



**Pilot Lesson Plans
Grades 6–8**

Santa Paula Art Museum

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Sense of Place

Objective	By observing one or more landscape paintings and writing a free-form poem, students will learn about the choices made by the artist to convey a specific sense of place and attitude towards the landscape.
Content Standards	Visual Arts: 6 —4.1; 7 —1.1, 4.2; 8 —4.3 Language Arts: This lesson may support various skills taught in the Language Arts curriculum. For example: 6 —Writing Applications 2.4.a-b; 7 —Writing Applications 2.2.a-b; 8 —2.2.a-c. Teachers please consult the content standards for your grade level.
Grades	6–8
Time	One to two class periods
Materials	Reproductions of Milford Zornes, <u>Santa Ynez Valley</u> , not dated, and Ralph Holmes, <u>Canyon Orchards</u> , 1940; paper, pencil, note cards, dictionaries, thesauruses
Background	<i>Landscape painting</i> has a long-standing and important tradition in the United States. During westward expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many paintings of the American west perpetuated the myth of the frontier. In the early twentieth century, many artists traveled to California inspired by the unspoiled landscapes of various locations such as Santa Paula and the Monterey Bay. Between the world wars, paintings of Southern California including <u>Santa Ynez Valley</u> by Milford Zornes and <u>Canyon Orchards</u> by Ralph Holmes depicted areas not yet impacted by urban growth. In many of these landscapes, the artists' choice of subject, scale, color, and style, convey a particular understanding or personal sense of the place.
Procedure	Step One—Students Discuss a Work of Art and Consider the Artist's Sense of Place Have students look closely at <u>Santa Ynez Valley</u> or <u>Canyon Orchards</u> and describe what they see in the painting. Encourage students to use specific words to describe what they see. What nouns, verbs, and adjectives does each element of the landscape inspire? Make a list of descriptive words on the board as students say them. What colors do you see in the painting? Are they warm or cool, bright or subdued, light or dark? What colors first draw your attention?

How would you describe the mood or emotion of the painting? In what ways do the colors support that description?

Look closely at the painting. Where is the horizon line? What do you see in the *foreground*, *middle ground*, and *background* of the composition? What area seems most important? Foreground is the area that appears to be closest to the viewer, middle ground lies between the foreground and background, and the background is the area that appears farthest away from the viewer near the horizon line.

What other details has the artist included? Does the artist focus on trees, water, rocks, sky, or other elements in the landscape?

Consider the point-of view of the painting, where was the artist when he painted this landscape? As a viewer, do you feel you are above, below, or a part of the scene represented?

Does the painting communicate a sense of grandeur or an intimate experience with the land?

What do you think the artist has chosen to tell us about the place? How do you think the artist felt about this place?

Step Two—Students Build on their Observations through Writing

Have students select one of the artworks referenced above. Distribute paper and pencils. Look closely and quickly write down all of the nouns and verbs they can think of to describe the landscape. Students may draw from the list on the board.

Next, look at the landscape again, write down nouns and verbs and add specific descriptors such as jagged branches, dry grass, sunlit mountains.

Now look again and write lines using comparisons for example, the hills are like golden pyramids.

Finally ask students to combine and arrange their words, descriptors, and lines into a free-form poem or descriptive paragraph inspired by the painting.

When students complete their poems or descriptive paragraphs have them reflect on their initial observations captured on the board. After completing the process of looking and writing, how have their thoughts about the painting changed? What more do they see?

Have students work in pairs or small groups to read their poems aloud. In what ways do the students' interpretations differ? What do the other interpretations reveal about the painting?

Extension Students may repeat this process to write a poem inspired by the landscape around their school, home, or another location in Santa Paula. Encourage students to express a personal point-of-view or attitude toward the landscape.

This lesson is inspired by an activity created by poet Karen Holden.

