



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Teaching Colonial American Society through Visual Art

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Rationale

Many high school students walk into their history classes with preconceived notions of what their history class will be like. Far too many students enter these classes believing that history is just a long, intimidating series of events, people, and dates that happened long before they were born and therefore have little impact on their everyday lives. The further back into history you venture to have them explore, the more difficult it can be for them to visualize and connect with themes of the past. Add to this challenge struggling students. There are students with Individualized Education Plans, 504 plans, Response to Intervention plans, and the generally unmotivated, all of whom must understand and learn major themes and concepts from the course curriculum. Despite all these challenges and considerations, I have come to find that using visual art has become one of the most effective ways I can engage my high school students with the past. For this reason, I am focusing this unit on using visual art to teach a time period I have found my tenth grade students to struggle connecting with the most--Colonial America.

When the topic of Colonial America is first brought up in class, students usually cannot conjure up much more than vague ideas about clothing, the general existence of slavery, and an understanding that there was eventually a war that was fought. Literature on the subject can often seem "dry" to students, making it difficult for them to really examine and consider ideas of race, class, gender, and work in Colonial America. Students often consider this time period and ask, "What does this have to do with me?" and "Why should I know this?" For these reasons this unit aims to get students to approach the themes of race, class, gender, and economy that develop during America's colonial years through visual art. The idea behind this is that if students can be taught to construct meaning and develop an understanding of these themes through visual art, they will be more invested and interested in the learning because they uncovered the knowledge themselves in a meaningful way. The beauty of using art in a history curriculum is that it incorporates primary sources into the curriculum, it naturally captures student attention, it can be implemented to engage students in critical thinking, all students (advanced or struggling) can approach it, and it can foster great discussion.

I find that even my struggling students who do not do work outside of school and who lack motivation enjoy analyzing and discussing images. In many ways art can be a great differentiation tool in the classroom because no matter what level a student is at, they can participate in making observations and contributing interpretations. While an advanced and struggling student may initially make different observations and have

different interpretations when analyzing a piece of art, they can both engage themselves with it and be challenged by it. By developing students' visual literacy skills and discussing art that comments on major historical themes, I hope to motivate students to critically consider points of view and ways of life from this time period.

Overall, this unit will contain strategies for teaching students how to analyze and discuss art, a collection of images organized thematically to address topics of race, class, gender, and economy, and a list of various readings to accompany the discussion of these themes. These four themes were chosen because they will help students begin thinking about who these colonists were, what they would want and value, and who they were becoming. As much as this unit strives to teach students about life in Colonial America, it also will also have a focus on sharpening certain skills that all high schools hope to be building into their underclassmen. Through interactive activities, creative and expository writing, discussion exercises, group work, reading, and role playing, students will interact with art of this time period to construct an understanding of Colonial America. It is my hope that through the techniques and ideas introduced here students will be able to construct for themselves an understanding of Colonial America through visual art, with art leading the discussions of race, class, gender, work, the development of an American identity, and the lasting impact of these ideas on America.

Unit Objectives:

In the hopes of helping my United States History students understand Colonial America and the development of an American identity up to the start of the Revolutionary War, my first content objective for this unit is that students will be able to analyze visual and material art from the time period to construct an understanding of race, class, gender, and economy in colonial society. Instead of having students just read someone else's interpretation of what Colonial society was like from the textbook, my hope is that with the right strategies students will be able to construct their own understanding by examining primary sources from the time period. Each painting and object they analyze from this time period will speak volumes about the time period, so by equipping students with the tools they will need to sharpen their visual literacy and analytical skills, students should be able to create meaning from what they see. This is a skill they can make use of well beyond their time in my classroom. Through discussion of their observations and interpretations, along with supplemental readings, they should be able to create an even clearer picture for themselves of colonial society. This connects to my next content objective, that students will be able to discuss the themes of race, class, gender, and economy as they were in colonial America. Students will learn skills they need to be able to conduct a productive, focused academic dialogue on the visual and material art they examine. I have specifically chosen to focus this unit on the themes of race, class, gender, and economy as well. I believe these are themes that lend themselves well to visual and material art and are all themes that students will already have some understanding of. Another content objective is that students will be able to describe the role of visual art in colonial America and compare society then to society today in race, class, gender, and economy, and in the function of visual art. Whenever students can connect themes of the past to today they not only understand the content better, but they are more likely to remember it. It is so important as a history teacher to draw connections to society today because many students struggle to see the relevance of societies, people, and events of the past to their world today.

