

PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE WITH POE



THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL
ARTS INTEGRATION 11TH GRADE ENGLISH

UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, the learners will create their own artist books based on the theme, "passage of time." This 11th grade arts integration English unit is based on a work of Edgar Allan Poe, of the Dark Romanticism movement in 19th century American literature. Through the exploration of the work of contemporary artists Martin Puryear and Inka Essenhigh, students will gain additional context for the work of Poe that relates more closely to their own contexts. Students will create accordion fold artist books that incorporate imagery and artwork related to each individual's past, present, and future.

BIG IDEA

Passage of Time

KEY CONCEPTS

Memory (the past) · Mindfulness (the present) · Dreams (the future)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What is a memory of a significant event in your past? Why is it significant?

What are you about right now?

What is something you dream of for the future?

RATIONALE

This unit will guide students to analyze a challenging work of poetry that is representative of the Dark Romanticism period of American literature. The work of contemporary artists Martin Puryear and Inka Essenhigh will complement the big idea of "passage of time," emphasizing the use of imagery to illustrate ideas, as the Dark Romantics of the 19th century did.

TARGET STUDENT GROUP

This unit is designed for 11th grade students in a regular level English class in an urban high school.

SPECIFIC UNIT OBJECTIVES

The student will communicate their understanding about what it means to “come of age” by creating several items contained in a bundle that documents traditions, qualities and peer influences, while connecting these ideas to Spanish language skills.

Lesson 1 Objective: Imagery in the Past

In this lesson, we will introduce Dark Romanticism and its themes. A Google Slides slideshow will present introductory information about the Dark Romanticism movement and Edgar Allan Poe. Students will read the poem, “Dream Within a Dream” by Poe. Through group discussion, we will analyze the imagery used in the poem. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the imagery by sketching on top of their printed handout. A prompt question will guide students to add their own imagery related to significant past events. Students will connect with the theme through an introduction to contemporary artist, Martin Puryear, and a skillshare video about the art making portion of the unit. They will cut up their illustrated poem sheet and create a collage on one side of their accordion pages that represents their past.

Assessment: Students will sketch illustrations of Poe’s imagery on their Dream Within a Dream print outs to demonstrate their understanding of imagery.

Lesson 2 Objective: Mood in the Present

In this lesson, we will talk about the passage of time theme through discussion questions relating to the past, present, and future. This discussion will help the students come up with ideas for their artmaking. The students will be guided through a mindfulness exercise as part of the discussion about the present. In the mindfulness exercise, students will create watercolor paintings while thinking meditatively about their present selves. The watercolor paintings will become part of the outer cover of the accordion books. Students will construct their accordion book covers by assembling portions of their watercolor paintings onto cardboard backings.

Assessment: Students will create watercolor paintings during a meditation activity that represent their present state of being.

Lesson 3 Objective: Dreams for the Future

In this lesson, the students will be completing their accordion books. Through further discussion about Poe’s imagery and meaning about dreams, students will consider their own hopes and dreams of a future reality. They will use oil pastels on one side of their accordion pages to illustrate their own dreams using imagery. After completing the book, students will engage in a group critique where they will display their book on their desk, and will walk around to view their classmates’ books. Questions will guide group discussion on imagery and passage of time.

Assessment: Students will finalize their own artist book, containing text and imagery bound into an accordion fold, double-sided piece.



CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

While this unit focuses on the work of Edgar Allan Poe, a white 19th century male and a common reference in American literature, the theme of “passage of time” is expanded on through examining the works of contemporary artists, Martin Puryear and Inka Essenhigh. These artists come from a background that is not typically represented in American literature, and provides additional context for our students to connect with the unit concept. Martin Puryear’s work uses symbolism/imagery to comment on the struggles and determination of Booker T. Washington, while Inka Essenhigh’s work uses color and imagery to convey mood in her paintings.

STANDARDS

National Art Standard:

VA:Cr3.1.HSII: Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.

Virginia Visual Arts SOL:

A1.5 The student will employ a variety of subject matter, including cultural or social concepts, to express ideas in original works of art.

