

Lesson One: Stories of the Old West

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify a unifying theme or topic (west) in an art exhibition.
2. Students will be able to identify people, places, objects and activities from particular cultures in artworks.

Preparation

Preview the *Stories of the Old West* and *Western POP Exhibition Preview* PowerPoints. Look for possible connections to studies of westward expansion in the social studies curriculum. If your school is in the west, consider investigating local history you might wish to share with your students.

Resources

[Stories of the Old West PowerPoint](#)

[Western Pop Exhibition Preview PowerPoint](#)

Activities

Unit Preview: Introduce the theme in life, that “Things are not always black and white,” by explaining that black and white are opposites and by helping students generate a list of pairs of opposites, such as hot or cold, good or bad, beautiful or ugly and right or wrong.

Introduce the theme in art, that “Art can explore how opposites mix,” by leading a discussion of situations or things that may fall between the extremes of two opposites, such as shades of gray between black and white and various warm and cool temperatures between hot and cold. Explain that sometimes artists show us how opposites can overlap, mix and combine.

Introduce the key questions students will be working with in the unit:

1. How can I use different values (black, white and gray) in my artwork?
2. How are artists inspired by their culture?
3. How can an art exhibition focus on a theme or idea?

Historical Context: Display slides 1-6 of *Stories of the Old West* PowerPoint to illustrate the complex cultural history of the US west including:

- pioneers from the eastern US
- explorers from Mexico (called New Spain at the beginning of the 19th Century)
- cultural diversity of newcomers to the west and
- ancient roots of native peoples in the west

Connecting: Display slide 7 and 8 of *Stories of the Old West* PowerPoint to stimulate a discussion of why people live in or move to the west.

- Invite volunteer students to share how they and their family came to live in the west (or ask about someone they might know who lives in the west, if your school is in another region of the US).
- Next, show Dwayne Hall's painting of an imaginary west that mixes the old west with science fiction. Ask students to share the names of movies, comic books, or TV shows they may know about that tell stories of the old west.

Definition with Examples: Display slides 9-12 of *Stories of the Old West* PowerPoint to illustrate opposites one can find in the west. Define opposites as two things that are extremely different or contrary to each other.

Review and Practice: Display slides 13-22 of *Stories of the Old West* PowerPoint to remind students of situations and things that mix, overlap or combine opposites.

Assessment: Display all the artworks in the *Western Pop* exhibition at the Tempe Center for the Arts twice. Explain that the exhibition focuses on the theme of the US west. The first time you display the artworks ask students to identify features in each artwork that relate to that theme. Then display the artworks again asking students to find evidence of various western cultures.

Other Vocabulary

myth
legend
national identity
colonist
frontier
settler
mission
native people
appaloosa

Art Vocabulary

contrast
vertical
horizontal

Extension Activities

Organize a field trip to a local history museum or arrange for a guest speaker from the museum.

Assessment Checklist

___ Students will be able to identify a unifying theme or topic (west) in an art exhibition.
(Discussion of *Western POP* Exhibition Preview PowerPoint.)

___ Students will be able to identify people, places, objects and activities from particular cultures in artworks.

(Discussion of Luis Jimenez' *Denver Mustang* in *Stories of the Old West* PowerPoint and *Western POP Exhibition Preview* PowerPoint.)