

Web Unit Plan

Title: The Silk of Our Lives

Description: In this unit, students create painted silk scarves that reflect the culture and traditional art of a country or area. They write research papers and prepare slideshow presentation proposals for a fabric art exhibit to include the painted scarves in the upcoming World's Fair.

At a Glance

Grade Level: 9–12

Subject sort (for Web site index): Art

Subject: Textile Art, Writing

Topics: Art and Culture, Universal Themes in Art, Fabric Art, Artistic Interpretation

Higher-Order Thinking Skills: Investigation, Interpretation

Key Learnings: Relationship between Culture and Art, Traditional Art, Historical Influences on Art, Silk Painting

Time Needed: 3 weeks, 6 to 8 periods

Background: [Odyssey Story](#) from California, United States

Unit Summary

In this unit, students write research paper proposals for a fabric art installation to hang in the Hall of Nations at the upcoming World's Fair. Each proposal shows students' understanding of one culture's history and traditional arts. As students study, they record important cultural art and interpret the artworks' significance to culture. They learn to make silk paintings, and paint scarves that represent one art theme or style of a culture they studied. During a culminating class celebration, students present their proposals and art samples in a multimedia presentation to a World's Fair "jury" made up of local artists.

Curriculum-Framing Questions

- **Essential Question**

What role does art play in our lives?

- **Unit Questions**

How does art from different cultures reflect universal themes?

How does art reflect the history and traditions of a culture?

- **Content Questions**

What kind of art can be created with fabric?

Who are some artists from different cultures, and what are some of their works?

Assessment Processes

View how a variety of student-centered [assessments](#) are used in The Silk of Our Lives Unit Plan. These assessments help students and teachers set goals; monitor student progress; provide feedback; assess thinking, processes, performances, and products; and reflect on learning throughout the learning cycle.

Instructional Procedures

Prior to Instruction

In advance of instruction, purchase art materials, prepare simple sketchpads from art paper, and collect art books and other texts, especially materials with examples of fabric and textile art. Practice the silk painting technique and create a sample to show the class.

Setting the Stage

Pose the Essential Question, *What role does art play in our lives?* Ask students to write briefly on this topic to prepare for a whole-class discussion.

Give a brief lecture about fabric and textile art, using examples from the resources to answer the Content Question, *What kind of art can be created with fabric?*

Explain to students that they will write a research paper proposal for a fabric art installation to hang in the Hall of Nations at the upcoming World's Fair. Conduct a discussion about the importance of understanding cultures different from one's own, and discuss the impact better awareness of other cultures can have on society.

Show students a variety of fabric arts from different cultures and discuss their impressions. Assign pairs of students to study different regions (such as Latin America, Asia, and Africa). Have students take a brief "tour" of the cultures of their region before choosing one to focus on for the rest of the project.

Finally, hand out the [project rubric](#) and discuss the rubric in detail. Review the purpose of the rubric and expectations for students. Answer any questions and continue to refer to the rubric as each part of the project is introduced. Students should continue to use the rubric as a guide for monitoring progress as they work on each part of the project.

Research

Discuss the research report proposal assignment with the class, and teach necessary research skills, such as note-taking and citing references. Explain that each proposal will show students' understanding of a culture's history and traditional arts, and answers the following questions:

- *What are your impressions of this art and culture?*
- *How does art reflect the history and traditions of a culture?* Identify contemporary styles and discuss diverse social, economic, and political developments reflected in the works of art examined.
- *How does art from different cultures reflect universal themes?*

While students prepare research papers, have them study from selected resources, including the Internet, multimedia atlases, art history books, and encyclopedias. Meet with students periodically throughout the process to answer questions and monitor progress. Conduct mini-lessons as needed to refresh or review concepts.

Help students find art images that are representative of the culture they are studying. Encourage students to take notes and sketch examples of what they find.

Sketches are useful later when students develop presentations and design their silk scarves.

Research Paper and Presentation

Have students engage in the writing process of drafting, revising, peer reviewing, and publishing. Review each report and allow students a second revision phase, if necessary.

When reports are finished, have students begin developing their slideshow presentations. Review the [slideshow presentation sample](#) as an example of exemplary work. Remind students that the purpose of the presentation is to inform and persuade a specific and knowledgeable audience to approve a fabric art installation. Approve an outline of the presentation before students develop slideshow elements. Have students scan, copy, or take digital photos of their design sketches to include in their presentations. Students may also want to include music. A local library may have recordings of music from other cultures that students can sample, but be aware of copyright restrictions. After initial art instruction, you may want half the class to start painting their scarves while the other half works on their presentations.

Scarf Art

Use the [scarf painting procedures handout](#) and [scarf art presentation](#) to introduce the techniques students will use. Reference art books and sketches rendered during the research process to show students how to sketch their own interpretations. The best designs for silk painting are bold and simple. Some designs, particularly patterned ones, may be too intricate for scarf painting, and these should be simplified. Approve each sketch before distributing scarves and art supplies to students. As students begin working with the scarves, take digital photographs of the process for next time you teach the unit, and so students can include images in their presentations.

Proposals to the World's Fair Art Panel

As presentations and scarves are completed, plan an event where student artists present their proposals and artwork to a World's Fair "jury." You may want to ask local artists to act as panel members. Give students sufficient time to practice their presentations in small groups before they present to the larger class and "jury." Ensure that students have an opportunity to receive [peer feedback](#) on their presentations before sharing them formally. Have each pair give feedback to at least one other pair and then revise their presentation based on the feedback. Assess student reports, presentations, and artwork using the [project rubric](#).