Virginia 11th Grade English SOL:

11.5 The student will read and analyze a variety of nonfiction texts. (g) Recognize and analyze use of ambiguity, contradiction, paradox, irony, overstatement, and understatement in text.

LESSON PLANS

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LESSON 1: IMAGERY IN THE PAST

Objective: In this lesson, we will introduce Dark Romanticism and its themes. A Google Slides slideshow will present introductory information about the Dark Romanticism movement and Edgar Allan Poe. Students will read the poem, "Dream Within a Dream" by Poe. Through group discussion, we will analyze the imagery used in the poem. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the imagery by sketching with markers on top of their printed handout. A prompt question will guide students to add their own imagery related to significant past events. Students will connect with the theme through an introduction to contemporary artist, Martin Puryear, and a demonstration about the art making portion of the unit. They will cut up their illustrated poem sheet and create a collage on one side of their accordion pages that represents their past.

Assessment: Students will sketch illustrations of Poe's imagery on their Dream Within a Dream print outs to demonstrate their understanding of imagery.

Standards:

A1.5 The student will employ a variety of subject matter, including cultural or social concepts, to express ideas in original works of art.

11.5 The student will read and analyze a variety of nonfiction texts. (g) Recognize and analyze use of ambiguity, contradiction, paradox, irony, overstatement, and understatement in text.

Hook: 15 mins.

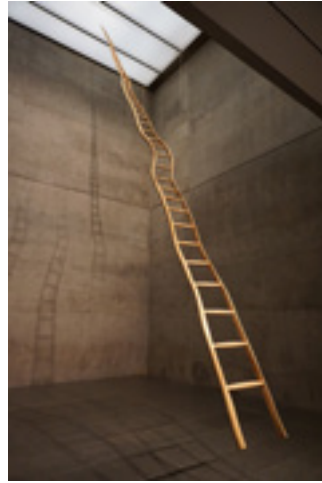
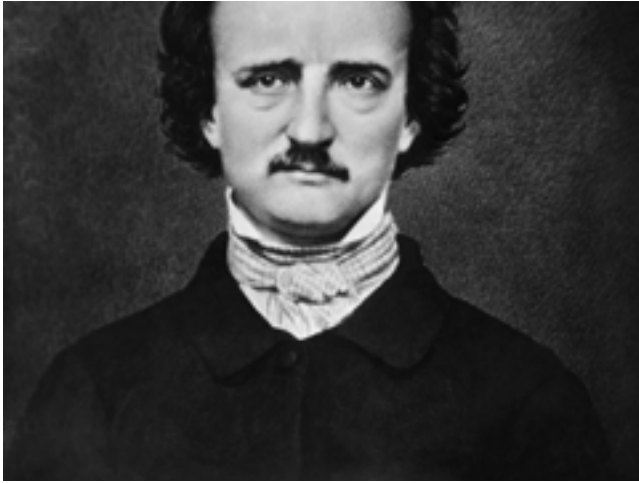
Teaching Strategy: Informative & entertaining video about Poe's life with discussion questions

Who is telling this story?

What kind of language is the narrator using?

What connotation does this language have?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9N-ZZ0Q7SM>



Instructional Input: 15 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Introduction slideshow about Dark Romanticism

19th century movement in American Literature

Prominent authors include Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville

Themes include horror, medieval-like violence, the spiritual and ghostly world, and melancholy aspects of life

Guided Practice: 30 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Creating imagery

Read & Analyze Poe's "Dream Within a Dream"

Write your name on the back of your sheet!

Use sharpies to mark up the handout

Why is this the title? What do you think this poem might be about?

What is the mood of this poem? What is the author feeling?

Ask students to draw imagery they find in the poem (a take on "Paraphrase" from grid sheet)

Line by line, read poem

What positive words do you see? What negative words?

How does the narration change from the first stanza to the second?

What is the theme of this poem?

Instructional Input: 5 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Introduction to contemporary artist

An example of a contemporary artist who uses imagery in his work is Martin Puryear.

What do you see in this piece?

What might a ladder represent?

Martin Puryear's "Ladder for Booker T. Washington" uses imagery, the symbol of a ladder, to represent the uphill fight of Booker T. Washington, who called for African American progress through education and entrepreneurship. The ladder seems to go on and on indefinitely, the goal of the end barely reachable.