Class and Gender in Colonial America as Depicted Through Art

Much can be learned about class and gender in colonial America through portraits. In colonial America most of the images created were meant to document people and places. For this reason you will find mostly natural history drawings and oil paintings of people and their families from this time period. The images of nature were meant to educate Europeans on the New World, and portraits would bring families together and preserve the family legacy. Although other types of oil paintings did exist in Europe, in colonial America only portraits and images of nature were painted. Patrons would commission painters to paint these portraits of one or more members of the family. Price, size, and number of figures within each painting would be negotiated and the figures would sit for hours over a long period of time as their portrait was completed. Some of the money would be paid upfront, and the rest when the job was complete. Historians know that "the artist rendered what he observed and what he knew to be the key ingredients of social identity in his culture," and that the painting would not be considered done or paid for until the patron stated they were satisfied with the result. If they were not, changes would be made until the patron was happy, and today historians use technical analysis and X-rays to study these adjustments. ¹ For these reasons it is important to teach students that these paintings were created, manipulated images. Just as history teachers teach students to identify author, audience, tone, intent, main ideas, supporting details, and time of creation when analyzing texts, students must be taught to do so when examining colonial art. Doing this is an important step to unlocking meaning from any piece.

So much can be learned about colonial society, specifically family life, gender, and social class, from examining colonial portraits that have survived to today. Images I have found to be enlightening when studying gender in class in the early colonial period are as follows: *John Freake*, *Mrs. Freake and Baby Mary*, *The Mason Children: David, Joanna, and Abigail*, all by an anonymous painter known as the "Freake-Gibbs Painter" and done between 1671-1674. During this period there was a strong Puritan presence in New England, and these paintings are very informative of how men, women, and children lived, what was expected of them, and what they valued during the early colonial American period. Another applicable portrait that is great for study of gender and class in early Colonial America is the self portrait of Captain Thomas Smith. Other images worth studying, and that were painted a little later in the colonial period, are John Smibert, *Dean Berkeley and His Entourage (The Bermuda Group)* (1729, Yale University Art Gallery), John Singleton Copley, *Nicholas Boylston* (1767, Harvard University Portrait Collection), John Singleton Copley, *Mrs. Thomas Gage (Margaret Kemble Gage)* (1771, Timken Museum of Art), John Greenwood, *Elizabeth Moffatt Sherburne* (1750, Yale University Art Gallery), John Singleton Copley, *Portrait of Jeremiah Lee* (1769, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art), John Singleton Copley, *Portrait of Mrs. Jeremiah Lee (Martha Swett)* (1769, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art), Charles Willson Peale, *William Buckland* (1774 and 1789, Yale University Art Gallery), Benjamin West, *Charles Willson Peale* (1767-1769, New York Historical Society), John Singleton Copley, *Mr. Isaac Smith* (1769, Yale University Art Gallery), and John Singleton Copley, *Mrs. Isaac Smith (Elizabeth Storer)* (1769, Yale University Art Gallery), and John Singleton Copley, *Portrait of Paul Revere* (1768, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston).



Mrs. Isaac Smith



Mr. Isaac Smith

As alluded to before, while in the 17th century people bought other luxury goods rather than commission paintings, in the 18th century more colonial Americans were commissioning paintings that were still intended only for private enjoyment and had no value as a commodity. The first set of paintings mentioned are from this earlier period than the ones mentioned later. On this note it would be valuable to point out to students how this differs from today, and discuss why people do not commission painters anymore, and if they did, to imagine how their negotiations and sessions with the painter might go. Also, a focus on the life and works of John Singleton Copley would make for great discussion when studying portraiture of the colonial American period.

In the classroom there are multiple ways to get students engaged with these ideas. As educators we know the importance of making all that students learn relevant to their lives. The connections students make between what they are learning in class and their daily lives helps engage them in the subject, as well as helps them remember what they learn. To engage students with the themes of class and gender, the teacher could start by showing the students a photograph or other image of a well known figure today, perhaps a movie star or artists they are all familiar with. The teacher could have students examine the image and then discuss questions that help them identify how this person is portrayed in this image, and aspects of the image make them believe so. Would the person portrayed like how they are portrayed, why or why not? When was the image created? Who created it and who was the intended audience? What do you suppose this person is like? What do they value? Having students answer these questions of a modern day portrait, a familiar time period, might help them then answer these similar questions for portraits from colonial America. It can also help them

ask deeper questions of the time.

Through careful observation of the 17th and 18th century paintings mentioned earlier one can see what the portrayed person, or people, valued as a member of their class and gender. Questions to ask of these portraits that speak to gender and class would be: How are the men portrayed versus the women, and what might that say about gender roles of this time period? What does the body language of the people portrayed communicate? What objects were chosen to be portrayed with the painted and why do you think they were chosen? What do the objects in the foreground and background communicate to the viewer? What does the body language of the people portrayed communicate? How do these people seem to want to be portrayed? What social class are the portrayed a part of and how do we know? These questions can be asked of each of the mentioned portraits and help students draw conclusions about gender and class from the time period through discussion and supplemental readings that will enhance, shape, guide, or reinforce interpretations of the paintings made by students. Doing a comparative exercise where students compare and contrast modern portraits of well known people today to some of the portraits from the 18th century could be valuable as well, especially to help students see that both sets of images are interpretations of reality. Since this unit is for a US History classroom, perhaps any of President Obama's campaign portraits would work. Having students compare and contrast class and gender as depicted in images from the colonial time period could help them solidify and deepen their understanding of these themes in colonial America. At the same time having students compare and contrast these themes as depicted in images from both the 18th century and today could really help them to connect to the material. The teacher can decide which points they most want their students to take away and choose pairs of images for students to analyze that would most highlight the ideas they want their students to understand.

