



Ethnic Art: African, Mexican and Caribbean Perspectives

Guide for Curriculum Unit 95.04.05

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In the arts we understand our ethnic culture to be the elements that add beauty and enjoyment to our lives. All painters, sculptors and other artists from the past and present have given culture to all of us. Most students' artistic culture has been influenced by many sources around them, including their own ethnic communities. Because of the ethnic influences upon communities, what I explore in this curriculum unit is not the history of art, nor the history of ethnic culture, but I will briefly compare African, Mexican and Caribbean culture through the form of arts and crafts, and expose students to the arts that are pertinent to their own ethnic backgrounds.

In this curriculum, I focus my first discussion on the art of West Africa. Through this discussion, it shows how the ethnic culture of West Africa is reflected in today's African-American culture through not only works of art, but also through everyday necessities, such as clothing. Second, my focus centers on the art of Mexico and how its art is unique, especially in particular villages established before the Spanish Conquest. Third, my focus covers the art of the Caribbean Islands, which is pertinent to such ethnic cultures as Puerto Rican, African and American Indian, and how they all have common elements.

This unit also includes three suggested lessons. These lessons are designed so that students not only have a hands-on experience, but also learn that in order to understand their own culture, they must learn about the persons and things that influenced it.

(Recommended for Art, grades 5-8)

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