Independent Practice: 10 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Students work independently

What is a significant memory from your past? Happy? Sad?

Art activity: Draw imagery/symbols from significant memory with sharpies on poem handout

What symbols represent this memory?

Fill the whole paper!



Demonstration: 10 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Video demonstration

Folding black paper accordion pages

Fold ends in 1/2", fold in half, fold end pages back

Write your name on a small flap in pencil

Independent Practice: 15 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Students work independently

Students cut up their illustrated poem sheets and collage one side of their black accordion pages using scissors and glue

Closure: 5 mins.

Teaching strategy: Discussion of work and ideas

What imagery/symbols did you use to represent your memories?

How did you translate these images in the collage?



Materials:

Dry erase markers, black paper, poem print outs, Sharpies
scissors, glue sticks, laptop, projector

Differentiated Instruction:

Some students might benefit from written prompts for drawing imagery, which will be provided on a projected slideshow.

Assessment:

Formative: students will illustrate their own imagery that represents memories of the past, demonstrating their understanding of imagery used in the work of the Dark Romantic writers.

Summative: Students create a final collage that represents memories of their past.



LESSON 2: MOOD IN THE PRESENT

Objective: In this lesson, we will talk about the passage of time theme through discussion questions relating to the past, present, and future. This discussion will help the students come up with ideas for their artmaking. The students will be guided through a mindfulness exercise as part of the discussion about the present. In the mindfulness exercise, students will create watercolor paintings while thinking meditatively about their present selves. The watercolor paintings will become part of the outer cover of the accordion books. Students will construct their accordion book covers by assembling portions of their watercolor paintings onto cardboard backings.

Standard:

A1.5 The student will employ a variety of subject matter, including cultural or social concepts, to express ideas in original works of art.

Hook: 10 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Slideshow & contemporary artist introduction

Review the idea of passage of time and the poem

- What is an example of imagery in the poem? The painting?
- What is a similarity in these works? A difference?
- What is the mood of this work?

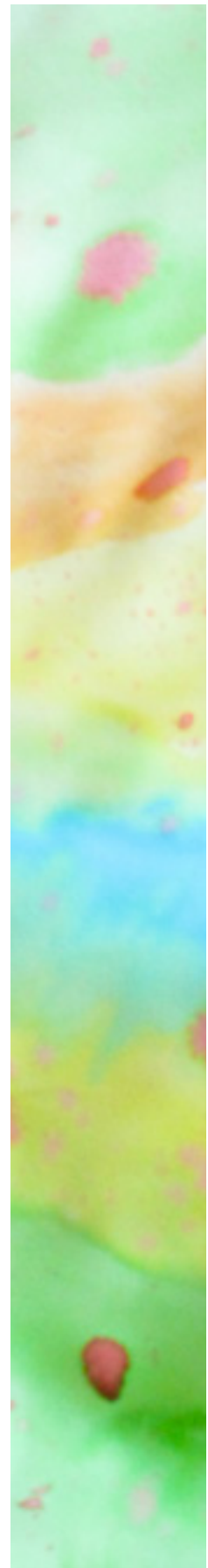
Inka Essenhigh, born 1969, studied and lives in NYC, contemporary painter

She starts a canvas with a color on it and mixes it with another that "might suggest other colors or a mood; sunlight or an ocean scene. Eventually, she continues, the shapes and colors play an "almost equal and interchangeable role" that determines the mood or scene.

Transition: 5 mins.

The dark romanticism writers like Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville used imagery, as we talked about last time, and they also used mood. What do we mean by "mood"? What is your current mood? When did your mood last change? Mood is flexible, and relates to the present, or the current state of being.

We have an activity today that is going to help us connect with our present thoughts and mood, and we're going to make some art with this thinking! This might seem a little unusual, or feel a little silly, but we're just connecting with our thoughts so we can better express our mood like the romantics. I'm going to read some directions, and we're going to create a couple paintings together as I ask you to think about a few different things...there is no wrong way or right way to create these! The main thing is to focus your energy on your thinking and your art for just a few minutes.



Demonstration: 2 mins.