It could also be beneficial to have students compare men to women as they are depicted in 18th century art, particularly since it speaks so strongly to gender roles of the time. Students in the class could be asked to recreate the images they see in a tableau as well. This could be really fun in the classroom with a painting of a family too. Student groups could be asked to position their members to mirror the painting and could take turns coming to life from the painting to explain who they are, their social class and their gender role within their family. Even if students do not have all the facts about the painting and its subject(s) before hand, they could have fun speculating based on what they see then have the teacher tell the story of the image afterward. Whether they are speculating or using the information to do this exercise, it would be very engaging for students. Students could also be given the chance to design or create their own portraits. After discussing the pieces students could then decide how they would want to be depicted in a portrait then try to decide what objects, scenery, people, etc. they might include in order to make themselves appear that way. This would also be a great way to introduce the process of commissioning a painting and get them to personally connect with the material.

Race in Colonial America as Depicted Through Art

Besides class and gender it is also important to understand race in colonial America. This unit will try to engage students with different depictions of both Native Americans and slaves during this time period. The aim will be to get students to compare and contrast how these groups are portrayed in various pieces of art created throughout the colonial period. This naturally will lead into a discussion of what these different portrayals say to the viewer about how these two groups were viewed by the painter and their society at

large.

Two paintings by Benjamin West prominently feature Native Americans in the colonial Period, *The Death of General Wolfe* (1770, National Gallery of Canada), and *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians in 1683* (1771-2, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts). *The Death of General Wolfe*, landed West the occupation of history painter to the king and captures a moment in history when the British won a major battle in the French and Indian War, one that nearly destroyed the French empire in the Americas. This history painting depicts the death of an important British general named James Wolfe, and shows officers surrounding his body on the battle field. In the foreground is a Native American seemingly just as reverent as the other British officers, and next to him is William Johnson, who was not actually at the battle but was known for working with Native Americans. Questions that can be discussed using this painting are: Do artists depict historical subjects accurately? How does the artist portray the Native American in the painting and why do you think he is portrayed in this way, or portrayed at all? Generally speaking we see that the Native is just as concerned with the death of the General as the other British. Perhaps this is to remind English viewers of the role colonials and Natives played in the war as "valued partners that the British could not afford to lose." ²

In *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians in 1683*, another history painting by Benjamin West painted after *The Death of General Wolfe*, we see a moment in history when William Penn negotiated a land exchange with the Delaware Natives. This painting portrays a peaceable agreement between the Natives and the English, but also juxtaposes the two converging worlds of the Natives versus that of the colonists. It also hints at the trade that existed and that would continue to flourish between the groups. Besides discussing how the Natives and white colonists are portrayed in this image, this painting could be used to also begin a discussion on the economy of the colonies during this time period. Discussion questions around this painting could include: How are the natives portrayed versus the English colonists? How do the subjects of the painting seem to relate to one another and what examples are there in the painting to support your assertion?

Another piece that points to the relationship between Native Americans and the British colonists is Ezra Stiles' *Phebe and Elizabeth Moheegan's Wigwam* (1761, Bienecke Library Yale University). Stiles was a man who was interested in the well being of Natives in Connecticut. Upon visiting a wigwam in Niantic he sketched his findings, and in this sketch we see much evidence of European and Native cultures converging. This is indicated by the furnishings and design of the interior that we see sketched in the image. Similarly to how *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians in 1683* pointed to strengthening trade between the two cultures, this sketch lends evidence to the idea that trade was strong between the two cultures and that the cultures has begun to blend together.

One way for teachers to use these three images to help students understand race in colonial America would be to set up stations in the classroom and have each one of these images at a different station. If lacking space, the teacher could split the class into groups, and place all the materials for each image in a folder and have the folders get passed around instead of having the groups move. Either way, the idea would be to present the students with each of the images and have them describe what they literally see, what they think they see (their interpretation) and what questions they still have. This will allow students to point out different aspects of paintings, develop interpretations, and help lead into the part of the lesson where the teacher could explain what the students were looking at, using their ideas as the basis for discussion. Students in New Haven will have already completed a unit on Native Americans before European contact, so this will allow them expand on their understanding of Native Americans and better understand changes in their culture after European contact and how colonists viewed them. In the end, students could then discuss or write about their new understanding of Native American culture in colonial America, using their prior knowledge to springboard

their discussion.

