



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2012 Volume I: Understanding History and Society through Visual Art, 1776 to 1914

The Stories Artwork Tells: Opening Doorways Into Creativity

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.01.02

by Mary C. Elmore

As we get older, it may become harder to stay true to that rare quality that makes us individual, and so it is with a sense of urgency that I seek to provide my students with the opportunity to discover and nurture their creative spirit. I invite you to embrace this initiative through my curriculum unit, as it is interdisciplinary in scope, incorporating history, creative writing, oral language and reading through an exploration of visual art.

My curriculum unit opens with an introduction to both the technical elements of art as well as the historical background for British and American paintings, 1776-1914. Visual art is then utilized to develop inferential thinking and elaboration in narrative writing. The unit culminates with students creating their own "masterpieces." This unit includes six sections:

1. Teaching the Elements of Art
2. Understanding British and American History through Art
3. Inferential Thinking: Giving Figures in Art a Voice
4. Exploring Landscape in Art through the Senses
5. Allowing Stories to Unfold from Artwork
6. Coming Full Circle: From Masterpiece to Masterpiece

(Recommended for Art, English Language Arts, History, and Writing, grades 2-6)

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