Get a little bit of water with your brush, dip the wet brush in the watercolor paints, and brush onto your paper.

Students get 2 sheets of white paper and write their names on the back

Guided Practice: 10 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Meditative paintings

Lead the students through these meditation exercises, and have them paint with watercolors while thinking about the questions. Play relaxing music while the students paint (Spotify playlist, "Meditate to the Sounds of Nature", or Relax Melodies white noise app)

Breathing exercise: Let's start by taking a slow big, deep breath together...and let it out. Take another...close your eyes and let it out...through your nose take a deep breath, reaching all the way up, pulling every last ounce of air into your lungs until you can't take any more in, hold it (for a second), and release, emptying your lungs and pushing out every last ounce of stale air. Through your nose, take one slow breath, filling your lungs to very top...hold it, and slowly release your breath through your nose, until your lungs are completely empty...continue breathing in through your nose, and out through your nose, becoming aware of the cool air filling you...the rhythm of your breathing...the beat of your heart. Open your eyes.

Paint while listening to the prompt: (explain that they need to be quiet for this to be a really cool activity)

Imagine yourself sitting right where you are, feeling the chair under yourself, your feet on the floor, your arms on the desk, really being right here right now, what does that feel like? Close your eyes, what do you hear, what are the sounds around you on the outside and even on your inside? Let go of the sounds that have already been heard and focus on the sounds that are happening right now. Open your eyes, focus on your surroundings. Every little feeling, color, sound, and detail. Every day we look, but do we really see and experience. Experience what you have looked at in your surroundings but never really appreciated. What are the colors that speak to you? How does your environment feel?

Begin by listening to the prompt with eyes closed: Close your eyes, take a deep breath...imagine yourself floating in an empty room, or perhaps as a rock sitting in the deep ocean, or as a tall blade of grass in a field. Create your own environment of peace within your mind. Wherever you are, there is no homework, no drama, no thinking or stress. You just exist. You don't have to figure out what to do or say, you are just there, existing. What colors do you see? What sounds do you hear? What do you feel? Be aware of only yourself in this moment. All of your senses. Don't think of what you have to do tonight, think of where you are right now—in the empty room, the ocean, or field of grass. Don't worry about others' expectations of you, only worry about what you are right now.

Paint your current mood—What are the colors your feel? What is the speed your mind is running on? What is the environment of your mind?

If you spend too much time focusing on the past, you will never appreciate the present, and if you spend too much time worrying about the future, the present will pass you by. Focus only on the now.

Using your focused breathing, blow a few gentle breaths on your paintings (i.e. help dry them)

Demonstration: 8 mins.

Cut down 4 small sheets of painted paper, using the cardboard as a template

Cut 2 into horizontal strips, and 2 into vertical strips BUT LEAVE A TAB AT THE TOP OF VERTICAL ONES

Begin with a horizontal strip and glue vertical strips in an over-under pattern

Continue glueing each strip in an over-under pattern



Independent Practice: 30 mins.

Cut the papers into strips and weave them together

If time, students should choose a word to represent who they are in the present and use the markers to write their title on their book. What is your current mood? Who are you in this moment?



Closure: 5 mins.

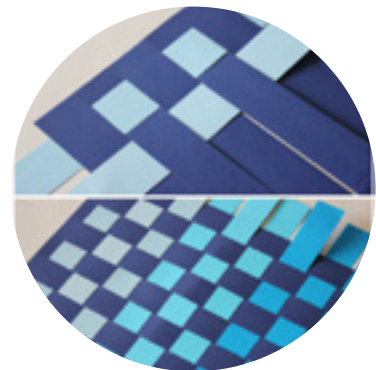
Who would like to share something they were thinking about during meditation?

How did your watercolor paintings reflect your thinking? What colors were you feeling?

Materials:

projector, laptop, 5x7 cardboard covers, white paper, watercolors, salt, brushes

Elmers glue, scissors, water cups, water, paper towels



Differentiated Instruction:

Some students might benefit from written directions for weaving, which will be provided on a projected slideshow.

Assessment:

Formative: Students will demonstrate their understanding of the present through participation in a mediation exercise while creating watercolor paintings.