It is also fascinating to examine how African, or black, slaves are portrayed in colonial art, whether it be in a portrait, history painting, or any other type of painting. While it is common knowledge that slavery existed in the British colonies, not all depictions of slavery were the same. Unknown Artist, *Plantation Scene* (18th century, Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller Fold Art Museum) and Thomas Coram, *View of Mulberry House and Street* (1805, Gibbs Museum of Art) both depict slave life on plantations, but do so quite differently. In both paintings the master's house can be seen in the background, but in the first the larger focus is on a group of slaves, both men and women, "jumping the broom." This is a cultural dance associated with weddings in Yoruba culture. It captures a moment supposedly away from the view of the master, where the slaves can celebrate their culture, community, and family, but perhaps in an idealized way. In *View of Mulberry House and Street*, although painted after the Revolutionary period, one can see slave quarters in the foreground framing the slave owner's home in the background. This painting depicts a peaceful plantation scene where slaves are spread out, walking in pairs and working in the distance while still distanced from the home of the master.

Unlike the paintings mentioned above, Justus Engelhardt's *Henry Darnall III as a Child* (1710, Maryland Historical Society) and an unknown artist's *Portrait of Phyllis Wheatly* (1773, Library of Congress) are both portraits. One depicts a young, white boy with a slave, and the other has a young, black girl as the subject. The image of Henry Darnall III incorporates many of the elements of portraits mentioned earlier so it could be used in the study of race and gender as well. In this image Henry stands in the foreground with an expensive jacket and is surrounded by objects, both in the foreground and background, that speak to his family's wealth. To his right is his black slave, similar in size to Henry, but he is attending to his master from behind a wall, with half his body hidden behind it. The chain around his neck and his body language speaks to how the painter and the painted viewed him.

On the other hand there is the portrait of Phyllis Wheatly, believed to be "the first portrait produced by an African American of a member of his own race" in 1773. ³ Here we see a young, black female portrayed as an intellectual, pen in hand, paper on the desk, hand under her chin, and eyes staring into the distance ahead. Famous in history for being a slave directly from Gambia and learning English, Latin, and the Bible from her mistress, and for being the first published African American poet, this image depicts her as the intellectual she was, despite how the white colonials may have perceived her. Comparing these two portraits to one another could be a valuable exercise for anyone studying race in colonial America, particularly for students who carry the preconceived notion that all African or blacks from the time period were invisible and only slaves. While the majority were perceived this way, it is important to acknowledge the achievements of the blacks who stood out in this period for their intellectual capabilities in a time when they were thought of merely as manual labor.

In John Greenwood's *Sea Captains Carousing at Surinam* (1757-8, St. Louis Art Museum) there is a chaotic scene of sea captains drinking together in a room. All are white sea captains acting rowdy, rambunctious, and without dignity except for three black servants, one serving a punchbowl from the bar, another sleeping on the floor, and the third carries two drinks about to be served to some sailors. When their behavior and body language are compared to the white sailors, we see that the black men seem composed and with dignity while the sailors act foolishly.

One last painting that adds to the discussion of race in colonial America is John Singleton Copley's, *Watson and the Shark* (1776, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.). This painting is bound to bring about conversation on its own, and while there is much to observe in the painting, I would draw attention to the

black man standing in the center of the painting. Copley was commissioned to paint a scene from Brook Watson's life, one where he was swimming in Cuba and lost his leg to a shark in the harbor. While it is unclear why he holds the position he does when it was originally sketched to be a white sailor in that position, it is worthwhile to debate interpretations of this piece. While one art historian sees it as drawing "attention to the hypocrisy of colonial claims to independence when such claims rest upon the continuance of slavery," another says it was edited when the scene was described to have had a black man present. ⁴ Regardless the painter chose to portray the black man the way that he did for a reason. He is at the center of the cluster of men, and above the majority of them. He points to the man in the water next to the shark while the man in the water seems to reach up toward him. An engaging discussion could be had analyzing this scene and asking why it was done the way it was, and what it means to us studying race in colonial America.

Overall a discussion comparing depictions of black men and women from this time period through the images mentioned, added to an understanding of relations between colonial Americans and the Native Americans, can add depth to our understanding of race in colonial America. It can help students to understand the intricate nuances and complexities between the difference races and how they were viewed by one another. Another great exercise to engage students with this material would be to have students choose one of the African or slave figures from one of the paintings and create a narrative for that figure. They could write about what they think their figure is thinking, who their figure is, and what their life might be like, using clues from the image. This would allow them to give voice to those in history who often went ignored and undervalued and they could compare different depictions of slavery in this way as well.

Economy in Colonial America as Depicted Through Art

One way to approach the theme of economy in colonial America is to consider the different ways of life that develop between the northern and southern colonies. The study of maps and drawings of northern cities and homes versus plantation layouts can help support what seems to most the common knowledge that the north developed most in industry and the south in agriculture. Students can revisit *View of Mulberry House* and *Plantation Scene*, both mentioned earlier, and discuss their conclusions about plantation life, and how what they see supports what they know about plantations of the south. This can lead into a discussion of many details that appear in these images. These images can then be compared to images and maps of cities from the time period, like of New Haven or Boston. Discussing and comparing these types of land formations can lead into a discussion of city planning, of which there are three styles: organic, grid, and radial, ⁵ and land art as displayed in the layouts of plantations and farms in the southern colonies. ⁶ Both survived well beyond the colonial period, but could still help students see and understand the economic development of the time period.

