

Teacher Lab

Lesson Plan

Title of Lesson: Mood and Emotion in Painting and Poetry

Topic or Theme of Unit that Lesson is Part of: Art Communicates

Subject Areas: Reading/Language Arts

Schedule: 3–4 class periods

Lesson Summary: Students think about the visual strategies an artist used to create a sense of mood in his painting. They write poems in response to the painting using language to convey mood, first before having learned about the artwork and the artist, then again afterward, incorporating their new knowledge. Finally they make paintings inspired by the poems.

American Artwork(s) on Which Lesson is Based:



Fitz Henry Lane (1804–1865)
Brace's Rock, Brace's Cove, 1864
Oil on canvas, 10 ¼ x 15 ¼ in.
Terra Foundation for American Art,
Daniel J. Terra Collection, 1999.83

Big or Main Ideas Students Will Understand:

- The subject of a painting can be symbolic
- Mood can be an important element in both poems and paintings
- Color can contribute to the mood of a painting

National Standards:

English Language Arts Standard 4: Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Visual Arts Content Standards:

- 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
- 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- 6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Illinois Learning Standards:

- 1C: Comprehend a broad range of reading materials
- 5B: Analyze and evaluate information from various sources
- 27B: Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society, and everyday life
- 26B: Apply skills and knowledge to create a work of art

Chicago Reading Initiative Correlation: X word knowledge X writing X reading X fluency

Student Objectives: Students will...

- Interpret and analyze the painting *Brace's Rock, Brace's Cove*, 1864
- Write a five-line poem, using *Brace's Rock, Brace's Cove* as inspiration
- Identify the mood of the painting, using formal analysis to support ideas
- Identify the mood of a poem
- Create a work of art that illustrates the mood of the poem

Vocabulary Students Will Learn:

Mood, landscape

Information about the Artwork that is Important to Student's Understanding:**Relevant Information about the Time Period**

- Gloucester was becoming popular as a tourist destination when the painting was made; and visitors to the town were purchasing art. There was an increasing art market in Gloucester for imaginative seascapes and landscapes.
- The year the painting was made, 1864, was the bloodiest of the Civil War. It was a dark and highly uncertain time for people in the United States and for the artist, Fitz Henry Lane, personally.

Relevant Information about the Artist

- Lane was born in 1804 in the historic seaport town of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

- He was paralyzed after contracting polio as a small child, which helped direct him into a career as a painter.
- Lane spent his career painting scenes of the shore around his hometown of Gloucester. The son of sail maker, Lane knew a lot about ships and was able to incorporate accurate details into his paintings.
- Lane painted *Brace's Rock, Brace's Cove* in 1864, during the Civil War, and while he was experiencing failing health.

Relevant Information about the Artwork

- The painting shows an actual place: a cove near the artist's native Gloucester, Massachusetts.
- Brace's Cove was a very dangerous place for sailors—full of treacherous rocks off a point and the site of numerous ship wrecks; yet the artist shows it as peaceful and calm.
- No life is visible in the painting and bushes on the bank seem to be in their last days.
- The boat is wrecked or beached, which art historians believe could symbolize death and destruction of the Civil War and the artist's failing health.
- The artist used contrasts between dark and light colors in his painting which lends a sense of mystery.
- The painting communicates stillness and has dreamlike qualities. The calm sky, glassy reflection of rocks against still water, and gently lapping waves suggest permanence and eternity.
- The painting is small and intimate, and is more about emotion and mood than a document of a specific location.

Source(s):

Terra Foundation for American Art Web site, <http://www.terraamericanart.org/collections>

Resources:

Information Source for Student Use:

- Terra Foundation for American Art Web site, <http://www.terraamericanart.org/collections>

Other Materials/Supplies Needed for the Lesson:

- Paper
- Pencils, colored pencils, markers, and water colors (medium to be determined by teacher or selected by students)
- "Poetry from Art" handout attached

Student Activities:

| Day | Emphasis of this Lesson Idea/Outcome | Activities |
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| 1 | Guide students in doing a “close read” of the painting and writing a poem based on initial impressions. | <p>Introduction/Motivation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pass out colored prints (made from the Terra Foundation Web site) of <i>Brace’s Rock</i>, <i>Brace’s Cove</i> and “Poetry from Art” worksheet (attached). 2. Ask students to look closely at the work of art for about 35 seconds, noticing as many details as they can. 3. Ask students to write a poem following the instructions in the worksheet. Give students approximately 20 minutes to complete the exercise. 4. Invite students to share their observations about the painting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you see? 5. Assist students in analyzing the painting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the focal point? • What did you notice first and why? • What details has the artist included in the painting? • What do you notice about the artist’s use of color? • What is the overall mood of the painting? • What do you see that helps create that mood? <p>Assignment: Ask students for evidence of mood. Have them list in writing at least three details that contribute to the painting’s mood. In a sentence, describe the feeling each detail creates.</p> |
| 2 | Lead a contextual analysis of the painting and poem. | <p>Motivation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to look at their poems to see if they thought about mood as they were writing. Ask volunteers to share their poems. 2. Have a group discussion about mood in the painting and evidence they noted in the previous day’s assignment. <p>Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct students’ attention to the date of the painting and discuss what was happening in the United States at this time in history. 2. Give students text about the painting and the artist from the Terra Foundation Web site, (www.terraamericanart.org/collections). Have them look for information about the artist, artwork, and historical context as they read. 3. Encourage students to connect the information with the painting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were events taking place that may have influenced Lane? • Why might he have painted this picture? <p>Synthesis/Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Ask students to write a reflection on their poems. They should specifically address the ways they would change their poems with the new understanding of the painting. |

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| 3 | Read a poem and identify the mood. | <p>Synthesis/Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to write a second poem about the painting, incorporating their new knowledge about it and the artist, using language that captures the painting's mood. 2. Ask volunteers to read their poems aloud. 3. In small groups, have students read one another's poems and highlight words and phrases that help them visualize and understand the ideas in them. 4. Have a group discussion about the authors' word choices and how they contribute to what we visualize. 5. Ask students to determine the mood of the selected poems. What evidence from the texts supports their conclusions? |
| 4 | Create a work of art that represents the mood of a poem. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to make a work of art that communicates the mood expressed in their poem or in a poem by a classmate. Review elements from <i>Brace's Rock, Braces Cove</i> that lend to the mood (such as colors, contrast between light and dark, the subject matter, etc.). Encourage students to avoid using traditional symbols (such as the sun to represent happiness, etc.). 2. Have a group discussion about the work. Students share their ideas about the mood expressed in their classmates' artworks, referring to evidence in the works. |

Poetry from Art: Metaphor and Simile

Writers often find inspiration in works of art. Look carefully at a work of art that you find interesting or moving. Use the structure below to write a poem inspired by the work you have selected.

Choose a one-word title based on the work of art

Write an action phrase based on what you see (beginning with an “-ing” word)

Write a simile (a phrase that uses “like” or “as”)

Write about a sensation you might experience if you could enter the work of art

Give the artwork another, longer title