Summative: Students will cut apart these watercolors to create a final weaving that represents their thoughts and moods connecting. On the woven book cover, students will write 1-2 words that symbolize their current selves.



LESSON 3: DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE

Objective: In this lesson, the students will be completing their accordion books. Through further discussion about Poe's imagery and meaning about dreams, students will consider their own hopes and dreams of a future reality. They will use oil pastels on one side of their accordion pages to illustrate their own dreams using imagery. After completing the book, students will engage in a group critique where they will display their book on their desk, and will walk around to view their classmates' books. Questions will guide group discussion on imagery and passage of time.

Assessment: Students will finalize their own artist book, containing text and imagery that represents their past, present, and future, bound into an accordion fold, double-sided book.

Standards

VA:Cr3.1.HSII: Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.

Hook: 5 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Intro discussion questions

Where in the poem does Poe use exaggeration?

What is an example of repetition in the poem?

What is the most dreamlike line?

Teaching Strategy: Mini-worksheet for "dreams" ideation

Who do you want to be in the future?

What qualities do you hope to possess?

Where do you see yourself living?

How will you achieve these dreams?

How can you set yourself up to achieve these dreams?

Demonstration: 2 mins.

Drawing with oil pastels, and smudging to blend colors

Hand out accordion pages from Lesson 1, assist students who missed this step

Independent Practice: 15 mins.

Teaching Strategy: Students work independently

Students will use the oil pastels to illustrate imagery for their dreams of the future

Demonstration: 2 mins.

Finish weaving watercolor cover, cut out a rectangle to use for the back cover if no time for second weaving

Gluing weaving to covers

Gluing book pages to covers

Independent Practice : 45 mins.

Students complete book design & assembly

Clean up

Closure: 5 mins.

Sharing finished works: Group critique via Instagram "likes"

Students each receive one instagram "like" ticket to give to another student. Class walks around to view everyone's work, and places their "like" on their favorite piece. Ask students: Why did you choose this piece?

Materials:

projector, laptop, oil pastels, Elmers glue, cardboard, book pages from previous lesson,

mini worksheet for ideas, Instagram "like" tickets

Differentiated Instruction:

Some students might require extra assistance in catching up on steps if earlier lessons were missed. Written directions for each step of the process help students progress independently.

A skillshare video of how to make the accordion fold book structure can help also.

Assessment:

Formative: Students will complete their worksheets and illustrate their dreams on their books.

Summative: Students will complete their final artist books, representing their past, present, and future. During the group critique students will discuss each other's final books and why they "like" them.



UNIT REFLECTION

In this unit, my teaching partner, Sara, and I created a unit based on Edgar Allan Poe's poetry from the Gothic Romanticism period in American Literature. We were excited to work with the students at Thomas Jefferson High School, and looking forward to bringing art activities to a core subject. The students were gearing up for testing season, and I think they appreciated using art as a new way to learn about the subject. We decided to combine several artmaking activities in the unit. Together, these pieces would become a customized artist book for each student, describing their past, present, and future. The first lesson we developed centered around introducing Gothic Romanticism and analyzing a work of Edgar Allan Poe. We broke this down into several steps and incorporated drawing imagery on their handout. I think this helped students connect with the idea of imagery, and they enjoyed drawing their own imagery over their handouts. They also demonstrated that they connected with memories of their past as inspiration for their imagery. In this lesson, I feel that my students gained trust in me as an outsider, and that they were looking forward to the next lesson. In the second lesson, Sara and I planned to lead the students through a meditative painting activity in which they would create watercolor paintings that represent their present state of mind. I was nervous about leading a group of high school students through this, but the class was wonderful and every student participated by the end. Several students commented that they were skeptical of the activity at the beginning, but enjoyed it by the end. This lesson helped students connect with their present thoughts, and used art to express these moods. In the third and final lesson, we used the watercolor paintings to create woven covers for their artist books, and used oil pastel drawing techniques to illustrate imagery of our dreams. I explained how the whole artist book together represented the past on one side, the future on the other, and wrapped by the covers representing their present selves. The Instagram "like" activity was very popular with the students, and could use more time in the future. Overall, I think this was a very successful lesson and the students connected with the concepts.



FINAL EXHIBITION



