



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

Teaching Colonial American Society through Visual Art

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.01.05
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This unit was developed as a way to help students learn about colonial American society through visual art. Students will be exposed to paintings as well as crafted items to help them construct their own understanding of class, gender, race, and economy in colonial America prior to 1776. During this period of time, the colonists were creating their own identity and unique society that has manifested itself in the art and crafted objects of the period. Allowing students to learn about these themes in early American history from these primary sources, as opposed to mainly from textbook readings, can help engage them with this crucial period in the development of American society.

In this unit, students will be able to analyze visual art related to race, class, gender, and economy in the thirteen colonies, through discussion, group work, and using different art analysis techniques and exercises. This unit fits well into any United States history course that covers colonial America, but parts could fit into an American literature course, as well.

(Recommended for U.S. History, grade 10)

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