Depending on the level of the students being taught and their prior knowledge, it could be a fun warm up to list the different occupations that could be found in the colonies at the time (artisans, farmers, plantation owners, bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, laborers, perhaps even slaves) and have each student match the title to a piece of craftsmanship or other object that represents the product made or maintained by the worker. This would introduce them to some important elements of the colonial economy and help them familiarize themselves with what was going on in the colonial workforce. This exercise could be followed by having students compare the maps of the cities to views of plantations and discuss these pieces as they would

other pieces of art. After comparing and contrasting them students can then get into a discussion of how the north differed from the south in their economies, using the art as the foundation for the discussion. This could also connect to the prior activity by having students then discuss which occupations would be found where, based on the discussions already had. The activity could be accompanied by a reading or graphic organizer that further details the economies of the northern, middle, and southern colonies. Activities such as these would help students to gain a better understanding of the economy within the colonies, but it should be followed up with a discussion of the colonies as part of a larger global economy as well.

Colonial Americans were artisans, farmers, plantation owners, bankers, merchants, and shopkeepers who not only traded with their mother country in Europe, but were involved in cross cultural, global trade. As already evidenced in *Phebe and Elizabeth Moheegan's Wigwam* and *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians in 1683*, the colonial Americans participated in global trade by purchasing furniture, china, sugar, and Africans from different parts of the world, and emulating styles of architecture, painting, and craftsmanship found back home in Europe. Examine any map depicting the triangular trade and you will see how different parts of the world connected to one another. This participation in the global market helped the colonists foster a sense of independence from Britain and eventually aided in the decision to declare independence.

Examining crafted objects can further aid in understanding the economy of Colonial America. In early colonial America, before portraits became more common in the 18th century, crafted objects were most prized. Even today we tend to assume paintings were valued most then, but many crafted objects were more highly valued then because of their material value than a portrait that was only valuable to the family it was commissioned by. They were made of expensive materials, such as gold and silver, and displayed high quality workmanship. What took place in the American colonies in the eighteenth century has been called a "consumer revolution," where colonists who benefitted from the practice of mercantilism, along with the increasing wealth and success of artisans, plantation owners, bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, laborers, helped make the colonies part of the larger global economy. ⁷ During this time we even see locks introduced to furniture when a new importance place on privacy and property developed in the colonies. One beautiful piece that exemplifies this is a chest built in Pennsylvania between 1767 and 1770. Many of the details have German influences with the patron's initials carved into the top, above the ornate design that displays great craftsmanship. It certainly shows the influence of European cabinetmaking on the colonies.

Tobacco, potatoes, corn and sugar were all crops that contributed to the global economy, but we see craftsmanship displayed mostly surrounding sugar. Silversmiths in Boston, New York, and other places used silver from Natives in Mexico and commandeered silver off ships going to Madrid to craft containers to hold sugar. One example of a craft that exemplifies the global economy that the colonists were a part of is a sugar box crafted by Edward Winslow for a patron in New England. It was made of Mexican silver to hold sugar from the Caribbean that would then be used to sweeten tea purchased from England. On top of that its design is influenced by trends that were current in Europe at the time. ⁸ There are other important pieces that show the British merchant class' rise to power near the end of the 1600s, overshadowing the dominance of the Puritan oligarchs that founded the area. ⁹ These include Jeremiah Dummer, *Pair of Candlesticks* (1686, Yale University Art Gallery), and John Coney, *Monteith* (c.1705, Yale University Art Gallery), adorned with ornate design and the family coat of arms. A great example of mid-eighteenth century American silver is Joseph Richardson Senior, *Teakettle on Stand* (c. 1745-54, Yale University Art Gallery). Other silver cups, pots, dish rings, candlesticks, sugar bowls, and tea pots show this change in the colonies and increased attention being brought to luxury goods later in the colonial period, most of which was a result of increased wealth in the colonies as they become increasingly involved in the global market.



Monteith



Teakettle on Stand

In the classroom, to approach this idea of the colonies as part of the global market students should first understand the triangular trade (getting them to see what goods went where), mercantilism (its definition and its effects on colonists), and the Navigation Acts (what they did and their effects on the colonial economy). With this background the students, with scaffolding built in by the teacher, could be lead to different paintings, furniture, and silver goods made by the colonists to look for evidence of global trade.

