be art.

- How are art and politics related? Does the artist have an important role to play in politics?
- What art displayed in our school is especially meaningful to you? Why do you find meaning in this particular work?
- What works of public art in your community are especially meaningful to you? Would you say these works are political? Why or why not?
- How is the process of creating a work of art in a group challenging? What advantages does it have over creating an art piece by yourself?
- You have created essays, speeches, and art. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each way of conveying your views? Which do you prefer?

VOCABULARY

Art: Conscious human production or arrangement of sounds, colors, forms, movements, or other elements to create something beautiful or of aesthetic value.

Public Art: Art planned and executed to be displayed or staged in the public domain.

RESOURCES

Artyclopedia: Art Museums Worldwide, <http://www.artyclopedia.com/general/museums.html>

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists, <http://editorialcartoonists.com/>

Center for the Study of Political Graphics, <http://www.politicalgraphics.org/home.html>

Community Arts Network: Community-based Art for Social Change,

<http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/1999/10/communitybased.php>

Eight Visions of Hope, <http://www.8visionsofhope.org/Home.html>

Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum: In the Eye of the Storm—An Art of Conscience, 1920-1970, <http://www.weisman.umn.edu/exhibits/eye/eye.html>

Fugard, Athol, *Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1999.

George Mason University's History Matters: Art and the Shaping of Identity,

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6875>

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog,

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html>

Mark Vallen's Art for a Change, <http://www.art-for-a-change.com/>

National Gallery of Art, <http://www.nga.gov/>

North Carolina Museum of Art: Reading Art, <http://www.ncartmuseum.org/artnc/theme-readingart.php>

SFMoma ArtThink: Art Can Be a Messenger for Social Awareness,

<http://www.sfmoma.org/artthink/unitoverview.asp?unitid=4&lessoncategoryid=1&menu=a>

Smart Art: Art for Social Change, <http://www.smartart.us.com/>

Name: _____

ARTWORK ANALYSIS

Teacher: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Topic: _____

Artwork #1 Title: Artist:	Artwork #2 Title: Artist:	Artwork #3 Title: Artist:	Artwork #4 Title: Artist:	Artwork #5 Title: Artist:
What is the medium of the piece?	What is the medium of the piece?	What is the medium of the piece?	What is the medium of the piece?	What is the medium of the piece?
What does the artwork "say"?	What does the artwork "say"?	What does the artwork "say"?	What does the artwork "say"?	What does the artwork "say"?
Is it political? Why? How does it comment on its time?	Is it political? Why? How does it comment on its time?	Is it political? Why? How does it comment on its time?	Is it political? Why? How does it comment on its time?	Is it political? Why? How does it comment on its time?

Names:

PEGGY DIGG'S MILK CARTON PROJECT

Teacher: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Topic: _____



Used by permission of the artist.

Names: _____ _____ _____ _____	<h2 style="margin: 0;">ART PROJECT SCHEDULE</h2> <p>Teacher: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Topic: _____</p>
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Use this worksheet to schedule due dates for all the components of your art project. Breaking down the process into component parts can make it easier to accomplish and to visualize how you can most efficiently address the issues you face.

1. The Steps. Decide what must be accomplished in order to create your art piece. Do you have to do more research? Do you have make a sketch? What steps are necessary to finalize it? List those steps below:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

2. Individual Responsibilities. Assign due dates for the steps listed above. If the step does not involve the whole group, assign someone to be in charge. Sign next to your tasks to show that you agree with and will adhere to these deadlines, *after conferring with the teacher.*

Task Name **Who Is Responsible** **Due Date** **Signature**

3. Calendar. Map out these deadlines below.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday