

Title: The Civil Rights Struggle in a Jacob Lawrence style Series

By Elizabeth Titus

Possible Subject Area(s); Middle School Art, Social Studies (this could be taught as part of an interdisciplinary team teaching unit or separately in art or social studies)

Overview: This lesson will involve studying the work of Jacob Lawrence and his use of a series to tell a visual narrative. Students will create paintings in the style of Jacob Lawrence based on civil rights movement primary sources. Students will analyze a specific work by Lawrence (Confrontation at the Bridge 1975) related to the March 7, 1965 protest march from Selma that was confronted by police and forced to return. Students will then study photographs from the civil rights struggle and as a class, select which photographs best represent the civil rights struggle. Each student will create paintings emulating the style of Jacob Lawrence based on a specific class chosen photograph. When complete students will install the series and analyze their work. Part of the analysis will involve the comparison of the paintings with the photograph based on communication of message, story, or feeling.

Essential Understandings:

- Artists can communicate ideas and a message or story through their art.
- An artist's environment/ historical context affect the artist's choices in subject matter, media, and style. Different media (painting, photography) can have different effects on the viewer.
- Artists evaluate works of art using specific criteria.
- Every picture tells a story and has multiple interpretations.
- Photography is an art form that records and selects moments from history and can be a powerful catalyst for change.
- The civil rights movement was marked by many events and the actions of many people organized and working together. Some of the most critical issues related to education and voting.

Essential Questions:

- What are the important moments/important people to include in a representation of the civil rights movement?
- How do photographs reveal history?
- Why do artists focus on politics or storytelling in their artwork?
- How does a painting differ from a photograph in communicating an artist's intent?

CT Standards:

Social Studies Connecticut Content Standard 1 grades 5-8: Historical Thinking

- Interpret data in historical photographs

Social Studies Connecticut Content Standard 3 grades 5-8

- Explain how roles and status of people have differed and changed throughout history based on gender, age, class, racial and ethnic identity, wealth and or social position
- Describe examples of how societies throughout history have used various forms of visual arts, dance, theater, myths, literature and music to express their beliefs, sense of identity and philosophical ideas.

Connecticut Standards for Visual Arts (For grades 5-8) Content Standard 2:

Students will understand and apply elements and organizational principles of art

- 2b. recognize and reflect on the effects of arranging visual characteristics in their own and others' work

Connecticut Standards for Visual Arts (For grades 5-8) Content Standard 3:

Students will consider, select and apply a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas

- 3b. consider and compare the sources for subject matter, symbols and ideas in their own and others' work

Connecticut Standards for Visual Arts (For grades 5-8) Content Standard 4:

Students will understand the visual arts in relation to history and culture

- 4b describe and place a variety of specific significant art objects by artist, style, and historical and cultural context

Connecticut Standards for Visual Arts (For grades 5-8) Content Standard 5:

Students will reflect upon, describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate their own and others' work

- 5b describe and analyze visual characteristics of works of art using visual art terminology
- 5d describe their own responses to, and interpretations of, specific works of art

Objectives:

- Students will analyze primary source photographs from the civil rights movement for content and composition.
- Students will examine Jacob Lawrence's work as a medium used for social commentary. Students will interpret how the stylistic characteristics affect Jacob Lawrence's content using appropriate visual art terminology.
- Students will recognize, reflect, and apply use of visual organizational principles to effectively communicate a message.

Materials Needed:

Possible websites:

Reference for Jacob Lawrence and *Confrontation at the Bridge*

http://whitney.org/jacoblawrence/art/painting_method.html

<http://whitney.org/jacoblawrence/art/index.html>

<http://www.weisman.umn.edu/exhibits/Lawrence/confront.html>

<http://www.artnet.com/ag/FineArtDetail.asp?G=&qid=0&which=&aid=661311&wid>

For primary source photographs

<http://afroamhistory.about.com/od/civilrightsmovement/ig/Civil-Rights-Movement-Photos>

http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1704734_1520199,00.html

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart9.html>

<http://www.kodak.com/us/en/corp/features/moore/moreIndex.shtml>

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/084_civil.html.

http://photos.state.gov/galleries/usinfo-photo/39/civil_rights_07

book:

The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History 1954-1968 by Steven Kasher ISBN 9780789201232

Books on Jacob Lawrence:

- The Great Migration: An American Story paintings by Jacob Lawrence, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Phillips Collection, HarperCollins Publishers, 1993. ISBN 0064434281
- I See You: I See Myself: The Young Life of Jacob Lawrence, Deba Foxley Leach, The Phillips Collection 2001 ISBN 094304426X

Video:

Jacob Lawrence: An Intimate Portrait (Portrait of an Artist) produced and directed by Grover Babcock and Elvin Whitesides ISBN 0780018222 1993 (25 minutes)

Art criticism worksheet

Planning worksheet

Evaluation questions

Rubric

Art materials:

9" x 12" drawing paper

Pencils

Erasers

Tempera paint

Palettes

Brushes

Water cups

Masking tape or material to install for display

Suggested Activities/Procedures:

