

Theme Ten: Global Village



Theme in Life

We all want to thrive in an evolving future.

Theme in Art

Art is changing as the world is changing.

Introduction to the Theme

For thousands of years people lived together in villages. In traditional villages, people all know each other. They know each others' strengths and weaknesses. They depend upon each other. They each know their place among the other people of the village.

For most of the history of the world, people of one culture knew little, if anything, about people of other cultures. As transportation technology advanced from moving by foot, to boat, to animal power, to train, to automobile, to airplane, to space shuttle, people have come more and more in contact with people of other cultures. As communication technology advanced from spoken words, to written words, to radio waves, to television signals, to the Internet and satellite communications systems, people all over the world are learning more and more about the many people who share life on our planet.

Virtually all cultures have developed their own distinctive art traditions, that is, ideas, activities, and values associated with art. As cultures contact each other and intermix, art traditions overlap, evolve, and endure.

Key Inquiry Questions

Questions about Artworks:

SENSORY ELEMENTS:

What sensory elements (line, shape, color, light and dark, mass and space) are most important in this artwork?

FORMAL ORGANIZATION:

How do the elements in the artwork work together (for example, are parts repeated, balanced, emphasized, contrasted)?

Question about Artworks in Context:

THEMES: What general ideas does this artwork share with other artworks?

Key Cultures

Contemporary Asian American
Contemporary Native American



Activities

Unit Orientation

Introduce students to the Theme Title, the Theme in Life, the Theme in Art, and the Key Inquiry Questions to help guide their independent or small group investigation.

Theme and Key Questions

Use the following questions to guide your discussion.

Students' Experience with the Theme:

Help students identify how the theme relates to their own lives.

- Check labels on your clothes and the packaging of consumer goods to identify the many places around the world where these products originated.
- Use a map to locate the countries of origin.
- What foods have you eaten that are prepared in the traditions of different cultures (Italian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Ethiopian, Caribbean, Jewish, Mexican, French, other)?
- Talk with older family members about family roots. Do you believe that your family roots go back a long time in the area where you live? Perhaps you, your parents, or some or all of your grandparents came from another part of the state, country, or world. If you are not a Native American, do you know what country/countries or continent/s your family ancestors came from? Use a map to locate family roots represented in the class.
- Is your first or last name one that has roots in a particular culture (perhaps not even your own)? Which culture is it?

Inquiry into Students' Experience:

Use the key questions to help students make connections to their own experiences.

- A theme in art is a big idea that an artist includes in an artwork. Some themes have been used by many different artists in different eras and even in different cultures, for example love, friendship, power, religious devotion, struggle, or freedom.
- Can you think of a big idea that is used again and again in familiar TV comedies or dramas, in children's cartoons, in science fiction movies, or in mystery novels? (For example: tragedy caused by jealousy, relationship lost to ambition, humorous mix-up in communications, noble response to disaster, courage to act when afraid, struggle for dignity/power/life, self-sacrifice for love, unhealthy competition, inventiveness under pressure, struggle between good and evil, triumph of good [or evil], challenge to understand another person, the loyalty of friends, confusion and misunderstanding across generations, and many more.)
- Can you think of two otherwise quite different artworks (plays, TV shows, movies, etc.) that address the same theme? (Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and the Broadway play, *West Side Story*, are both about tragic love.

Bugs Bunny and *Roadrunner* cartoons are about determination and effort [by Elmer Fudd and Wiley Coyote] foiled by quickness and cleverness [by Bugs and the Roadrunner].

Transfer to Diverse Cultures



The following instructions are written for students who are able to work independently. If you teach younger students, the instructions offer helpful guidelines as you gather and present information in order to optimize transfer potential for your students. Depending on the grade level of your students and their access to appropriate library and Internet sources, you can choose to build transfer across cultures either 1) through student investigation or 2) through your own investigations and presentations to students.


Inquiry about Artworks:

- Divide half the class into small groups and ask each group to select an Asian American artist they would like to learn more about (for example Roger Shimomura, Nam June Paik, I. M. Pei, or Hung Liu). Ask them to locate reproductions of several artworks by that artist and to discuss which one or two sensory elements is/are most important in that artist's work or what principle the artist tended to use to organize elements within his/her artworks.
- Divide the other half of the class into small groups and ask them to select an important contemporary Native American artist they would like to learn more about (for example Jaune Quick-To-See Smith, Shanto Begay, Nora Naranjo-Morse, Baje Whitethorne, or Roxanne Swentzell). Ask them also to locate reproductions of several artworks by their artist and to discuss which one or two sensory elements is/are most important in that artist's work or what principle the artist tended to use to organize elements within his/her artworks.

Inquiry about Artworks in Context:

- Ask students to continue to work in their groups focused on an individual contemporary Asian American and Native American artist. Ask them to extend their investigations looking for evidence to suggest that their selected artist drew ideas from more than one culture or artworld. Ask them to look for qualities in the artist's work (elements, organization, technical features, subject matter) that come from different aspects of the artist's cross-cultural heritage. Also ask them to look for themes that appear repeatedly in the work of one artist.
- Finally, ask students to work together to plan a group presentation that tells the story of the artist, her/his artwork, and overlapping cultures. Presentations might take various forms: role playing, mock interview, dramatic scene, performed biography. Ask students to be sure to include reproductions of the





artist's artworks in their presentation. Ask them also, if possible, to show at least one theme that appears in more than one artwork and to point out evidence of the artist's cross-cultural heritage.

Transfer to Studio



Review the unit themes and key questions to help students transfer what they have learned to their own art making.

Thematic artwork:

- Challenge students to relate the theme to their own experiences. For example, after investigating at least two quite different presentations of the same theme, ask students to create their own artwork that addresses the theme from their own perspective.
- Ask students to make an artwork that synthesizes (styles, processes, subject matter) from at least two different artistic heritages or artworlds. CAUTION: In order to avoid cultural insensitivity, do not encourage imitation of appearance only. Be sure to investigate the function and/or meaning of the artwork in its own culture sufficiently to avoid disrespectful use of sacred or otherwise very special images.

Exhibition:

- Display student artwork with Unit Information (Unit Title, Theme in Life, Theme in Art, and Key Questions). You may also want to exhibit sample student reports.

Interdisciplinary Transfer



The Arts:

- Themes in literature, film, drama, and dance

Economics:

- Raw materials, manufacturing, and trade

Geography:

- Demographics of the United States through the centuries

History:

- Relationships with Native Americans, with imported enslaved people, and with conquered or colonized peoples