Teaching Strategies:

I plan to teach the unit's objectives through the use of visual images, supplemental readings, and art analysis techniques, students will aim to describe, develop an interpretation of, ask questions of, read about, and discuss various examples of visual art from the time period. Since most students will enter the classroom without much knowledge of how to discuss or look at a piece of art, they will need explicit instruction to begin the process, connecting to my first objective. Without these tools it may be difficult for them to be able to construct meaning from a piece. For example, students will conduct a "See, Think, Wonder" exercise where they list all that they see (no observation being too small), make an interpretation as to what might be going on or what might be the larger significance based on what they saw, and then "wonder" by asking questions of the piece. Students will also learn to analyze a piece of art similarly to how they are taught to analyze any other primary source—by asking and answering questions about audience, intent, and historical context. They will also be guided and encouraged to make connections to today and think about artistic technique.

While the above strategies will sharpen their observation, description, and inquiry skills, another objective is for students to also sharpen their discussion skills, focusing on discussing race, class, gender, and economy in colonial America. All of these skills are real life skills that are just as applicable outside the history classroom as they are in it, so it is important to not assume students will be able to do this well. It is easy to assume students can observe and discuss since they can list things they see and love to talk, but these are skills that need to be taught and crafted. Teaching students to make observations about what they see is challenging for many students. Some students may get stuck after three, four, or even five observations and need encouragement and modeling in order to succeed. With practice, modeling, and instruction students will learn how to really observe and what to look for in a painting that will point to large ideas and significance. Similarly, students should be taught how to engage in genuine discussion. Discussion can either be teacher or student centered. In teacher centered discussion much of the direction of conversation is dictated by the teacher. Sometimes it appears that students speak to the teacher as opposed to their peers. When students do respond to another student's idea, they may still address the student instead of the peer him or herself. While there is value in this, discussing the themes of race, class, gender, and economy through art gives many opportunities for teaching students how to productively speak to and respond to each other, with little or no teacher intervention.

As mentioned earlier, it is important as educators to make all that students learn relevant. Using art to teach about race, class, gender, and economy in colonial America will help engage students of varying skill and knowledge, but also engage them in thinking about these themes today. What is different about race, class, gender, and economy today? What purpose did art serve then and what purpose does it serve now? Students can use what they uncover about these themes through art to compare colonial America then to America now, but also compare how these themes were depicted and seen in art then to how they are depicted and seen in art today. These ideas would make for great discussion and allow them to really solidify their understanding of colonial America through the process of comparing it to their world.

Sample Lesson One: Class and Gender in Colonial American Society (90 min.)

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to describe gender roles and class distinctions in colonial America, analyze 17th and 18th century colonial portraits as portrayals of colonial society, and create a narrative to accompany a 17th or 18th century colonial portrait.

Lesson Steps:

Have students independently complete a "See, Think, Wonder" for an 18th Century portrait painting, perhaps using John Smibert's "Dean Berkeley and His Entourage (The Bermuda Group)," or any other portrait on a three column graphic organizer. Challenge students to come up with as many ideas as they can for what they see (think colors, objects, foreground, background, etc.), what they think they see (interpretations based on what they saw), and what questions they have. Discuss their ideas, making sure to hit on the subjects' class and gender roles based on what they observe. Lastly, reveal the background and details of the painting to the students and introduce the lesson's topic.

Read together the last 4 paragraphs from the CliffNotes' article entitled "Colonial Society and Economy" so students have background. Teacher should use the comments made during the initiation and the reading as the basis for a discussion. Since we are connecting these themes to art, the teacher should also teach about the purpose of portraits at the time, and the process of commissioning and completing a painting.

Using a projector, place an image of a female celebrity or artist next to one of a male celebrity or artist that most students would be familiar with on display. Have them discuss what they see, think, and wonder together as a class. Have them then make observations about their class and gender based on details they see in the images, getting them to rely on what they see instead of background knowledge. Questions to ask after the "See, Think, Wonder" could include: What class are these people from and how do we know? How is the male portrayed? How is the female portrayed? How might each image have been different if the person were of a lower class? Use this discussion to get them to see how these images are staged, just as portraits from colonial America were.

Break students into groups of 2 or 3. Have the groups sit together so they all are facing each other. Review with your students your expectation for productive, meaningful discussion and on task behaviors. Remind them that one person should be talking at a time so others can listen, and review appropriate ways to suggest new ideas, agree or disagree with someone, and get the members of the group back on task.