Concluding Activity

After students have seen all of the presentations, conduct a discussion revisiting the Essential Question, *What role does art play in our lives?* Ask students to look back over their initial responses to this question and discuss how their current answers vary.

Ask students to write an in-class essay to the following prompt, making specific references to a variety of cultures, artists, and works of art:

- *What can we learn about cultures by looking at their art?*

Hand out the [essay rubric](#), review the expectations, and answer any questions. Ask students to use the rubric as a guide while writing their essays. Use the same rubric to assess students' completed essays.

Prerequisite Skills

- Reading for information
- Research writing
- Presentation skills
- Basic concepts of color and design

Differentiated Instruction

Resource Student

- Narrow the student's research focus by assigning specific topics to investigate
- Pair the student with a peer mentor

Gifted Student

- Have the student delve deeper into discussing art and culture in the proposal
- Have the student create a Web site showcasing the fabric art of the class

English Language Learner (ELL)

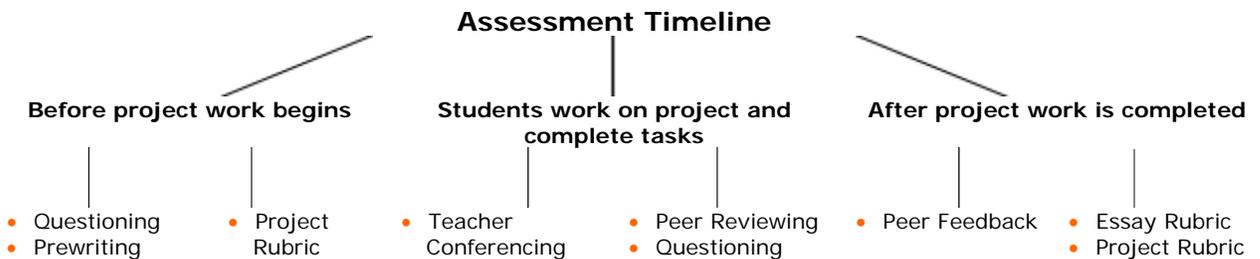
- Provide texts in the student's first language
- Encourage the student to research the student's own homeland and culture to share with others

Credits

Nancy Dome participated in the Intel® Teach Program, which resulted in this idea for a classroom project. Dome's classroom was featured in *An Innovation Odyssey*, a collection of stories of technology in the classroom, [Story 249: Watching Them Blossom](#). A team of teachers expanded the plan into the example you see here.

THINGS YOU NEED (highlight box)

Assessment Plan



The unit begins with questioning and a prewriting exercise to tap students' prior knowledge and prepare students for a class discussion. The prewriting and discussion are used to assess students' background knowledge on the topic and prepare them for the unit. Questioning is used throughout the unit to assess students' understanding and prompt higher-order thinking and discussion. The [project rubric](#) is introduced early in the unit to set up expectations and provide a tool for students to self-monitor their progress. The [project rubric](#) provides assessment for the research paper, oral presentation, class participation, and final scarf painting.

While students work on their research papers, they meet for brief conferences with the teacher to assess student understanding and answer any questions. The

conferences also serve as a tool to monitor and adjust teaching methods based on student need. Students are encouraged to work through the writing process as they develop their research papers and engage in a peer review process. Students also receive [peer feedback](#) as they assess one another's presentations and offer advice for revisions.

Finally, students are asked to write an in-class essay based on a given prompt. Students use the [essay rubric](#) as a guide for expectations and the same rubric is used to assess the final essays.

Targeted Content Standards and Benchmarks

California Language Arts Standards:

Reading

- Synthesize information from multiple sources

Writing:

- Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports
- Use appropriate conventions for documentation in the text, notes, and bibliographies by adhering to those in style manual

Speaking:

- Deliver focused and coherent presentations that convey clear and distinct perspectives and solid reasoning

California Art Standards:

- Investigate and discuss universal concepts expressed in works of art from diverse cultures
- Identify contemporary styles and discuss diverse social, economic, and political developments reflected in the works of art examined
- Create a work of art that communicates a cross-cultural or universal theme taken from literature or history

Student Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Conduct research using electronic and print resources
- Write a research paper supported with citations in a bibliography
- Create and execute an effective oral presentation supported by multimedia
- Paint an interpretation of one culture's art on a silk scarf

Materials and Resources

Printed Materials

- World maps, atlases, and art books

Supplies

- Sketchpads made from art paper
- Silk scarves
- Silk scarf paint
- Paint brushes
- Color resist
- Looms
- Masking tape

*Note: Many of the silk painting supplies are available through online suppliers, such as [Jacquard Products, Inc.](#) **

Internet Resources

- The Fabric Workshop and Museum
www.fabricworkshop.org*
A museum with information about contemporary fabric and textile art
- Textile Museum of Canada
<http://textilemuseum.ca>*
A museum dedicated to the collection, exhibition, and documentation of textiles from around the world
- The Textile Museum
www.textilemuseum.org*
A Washington, DC museum dedicated to furthering the understanding of mankind's creative achievements in the textile arts

Technology—Hardware

- Computers with Internet access for conducting research on art in different cultures

Technology—Software

- Word processing for research paper
- Presentation software for developing presentation
- Multimedia atlases and encyclopedias for research paper