The Role of Portraiture

Objective	Students will explore the purposes and functions of portraiture and create portrait collages to express information about themselves.
Content Standards	Visual Arts: 6 —1.2, 2.5, 4.1; 7 —4.1, 4.2; 8 —1.2, 4.3 Language Arts: The extension activity in this lesson may support skills taught in the Language Arts curriculum. Teachers please consult the content standards for your grade level.
Grades	6–8
Time	Two class periods
Materials	Reproduction of Marian Raulston, <u>Peaches and Ivan</u> , not dated, and Marjorie Murphy, <u>Pamela</u> , not dated, collage materials such as magazines, post cards, photographs, students' drawings, scissors, glue or glue sticks, heavy paper (8 1/2 x 11 or larger) for collage base
Background	<p><i>Portraits</i> are documents that record an individual's likeness at a particular moment in time. They can serve as evidence of a person's presence in the world and may provide information about that person's characteristics and interests. Portraits can give clues as to how people lived in different times and places.</p> <p>Portraits can provide information about the sitter or subject and reflect a specific point of view. When looking at a portrait, consider the information that may be contained in the sitter's appearance. The setting of the portrait might be significant as well. Body language can also provide clues about the personality of the sitter. By recognizing a pose, gesture, gaze, expression, or object included in the portrait, the viewer can draw conclusions or interpret the image.</p>
Procedure	<p>Step One—Students Discuss a Work of Art and Explore the Purposes of Portraiture</p> <p>Look at the <i>double portrait</i> <u>Peaches and Ivan</u> as a group. Have students describe what they see. What can you say about the sitters in the painting?</p> <p>In what ways do details such as setting, body language, facial expression, hands, and clothing provide information about the Peaches and Ivan?</p> <p>How would you describe the physical and emotional space between the sitters? What could be the relationship between Peaches and Ivan?</p>

Step Two—Compare Peaches and Ivan to Marjorie Murphy, Pamela

Take a close look at Pamela. Based on what you see in the portrait how would you describe the sitter?

Have students compare both portraits. In what ways do they differ? What similarities are there?

What are reasons for making each portrait? Were they made for similar or different reasons? Who may have been the intended viewer of each portrait?

Step Three—Students Further their Exploration through Collage

In a 1942 journal entry, photographer Edward Weston once made a distinction between portraits and “mere pictures of people.” What are the important qualities of a portrait? In what ways is a portrait different from a driver’s license photo or a passport photo? Reference Pamela and Peaches and Ivan in the discussion.

Have students work individually or in small groups to discuss how they would like to be represented in a portrait. What ideas would they want to communicate about themselves? Consider the setting of the portraits, what objects or *symbols* would be included, and who would be the intended audience for their portraits. In what ways would their portrait differ from a “mere picture”?

Ask students to make a portrait of a student from their group that captures their character or personality. Students may use a variety of images, symbols, drawings, and text to create a *conceptual portrait* or combine facial features from a variety of sources to make a *representational portrait*. What is the overall quality of the sitter that they would like to reflect in the portrait?

Provide students with a variety of collage materials. Keeping the main idea about their sitter in mind, encourage students to select images, colors, shapes, and facial features from a variety of sources.

When students have selected their collage materials, distribute the paper that will serve as the foundation of their artworks. Before gluing, ask students to explore multiple compositions and possibilities for arranging the pieces of the collage. Distribute glue when students have decided on their compositions.

Students may share their completed portrait collages with the class or students may participate in a “gallery walk” and consider who each portrait represents. In what ways did students express information about the sitter? How did they decide what information to include and what to leave out?

Extension To explore portraiture further, students may individually select a portrait and select from one of the following writing prompts.

Point-of View Monologue—Create a first-person narrative for one of the characters in the portrait. The narrative can be written in the form of an internal conversation or describe the sitter’s life.

Dialogue—Develop a dialogue between the individuals in the portrait. In what ways will the tone of each sitter develop the scene? Consider how the use of diction and grammar will support the mood of the painting and the conversation between the sitters.

Finding Meaning in a Work of Art

Objective Students practice one approach to interpreting a work of art and collaborate to form a reasonable interpretation.

Content Standards Visual Arts: **6**—4.1, 4.3, 4.4; **7**—4.2, 4.4; **8**—4.3, 4.4, 4.5

Grades 6–8

Time One class period

Materials Reproduction of Emil Kosa, Jr., The Loop, 1948, paper and pencil

Background Works of art have meaning and are open to *interpretation*. Interpretation is the practice of identifying the expressive qualities, meaning, mood, and ideas an artwork communicates to the viewer. A single artwork may have many interpretations, but a good interpretation is reasonable, enlightening, and can tell us something about the art.

Procedure **Step One—Students Discuss a Work of Art**

Have students look at The Loop and make observations about what they see. Consider subject matter, color, media, etc. Record responses on the board.

Divide the class into small groups. Have each group work together to answer the following questions. Students' responses should be grounded in what they see in the painting. One person in each group should be designated to record and share comments with the class.

What objects do you see? How are objects represented?

List everything you see in this work of art. Look closely at details in the *foreground*, *middle ground*, and *background* of the painting. How did the artist represent the objects? For example, are the objects large, small, light, or dark? What story does the painting tell? What draws your eye? What seems to be the focus of the painting? What surprises you about this artwork?

What mood or emotion does it communicate?

How would you describe the overall mood or emotion of the painting? What colors does the artist use? Are they bright or dull? Is any one color more predominant in the composition than the others? How do the colors contribute to the mood or emotion of the painting?

What is it made of?

The artist used watercolors to make this painting. In what ways do the materials influence your response to the artwork? How might your response be different if it was a photograph or a drawing?