Give each group a different portrait from the time period, but if it makes sense that two images go together, such as one of a man and another of his wife, go ahead and keep them together. Make sure at least one group has a painting from the 17th century even if all the others have ones from the 18th century. Provide each group with a short reading about their painting so they might better understand the subjects. Have each group complete a worksheet on the image(s) before them. The worksheet should have them identify the title, who painted it and when, who the intended audience was, and what they as a group see, think they see, and wonder about. It should also have them answer some of the following questions: How is/are the subject(s) portrayed, how is this shown, and why do you think so? How is/are the subject(s) positioned and what does this body language communicate to the viewer? What objects were chosen to be portrayed with the painted

and why do you think they were chosen? What social class are the portrayed a part of and how do we know? It is fine if more than one group has a certain painting, but groups that have two paintings be made a group of three, while groups with one painting be made a group of 2. Ideas of paintings to complete this with: 1) *John Freake and Mrs. Freake and Baby Mary* by the Freake-Gibbs painter, 2) *Elizabeth Moffatt Sherburne* by John Greenwood, 3) *Mr. Isaac Smith and Mrs. Isaac Smith (Elizabeth Storer)* by John Singleton Copley, 4) *Portrait of Jeremiah Lee and Portrait of Mrs. Jeremiah Lee (nee Martha Swett)* by John Singleton Copley, 5) *William Buckland* by Charles Wilson Peale, 6) *Ezra Stiles* by Samuel King, 7) *Nicholas Boylston* by John Singleton Copley.

After giving them about 10–15 min. to work on the worksheets, tell the students that they will present what they have learned by creating a tableau of their painting for their class. Give students time to write narratives for the people portrayed in the portraits and plan how they will create their tableau. The narrative should explain who they are, what they think, what their life might be like, their role in their family, and any other details that might get at their class in society and gender role. Students can use the readings that accompanied their paintings, but a bit of speculation in their narratives would be fine too. For the tableau part, each group should get in front of the class and stand in the same positions as the people in the portraits, trying to mimic their bodies and using as many similar props as possible (tables, chairs, writing utensils, globes, the whiteboard to draw objects in the background if wanted, etc.) Each group member must participate in some way. One student could act out the portrait, while the other reads the narrative they wrote for their person. If the group had two paintings and three group members, they could each take turns with different roles, or have one person read both narratives while the two others act out the paintings at the same time.

Have each group take turns getting in front of the class to present their painting and some basic information about it before creating their tableau in front of the class and reading their narratives.

To close, have students complete a "3-2-1" where they list three main ideas from the lesson, two new understandings, and one question they have on the topic.

Assessment Idea:

Have students, perhaps for homework or as a follow up the next class, plan to commission their own painting. Have them pretend they are from the time period and decide how they would want to be portrayed, using what they know about class and gender from the time period, and how they would go about portraying themselves that way. They should decide who would be in the painting, what would be in the foreground, what would be in the background, what objects would be present, how they would position their body, what they would wear, etc.

Sample Lesson Two: Economy in Colonial American Society (90 min.)

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to describe and compare the regional economies within the colonies, analyze and discuss art from Colonial America, and analyze the role of the 13 colonies in the global economy.

Lesson Steps:

Have students work in pairs. Give each pair a pile of cards with the name of colonial occupations on them, and a pile with an image that represents each occupation. For example, one card might say "silversmith" and its matching card might be an image of a silver teapot or sugar bowl. Example occupations could include: farmer, plantation owner, silversmith, shoemaker, tailor, weaver, blacksmith, cabinetmaker, banker, etc. You should also introduce the broader terms artisan and merchant to students. Use the following website associated with Colonial Williamsburg to review the different occupations with students:
<http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/trades/tradehdr.cfm>.

After introducing the topic of the lesson, students will silently read the first 9 paragraphs of CliffNotes' article entitled "Colonial Society and Economy." Before doing so, have students complete an anticipation guide where they will agree or disagree with the following statements before reading 1) Trade thrived in the thirteen colonies because they could trade freely with whomever they chose. 2) Slavery existed throughout the colonies, both North and South. 3) The majority of colonists were involved in trade and manufacturing in the more densely populated North. 4) The thirteen colonies greatly imported raw materials (like wood) from England and exported manufactured goods made from the raw materials to countries in Europe like France and England. 5) Life in the Northern colonies was similar to life in the Southern colonies. 6) The triangular trade supported globalization in Colonial America. After the anticipation guide and reading, have a discussion where students compare their initial views to their new understandings.

Have students work in groups and review the expectations laid out in example lesson one. Give half of the groups images of plantation like, including, but not limited to, *Plantation Scene* by an unknown artist, *Coram's View of Mulberry House and Street*, *William Byrd II's Plantation* by an unknown artist, and *Plan and Elevation of Mr. Vernon*, *site plans of gardens and outbuildings* by Samuel Vaughan. The other half of the groups should be given *Plan of New Haven* by James Wadsworth, *The Town of Boston in New England*, *Boston* by Francis Dewing (the engraver) after Captain John Bonner, and *A Plan for Rebuilding the City of London after the Great Fire in 1666* by Christopher Warren just for comparison. Each group should complete a thorough "See, Think, Wonder" for two of the images and make as many observations as they can about life in the region and the region's economy. They should support their assertions with details from the images.

Have groups partner up so that each group works with a group that had different images than them. Have them share with and teach each other.

Come together as a class and discuss the images and their findings. Share with them the good things you observed as they worked and encourage them to back every inference with evidence from the images.