Day 1

- Large group discussion:
Students will discuss a print by Jacob Lawrence, *Confrontation at the Bridge 1975* using the Feldman method of art criticism (describe, analyze, interpret, judge) (Art Criticism worksheet) During the discussion, the

- teacher will reveal the historical context of the event portrayed in the image. (March 7, 1965 when activists began a march in Selma to Montgomery and were confronted with police and tear gas and were forced back)
- Students will examine several works by Jacob Lawrence and will view a video highlighting periods of his career including commentary from the artist. (Jacob Lawrence: An Intimate Portrait) Jacob Lawrence created paintings in a narrative series. His stylistic characteristics involved a dynamic composition, areas of flat color creating a color rhythm, and his choice of visual storytelling in a series form.
 - Homework: Students will be given an image to evaluate by Jacob Lawrence. Students should complete an art criticism essay corresponding to art criticism worksheet.

Day 2

- Students will be divided into groups and will be given access to websites containing historical photographs linked to the civil rights. Each group will select a photograph to analyze. The task will involve discussing and recording notes on the specific photograph. The class will then go back to a large group and report back findings on individual photographs.
- The teacher will facilitate the group choosing a way to organize a series of photographs that tell the story of the civil rights. Should it be organized by date? Major figures? Issues- education- voting? What events/people should be included in the series? Once the class decides the focus for organizing the series students will go back to their small groups and view resource photographs and assign each student a picture collaborating with other groups to be sure the large group's organizational plan is still effective.

Websites for photographs with reference to civil rights:

<http://afroamhistory.about.com/od/civilrightsmovement/ig/Civil-Rights-Movement-Photos>

http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1704734_1520199,00.html

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart9.html>

<http://www.kodak.com/us/en/corp/features/moore/moreIndex.shtml>

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/084_civil.html.

http://photos.state.gov/galleries/usinfo-photo/39/civil_rights_07

book:

The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History 1954-1968 by Steven Kasher ISBN 9780789201232

- Homework: Students will print out an image of their photograph and research the specific event associated with this image completing page 1 of the planning sheet.

Day 3

- Students will report to small group findings from their homework. Students will then create 3 thumbnail sketches for possible compositions emulating

the style of Jacob Lawrence (simplified figures, flattened space, dynamic “on an angle composition”, and repetitive flat areas of color.) The difference in the sketches may be which details are eliminated or exaggerated. The basic composition of the photograph should be maintained, but subtle changes may occur in the planning stages for the painting.

- Students will present sketches to small group and then to teacher and evaluate feedback from group and teacher and will begin final piece using pencil to block in composition on 9” x 12” paper Students will begin painting.

Day 4-Day 5

- Students will paint compositions and participate in mid-point critiques where students will explain their choices and the events they depict.

Day 6

- Students will self evaluate using a rubric and will work together to decide the order that the class created series should be seen. (chronological? Based on different issues- education, voting, etc.?) Students will display the series as a group in decided order. In small groups, students will work together using planning sheets to write brief captions for each painting to be displayed with each painting.
- Students self assess using rubric and answer questions on rubric sheet.
- Students will assemble in front of installation and discuss its strengths and what choices they might make differently.

Suggested Assessment/Evaluation

- Discussion of work by Jacob Lawrence.
 - Planning sheets- page 1 and 2
 - Open-ended Questions
1. How does Jacob Lawrence use visual language to depict real events in our history?
 2. Can you understand a work without knowing the relevant historical information? Is there some communication or is there a risk of miscommunication?
 3. Jacob Lawrence insisted he was not a protest artist? Do you agree? Is he a fair judge of this?
 4. How did Jacob Lawrence’s experiences relate to the civil rights struggles? Could someone else with a different cultural background or time experience communicate these events with equal success?
- Rubric and questions
 - Final Assessment/ discussion of class- series on Civil Rights Movement

Possible Extensions/Resources

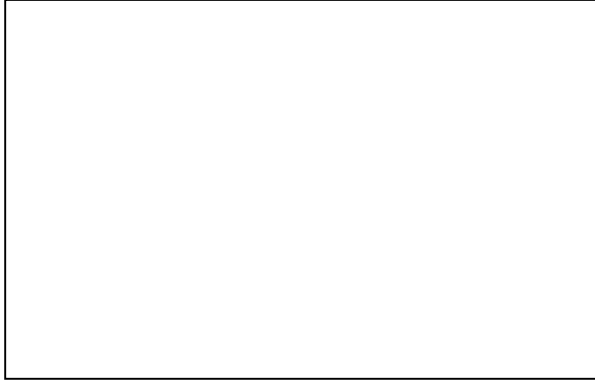
- Discussion of other artists from the Harlem Renaissance
- Discussion on photojournalism – Matthew Brady’s photographs from the Civil War

- Discussion of music and its impact on the civil rights movement- the power of “We Shall Overcome”

