

## Introduction to Picturing America

Allow approximately two 45 minute periods.

Objective: Introduce Picturing America Program and expose students to entire collection.

Outline:

Grant – National Endowment for the Humanities\*  
American Library Association

Collection – Pieces of art that portray typically American culture and history

Themes of the collection:

- Democracy,
- Leadership,
- Landscape,
- Courage,
- Creativity and Ingenuity,
- Freedom and Equality.

Warm up Activities: Play observation game using *Midnight Ride of Paul Revere* by Grant Wood

1. Display painting to whole group.
2. View painting for timed minute.
3. Cover painting with drape.
4. Send one student from the room for a timed minute.
5. Bring student back into room and have them stand so that they cannot see the painting but the class can.
6. Have student describe the painting from memory to the class.
7. Discuss students' levels of observations and skill of "active viewing".

Display each poster in collection asking students to share observations. Guide the discussion away from opinions and evaluative statements which may influence others interpretations.

Use Visual Thinking Strategies (Lukehart, 2010)

Leader asks students to take a few minutes to look closely at an image and then ask these and only these questions:

1. What is going on in this picture?
2. What do you see that makes you say that?
3. What else can you find?

The leader continually paraphrases student responses, while

- increasing the accuracy of the language without making participants feel corrected,
- validating individual views,
- connecting observations, and
- pointing out differences of opinion.

Participants must provide visual evidence to support their interpretations.

After short discussion, give students basic information provided on poster about each piece.

## Research Activity for Picturing America

Allow approximately two 45 minute periods.

Objective: Investigate information on a specific piece of the PA collection focusing on:

- Artist
- Time period
- Artistic medium
- Artistic style

Materials:

Picturing America posters

Historical timeline resources:

Chisholm, Jane. *Timelines of World History*. London: Usborne Publishing, 2000.

*Timelines of History*. Danbury CT: Grolier, 2005.

*World Almanac for Kids U.S. History Timeline*

[http://www.worldalmanacforkids.com/WAKI-Chapter.aspx?chapter\\_id=15](http://www.worldalmanacforkids.com/WAKI-Chapter.aspx?chapter_id=15)  
(2010).

Handouts:

*Picturing America Background Information and  
Historical Timeline for Picturing America Art*

Directions:

1. Complete Background Information graphic organizer
  - ✓ Using Independent Investigation Method (IIM) research process to:
    - Locate and select resources (online databases, print, evaluated websites, and recorded media)
    - Collect notefacts that answer the essential questions on the visual organizer (PA Background Information sheet)
      1. Summarize the *artist's personal life*. (5-10 notefacts)
      2. Identify the *time period* when the PA piece was created and describe what impact that may have had. (5 – 10 notefacts)
      3. Discuss the *style* of art that this artist is most known for and the artistic *medium* that he/she used to express their ideas. (5- 10 notefacts)
    - Create 1 – 3 essential questions of your own about your selection – What else would you like to find out?
    - Collect notefacts to answer your own EQ's (5 – 10 notefacts)
2. Using the timeline provided as well as other resources, complete the *Historical Timeline for Picturing America Art*
  - ✓ Sketch your PA selection in the middle panel
  - ✓ Identify and describe one significant historical event that occurred before and one after the creation of your subject.
  - ✓ Make sure the timeline has the necessary dates and labels.

Picturing America Background Information

Title of Art \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

Summarize the *artist's personal life*

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Identify the *time period* when the PA piece was created and describe what impact that may have had:

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Discuss the *style* of art that this artist is most known for and the artistic *medium* that he/she used to express their ideas:

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Your own Essential Questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Historical Timeline for Picturing America Art

On this page please sketch your piece of art from Picturing America on the shortened timeline below. Using the timeline provided, identify and describe one significant historical event that occurred before and one that occurred after the *creation* of your subject. Label and indicate timeline your piece of art was created.