Present students with an image of the triangular trade and walk them through what goods were traded where and how. Emphasize the fact that this trade brought different parts of the world together and intertwined their economies. Remind them that as part of the process of globalization when cultures interact goods and ideas are spread.

Using a projector, show students images to illustrate the points made about the triangular trade and the colonies as part of a global economy. Images to use are: *Phebe and Elizabeth Moheegan's Wigwam* by, Ezra Stiles, *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians in 1683* by Benjamin West, *High Chest of Drawers* by Samuel Henszey, and *Sugar Box* by Edward Winslow. Have the class brainstorm observations about what they see, develop an interoperation of what they are looking at, then challenge them to piece together how each image illustrates how the colonies were part of a global economy. Prompt them with questions for the more difficult

images. Talking points include: many crafted objects were more highly valued because of their material value compared to portraits, colonists increased their wealth so could spend on more luxury goods, tobacco, the sugar bowl exemplifies the global market because the silver came from the Spanish (in Mexico), to hold sugar from the Caribbean, grown by slaves from Africa, which was used to sweeten tea bought from England.

To close, remind students that while the colonies did have their own economy made up of different occupations and characteristics that different between the different regions, namely the North and the South, the colonies were part of a larger, global economy as well. Have students complete a 3-2-1 (see lesson sample one).

Assessment Idea:

Have them write about what is similar and what is different between the colonies as part of a global market and the United States today as part of a global market and why these similarities and/or differences might be.

Sample Lesson Three: Race in Colonial American Society (90 min.)

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to analyze depictions of Native Americans and Black slaves in colonial art, describe the relationship between the colonists and the Native Americans in Colonial America.

Lesson Steps:

Have students individually brainstorm what they know about Native Americans and slaves in Colonial America. Have students share their ideas as a class now. Make sure students share what they think they know about the relationship between the colonists and these two groups as well. Introduce the topic of today's lesson to the class.

Display *The Death of General Wolfe* and *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians in 1683* side by side and have students make observations about the Natives depicted. Have them respond to similarities and differences in their depictions. Challenge every student to participate in this discussion by giving students a bank of sentence starters to choose from to use in the discussion. Have students with lower confidence go near the beginning when their ideas are more likely to be new. This could also be done as a think-pair-share so students build confidence in their ideas before sharing with the class.

Have students complete the same exercise to compare slave representations, but with different image pairings: *Plantation Scene* and *View of Mulberry House and Street* followed by *Henry Darnall III* and *Portrait of Phyllis Wheatly*.

Have each student choose one of the slaves depicted in one of the following paintings: *Plantation Scene*, *View of Mulberry House and Street*, *Henry Darnall III*, *Portrait of Phyllis Wheatly*, *Sea Captains Carousing at Suriname*, or *Watson and the Shark*. Allow each student their own copy to work with at their desks to independently write a first-person narrative for one of the slaves depicted in the image they have in front of them.

Depending on the time remaining in class, have students volunteer to share their narratives and their painting with the class. If teacher wants all the students to be responsible for sharing theirs out loud, then they should be told that before hand.

Questions for discussion: How do you think slavery was able to flourish as it did in the colonies? Think about law/government, their society, the economy, etc. How has the relationship between colonists and these racial groups impacted us up to today? Feel free to cite related events that you know of in American history from colonial times up to today. Do you think countries built on slavery should pay compensation to the descendants of slaves? Do you think families that are rich now because their ancestors had slaves owe something to the descendants of the slaves? If so, what? Have lessons been learned from slavery? Does slavery still exist today? Have students explain their responses. Hand out one of two readings to the students from Free the Slaves' website, either the FAQ page or "Modern Slavery." Both can be found at www.freetheslaves.net under "About Slavery."

To close, refer back to the initiation activity and now have students brainstorm a list of what they learned today next to it.

Assessment Idea:

Have students complete a "See, Think, Wonder" on Thomas Gainsborough's *Mr. and Mrs. Robert Andrews*, a British painting from the same time period. Make sure they note similarities to American portraiture and use similar analytical techniques as they did in class. Have them then complete a "See, Think, Wonder" about Yinka Shonibare's *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews without their Heads* from 1998, and read his biographical information and then read about the piece, perhaps from the National Gallery of Canada's website. Have them then write about what they make of Shonibare's work. What do they believe he is trying to say? Do you like what he has done and how he has done it?

Appendix

National Council of the Social Studies Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change. In this unit students will identify and describe a specific period and change that took place within the period. They will be guided in inquiry that allows them to construct an understanding of the past and interpret it using visual art. They will also interpret and analyze different viewpoints by looking at different depictions of similar concepts and comparing and contrasting these viewpoints.

This unit also meets state standards and New Haven Public Schools' standards by having students interpret information from primary and secondary sources, writing to demonstrate an understanding of historical themes, and participating in small and large group discussion. Students will distinguish similarities and differences between the colonies, explore mercantilism and its effects, and analyze the economic relationship between colonists and different groups, such as Europeans, Natives, and Africans.

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