

**Theme**

Powerful Families

**Story Title**

Lord of the West

**Writing Lesson**

Response Paragraph/ Mini Art Critique

**National Writing Standards**

5 Communication Strategies; 7 Evaluating Data; 9 Multicultural Understanding;

**6+1 Trait®**

Word Choice, Voice, Conventions, Ideas, Sentence Fluency, Organization.

**Art Making and Meaning Question**

Artworld Specialists' Understanding

How do visual specialists understand and appreciate art?

**Objectives**

Students will:

Study the written work of one or more art critics.

Use information they learned about Native American Northwest Coast art and culture.

Interpret an artwork from a Native American Northwest Coast artist.

Compose a response paragraph of their interpretation.

**Preparation**

Prepare copies, transparencies, or use images from ArtsConnectEd Supplement, or from other sources, that depict Native American Northwest Coast art. Make copies of the story, "Lord of the West." Select how you wish to have the story read to the students. They may take turns. You may read the story to them, or make a recording of the story ahead of time and play it to the students as they read along. Find examples of art reviews or critiques and make copies. Robert Hughes, who writes for *Time* magazine, is a good source. Prepare a handout of Native American Northwest Coast people and their artwork. Include details and meanings of symbols, colors, subject matter, function, materials, tools, processes, etc. about the artwork.

**Activities**

1.) Read the story *Lord of the West*. Ask the students why Mawri's mother was selected to make the cloak for the Lord. What were the criteria for choosing the colors that went on the Lord's cloak? How did the style of clothing of the people of the Highlands differ from the people of the West? What did Mawri do to make Vallen's sash different?

- 2.) Ask the students to think about Vallen's cloak as an artwork. Think about the technical skills, the significance of the colors, the meaning, and the influence that contributed to making the cloak.
- 3.) Have the students think about an artwork with which they are familiar. Ask the students to explain why their example of artwork is art. Who decides what is art? Explain that, in addition to artists and crafts people, other visual specialists include art teachers, art historians, people who work in art museums and galleries, people who write about art in newspapers and magazines, and others.
- 4.) Inform the students that one type of visual specialist is an art critic. Art critics are knowledgeable about a variety of artworks and artists, and can discern reproductions from originals, as well as what makes art good. Art critics often select a particular period or style of art to study, and they are considered experts.
- 5.) Tell the students that they are going to become experts on Native American Northwest Coast art.
- 6.) Show the students an example of Native American Northwest Coast art and distribute the handouts. Point out specific characteristics. Provide a brief history of the people. Talk about the process and purpose of the art. Give the students information they need to help them become "experts" in Native American Northwest Coast art.
- 7.) Inform the students that as "experts" they will be writing an interpretation of a piece of Native American Northwest Coast artwork.
- 8.) Read for the students a review by an art critic (Robert Hughes, art critic for *Time Magazine*).
- 9.) Distribute copies of the review and have the students identify where the art critic provided a description of the artwork, an interpretation of the artwork, an analysis of the formal and sensory elements in the artwork and an evaluation of the artwork.
- 10.) Display another image of Native American Northwest Coast art. Tell the students to write a response paragraph (interpretation) of the artwork based on what they know about Native American Northwest Coast art. The paragraph should focus on interpretation supported by details in the artwork and include the artist, title and medium of the artwork.
- 11.) Have the students share their mini interpretations with the class.

### **Resources**

Erickson, M. (2005). *Art making and meaning: Understanding through questions*. Tucson, AZ: CRIZMAC.

Sebranek, P. Kemper D. & Meyer, V. (2005). *Write source: A book for writing, thinking, and learning*. Wilmington, MA: Houghton Mifflin.