Name _____ Grade _____

Jacob Lawrence Style Civil Rights Illustration Planning Sheet

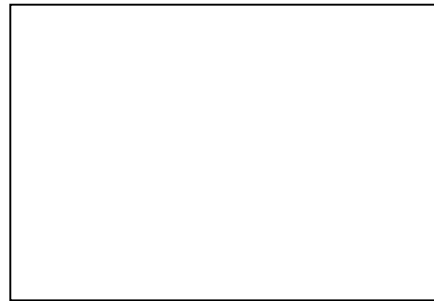
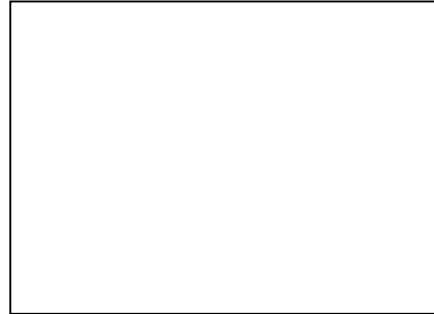
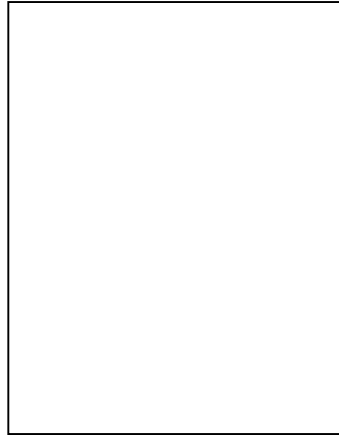
1. Draw a sketch of your photograph indicating important compositional elements and details you feel are important to the content.



2. What event is depicted in this photograph?
Research the event and record the important facts. Include if possible who the people are that are pictured. Where was this photograph taken? Who took the picture? What date?

3. What mood do you interpret from the photograph? Why do you think this photograph is important?

In the following boxes create three thumbnails to plan for your final composition.



What mood or feeling will you express?

What colors and lines would best express that mood and why?

Circle the best thumbnail sketch and explain below why it is most successful.

Describe

Focus: Objective Description of Subject matter

- Give title, year, artist, media information. Where and when the work made?
- What is the subject matter? Objectively describe what you see in the work.
- Elements of Art:
 - What colors are used?
 - How is value used?
 - What shapes are used?
 - What textures are visible?
 - How is line used?
 - Is the work 2D or 3D?
 - How is space indicated? Is it shallow or deep?
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Analyze

Focus: How is the work arranged? Principles of Design

- How is the work organized?
- What color scheme is used?
- How is the work balanced?
- How is rhythm achieved? (flowing, regular, alternating, random, progressive)
- How is the work unified?
- How does the work show variety?
- Is there an area of emphasis?
- What creates the focal point?
- Is the rule of thirds used to place focal point?

Art

- Directions: Write a four paragraph essay on your reproduction corresponding to the four parts of an art criticism.
- Paragraph 1: Describe
- Paragraph 2: Analyze

Interpret

Focus: Content of the work, Ideas, Feelings, Symbols, Stories

- Why was this work created? Create a hypothesis and defend with information from description and analysis paragraphs.
- Research information about this work, the artist, the culture, or historical context for the work and use information to help support and enhance your position.

Judge

Focus: Evaluation, judgment, aesthetic viewpoint

- Is the work successful? Is it important in art history?
- Evaluate the craftsmanship
- Evaluate the use of design
- Aesthetic viewpoint:
 - Imitationalist: realistic
 - Formalist: design, use of elements and principles
 - Emotionalist: communication of a

	Advanced (100-90)	Proficient (89-80)	Nearly Proficient (79- 70)	Basic (69- F)
Planning	All planning complete and thoughtful. Planning shows excellent effort.	Planning is almost complete and /or demonstrates effort.	Planning is incomplete and /or shows some effort.	Planning is not done and/or shows minimal effort.
Idea/Concept/ Composition	Composition demonstrates diagonals/active, areas of flat color which are repeated to create a rhythm Finished composition depicts an event from the civil rights movement using stylistic characteristics of Jacob Lawrence and is very consistent with the content of the photograph.	Composition uses most of the stylistic characteristics of Lawrence and/ or is consistent with content of photograph.	Composition uses few stylistic characteristics of Lawrence and/or is somewhat consistent with the content of the photograph.	Composition does not use stylistic characteristics of Lawrence and/or is inconsistent with photographic content.
Craftsmanship/ Technique	Sophisticated composition, thoughtful application of color to create rhythm movement through color Excellent craftsmanship	Good design and choice of color and/or good craftsmanship	Craftsmanship is inconsistent and/ or color and design choice are not unified	Craftsmanship need improvement and/or shows inconsistent effort. Color and design choices appear random.
Reflection/ Responses	Narrative text accompanies painting to enhance and explain specific illustrated event, Student enhances discussions of civil rights history, Jacob Lawrence artwork and class	Text explains event. Student actively participates constructively in small and large group	Text is incomplete or vague. Student participates somewhat in large and small group	Text is not done or is inaccurate. Student participation is large and small group discussions is minimal.

