

OVERVIEW

This seventh grade Renaissance Unit consists of twenty, forty-minute art periods. These periods occur daily during four consecutive weeks. There are approximately twenty-five students in each of the four classes in which I will be teaching this unit. Since the Renaissance is a period of time that is studied in sixth grade social studies classes in my district, most students have prior knowledge of the topic. However, the specific experiences provided on this subject vary from teacher to teacher and school to school.

"Can a renaissance occur amidst specialization?" is the essential question that drives this seventh grade unit. Through a study of the Renaissance and its art, students will learn about what made this period unique and so important to all the visual artists of later times. The student will be encouraged to compare and contrast this period with the present. They will be given two opportunities to respond to the essential question, once at the onset of the unit and again at the end of their course of study. They will also be asked to determine whether the Renaissance would flourish in the highly specialized society of the 21st century.

During the course of this unit, students will learn what, when and where the Renaissance occurred. They will study and be reflective about the culture, life and the arts of its people; and will make judgment calls about the people, their culture and lifestyle. They will compare their newfound knowledge to what they imagine the world might look like in the 21st century. The art of this period will be examined through the artistic lens, applying the elements and principles of design to create a successful piece of artwork. The students will study one and two point perspective to understand how to create space on a two-dimensional surface. Finally, they will walk in the footsteps of a Renaissance artist, experiencing the process of creation first-hand. They will research their subject matter, sketch and revise their sketches after in-depth observations of a Renaissance painting of their choice.

Renaissance Paintings

Questions to ask Students

Ask students to describe what they see in each painting. Ask them to specifically notice the color, space and lines. Does there appear to be a specific space?

What is happening in this painting? Who are the people? What are they doing?

Are you looking into a real space?

What does the artist do to make you think the space is there?

What means (techniques) does the artist use to make us think this is real space?

Why would a wealthy person living in the Renaissance commission this painting? (Same question only substitute "a wealthy person living in" for "the church during")

What do you like about this painting? Dislike?

What is in the foreground of this painting? Middle ground? Background?

What do you think the artist is telling you about this period in time? Subject matter?

Why do you think it is important to study paintings of the past? What do you learn from this experience?

Questions 5 - 10

Elements of Design

Line
Texture
Shape / Form
Space

Principles of Design

Movement / Rhythm
Balance
Pattern
Unity
Emphasis
Contrast

Write three other observations about how you used three other elements of design (not Color) in your painting. What effect did you achieve by using each element the way you did?

Write three observations about how you skillfully manipulated your elements of design to successfully incorporate three different principles of design in your painting.

Please number your observations 5 through 10.

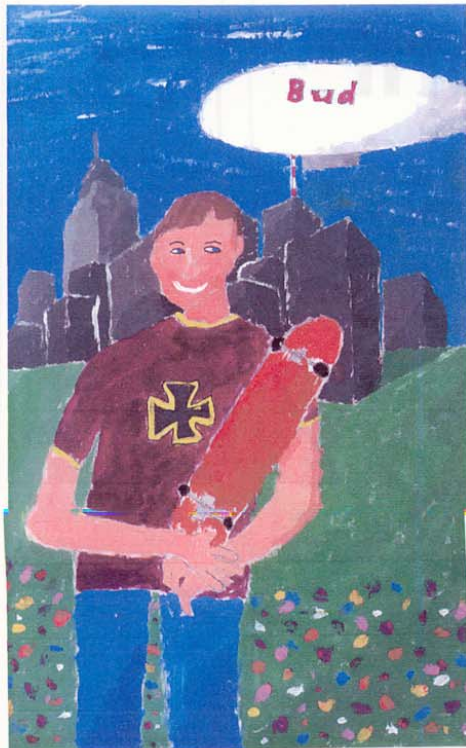
If you wish to use drawings to help explain what you did in your painting, make sure to label them appropriately so that the teacher and/or reader fully understands what you are saying about your painting.

Start here.

5.

Dan Penza came into seventh grade art with little art background. He was a hard working, conscientious student. He had told me that he had not painted since second grade. His artwork was not reflective of this. All his work, whether written or created was above average. Dan, unlike the other three students, seemed to learn from demonstration, as well from listening to oral instructions or doing written research.

Dan researched Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa.



Skateboarder in NYC
By Dan Penza

Lina Sanchez, Colombian, is an ESL student. She has been in this country only two years. She is an excellent art student. She is eager to learn. All tasks that required writing such as journal entries, reflections and research take Lina much longer to complete than they did other students. This is due to the fact that English is not her first language. However, she took assignments home and came in during her lunch period or after school to complete all assignments on time. She also spent additional time completing her artwork.

Lina found it difficult to paint in the dark, earthy colors of the Mona Lisa. Instead, she used colors true to her Hispanic background.

Lina did her research on Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa.



The New Mona Lisa
By Lina J. Sanchez

Samples of Student Reflections and Journal Entries

Essential Question 1 & 1 A Can a Renaissance occur amidst specialization?
Student's responses typed as written in order. First 1, then 1 A. Students answered the essential question first without any prior knowledge.

Terriann Beier

"I don't get this question. I don't understand the words admist & specialization,"

"I believe that the rennissance should not admist in specialization is because there are so many new things. There are different types of paintings."

Kristi Lewis

"I don't think the Renaissance is possible because I don't really know what there asking, so I'm really not sure but drawing show a lot what you do and how you feel."

She did not answer Essential Question 1 A.

Dan Penza

"I do not understand the question because of the high vocabulary of the words."

"The Renaissance is possible because there was many specialization. There were metal smiths there was merchants and there were painters. So, the Renaissance is possible through specialization. Metal smiths only worked with metal, painters only worked with paint, and merchants only worked with trading. That means they only work with one thing and are only good with one thing."

Lina J. Sanchez

"I don't understand it because I don't understand the words."

"Yes I belive the renaissance possilbe admist specialization because America and Far East traded and renaissance is burst of learning and in specialization we still have burst of learning."