



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2004 Volume III: Representations of American Culture, 1760-1960: Art and Literature

American Genre Painting in the Nineteenth Century: Teaching Artistic Interpretation as a Tool For Critically Viewing History

Guide for Curriculum Unit 04.03.01

by Justin M. Boucher

My unit on genre paintings and artistic interpretation was developed in response to the fact that there is very little art offered in my school. Aside from that, students are rarely taught how to interpret art, even if they receive basic artistic training. Therefore I decided that I would create a unit which dealt with artistic interpretation, couched in historical critical analysis.

The unit offers the students the opportunity to view and analyze art while learning the skills to do so. It progresses from basic viewing to a deeper understanding of art in general through various comparisons and guided viewings of paintings.

The topical focus of the unit (daily life in the United States during the antebellum period) fits nicely into a U.S. History curriculum, while leaving room for application elsewhere.

(Recommended for U.S. History, World History, English or Humanities, grades 9-12.)

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