

Picturing America Lesson Plan: Creating an Illustrated and Annotated Time Line  
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**Objective:** Students will be able to trace the progress of 19<sup>th</sup> century America by looking at the changes depicted in the art of the century.

**Guiding Question:** How do American artists capture the growing spirit of the age?

**Materials:** Computer lab, banner paper (5-6 feet), markers, scissors and tape.

**Teacher Preparation:**

1. Select a painting/photo to represent the selected themes of the 1800's. Themes are: Jacksonian Democracy; Manifest Destiny; Antebellum; Civil War; The West; Immigration and the Gilded Age or the Industrial Age.
2. Using information given in the Picturing America book, write a paragraph(s) explaining the time period and a paragraph describing why the art work is symbolic of the time period.
  - a. The following pictures could be used: View from Mount Holyoke (The Oxbow); Washington Crossing the Delaware; The Veteran in the New Field or the Robert Shaw Memorial; The County Election; The Peacock Room; The Portrait of a Boy and The Boating Party.
3. The pictures and the descriptions will be hung up in the classroom so the students can see and read the examples. The Room should be big enough that students can walk around.
4. Working alone or with the school librarian, the teacher will put together a list of computer and/or book sources that students can use to complete the project.

**Student Procedure:**

1. Students will be put into groups of 5 or 6. Each person in the group will contribute to creating a large annotated timeline of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Each student, in each group, will be assigned a theme to cover for their part of the timeline.
2. Students will first meet as an entire class and look at the sample timeline the teacher and librarian created. Students will be encouraged to walk around and read the material and look at the pictures.
3. Once the lesson is explained to the class, the librarian will demonstrate the various websites, data bases or books that students could use for their research.
4. Students will be given 2 days in the library to research their theme and find a painting or photo for their theme. The group will work to put the time line together. The historical paragraph should highlight the significant achievement or events of the time period. How did these events impact the course of the nation? The paragraph concerning the art work should explain why the

student chose this picture to represent the theme. The paragraph could include what the artist hoped to achieve, symbolism used and the impact of the work.

**Assessment:**

1. This project is worth 25 points. It is an individual grade. You can choose to add an additional 5 points for the group grade and look at how well the timeline was put together.
  - a. 5 pts. – selecting an appropriate picture
  - b. 10 pts. – paragraph on historical summary
  - c. 10 pts. – paragraph on art work