Step Two—Students Share Responses and Form a Group Interpretation

Have students from each group share responses to the questions. Summarize responses on the board. If there are many different responses for each question, discuss how they vary.

Work as a group to determine what the main or most important responses may be. How do the responses work together? What stands out? What seems to be most important about the work of art?

Have students look back at their initial responses to the painting. In what ways have their responses changed?

How did this interpretation process help them to look closer at the work of art? In what ways did the process encourage them to consider the meaning of the painting?

Extension What questions do students still have? An interpretation of a work of art can be enhanced through research of the artist and time the painting was made or the era it represents. Have students work in pairs or small groups to find information about the artist Emil Kosa, Jr. and the period of time represented in The Loop. In what ways will they revise their interpretation? What new information can they add?

Santa Paula Past and Present

Objective	Students investigate the history of Santa Paula and consider the city’s future through research and artmaking.
Content Standards	Visual Arts: 6 —4.1; 7 —4.2; 8 —4.3, 4.4 History-Social Science: This lesson may support various skills taught in the History-Social Science curriculum. Teachers please consult the content standards for your grade level.
Grades	6–8
Time	Two class periods
Materials	Reproduction of Douglas Shively, <u>I Remember</u> , 1971, butcher paper (48 x 20 inches per group), colored pencils or crayons, tempera paint, construction paper, collage materials such as magazines and postcards, glue sticks, scissors, pencils, basic map of Santa Paula (find a map at Google maps or similar source), internet access
Background	The city of Santa Paula has a long history of agriculture and oil production that can be traced back to the early homesteaders of the late nineteenth century. Many of the orchards and farms that were established in the 1880s and 1890s remain and continue to raise cattle and produce crops including lemons, oranges, and avocados. Like most cities, Santa Paula has grown and changed since its beginnings. In this lesson students will research the past of Santa Paula, think critically about its present, and envision its future.
Procedure	Step One—Students Discuss a Work of Art that Reflects Santa Paula’s History Take a few minutes to look closely at this painting. Describe what you see. This is a painting by artist Douglas Shively entitled <u>I Remember</u> that represents the Santa Paula Train Depot on North Tenth Street. The train station was built in 1887 and is one of the original Southern Pacific Railroad Depots. The Southern Pacific Railroad was an American railroad established in 1865 that had railroad lines across the United States. Shively was born in Santa Paula in 1896 and this painting is dated 1971. What time period could the painting reflect? What do you see that makes you see that? What does the painting suggest about the history of Santa Paula?

How does this image compare to the appearance of the train depot today? (Share recent pictures of train depot if necessary.) In what ways has that area of Santa Paula changed since the era referenced in the painting?

Step Two—Students Learn about the History of Santa Paula

Have students do basic research into the history of Santa Paula. How was the town founded? Who were the founding families? Research *landmarks* such as the Limoneira Company, founded in 1893, the Union Oil Company of California, California's first oil well, established in 1867, and the Santa Paula Train Depot from 1896. Consider natural landmarks such as the San Cayetano and Oakridge mountain ranges as well as the Santa Paula Creek and the Santa Clara River.

Have students work in groups to make a basic map of Santa Paula that illustrates major natural and constructed landmarks important to the city's history. Provide each group with a sheet of butcher paper and have students draw a grid of streets to indicate the layout of the city.

Ask students to include drawn, painted, or printed images to illustrate the landmarks they select. Go to www.santapaulahistoricalsociety.org to start. Where will they place Shively's painting I Remember on the timeline?

Step Three—Students Imagine the Future of Santa Paula

Have groups of students collaborate to create their own visions of the future of Santa Paula that incorporates elements of present-day Santa Paula and imagines what lies ahead. Consider the following questions:

How do students describe present-day Santa Paula?

What are the current strengths of Santa Paula?

What do students like about their city?

What is the role of the landscape and nature in the city now and in the future?

What is missing from present-day Santa Paula that students would like to incorporate into their vision of the future?

How will the future Santa Paula compare to present-day Santa Paula?

After discussing these questions have students find images such as paintings, drawings, and photographs from the internet and collage materials to illustrate the future of Santa Paula. Students can incorporate these components into the maps they began in step two. Will the future include new construction of civic or recreational buildings? How will parks and other open spaces be incorporated into the future city? Completed maps will combine information about the past, present and future of Santa Paula.

Have each group present their maps to the class. What was one thing that surprised them about the history of Santa Paula? What do they envision for the city's future? What parts of present-day Santa Paula do they want to carry forward? In what ways do their maps compare to those created by other students?

Extension Facilitate a discussion with students about how this activity inspired or challenged them to play an active role in the growth and development of their city. How can they take action now and in the future?