



Yale-New Haven
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1995 Volume IV: Coming of Age in Ethnic America

The Art of the Quilt

Guide for Curriculum Unit 95.04.04
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The making of a quilt brings together beauty and practicality, as well as history, community and culture. Throughout history, people have pursued the desire to create by putting together pieces of cloth for the purpose of bringing color and beauty into their lives as well as keeping their bodies warm. The process of making a quilt traditionally involves skill, time and patience on the part of the individual and the coming together of a community of people who share in the construction while sharing each other's stories.

A curriculum unit on "The Art of the Quilt" designed for a 4th grade elementary art class has broad potential for teaching many things: history, math, culture, organizational structures of art (elements of art, principles of design and how they effect the overall beauty of the quilt) and community (how quilts were traditionally put together by a whole group of people helping each other). Students will have the opportunity to make three different types of fabric made in West Africa while learning of the historical and cultural connections these designs have to African American quilts. They will also learn about and make examples of many different kinds of quilts: traditional pattern quilts, story quilts and crazy quilts. We will look at the effect quilts have had on other arts as well.

(Recommended for Art, grade 4)

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