

Unit Plan Overview: Charcoal Still-Life

General Unit Characteristics

[1] The unit is titled *Charcoal Still-Life*. [2] Before this unit students completed the *Clay Mug* unit where they built and glazed original and functional mugs. After the Charcoal Still-Life unit students will begin an illustration project with oil pastels in the style of Henri Rousseau. [3] Students will begin the unit with a pre-survey of their understanding of basic 3-D shapes and forms. The pre-survey asks each student to attempt to sketch a 3-dimensional cube, cylinder, and sphere showing their prior knowledge of these art terms and the art element *shape* and *form*. Students also are asked to shade a pre-drawn cylinder showing understanding of the art element *value*. In addition, the teacher leads a short class discussion on what still-life means in the context of art making and the importance of observation. [4] The central focus of the unit is: Students apply understanding of art elements (line, shape, value, form) with knowledge of art techniques to make an original charcoal drawing from still-life while applying the creative process. [5] This unit contains 10 lessons, which begin with basic drawing techniques for charcoal, then concepts about light and shadow, and finally developing an original illustration by applying the creative process of visual art. [6] Instructional practices utilized during this unit include the use of videos for demonstration of techniques and concepts. I use direct instruction and class discussion to deepen and strengthen understanding of art vocabulary and concepts like perspective, foreshortening and the parts of light and shadow. This unit contains a series of activities to give students the opportunity to practice art techniques and observational skills by

drawing a variety of forms, and each student receives individual feedback and instruction to assess skill level and content understanding. [7] As this unit concludes students will create a final original charcoal still-life illustration to assess understanding of the art techniques and application of the creative process. Students will write responses to reflective questions that assess understanding of the art concepts and vocabulary. Students will be scored according to evaluative criteria on a rubric, which covers three of the district content standards aligned to Washington State EARL's for 7th and 8th grade visual art.

General Lesson Characteristics

[1] The ten lessons for this unit are characterized as follows:

1. Charcoal Still-Life – Introduction to Charcoal Still-Life Drawing

Learning Targets: Students will learn basic charcoal drawing techniques.

Students practice applying charcoal techniques by drawing curves, lines, and shading. Students will consider a variety of subjects for their forthcoming drawing.

2. Charcoal Still-Life – Structure Basics, Cubes and Cylinders

Learning Targets: Students will apply understanding of shape and form by drawing geometric cylinders and cubes. Students identify and define the art concepts: foreshortening, perspective, contour and cross contour.

3. Charcoal Still-Life – Shading Light and Form

Learning Targets: Students will identify and define light and shadow to complete the Egg-notes worksheet. Students will apply knowledge of light and shadow by practicing shading a sphere from direct observation.

4. Charcoal Still-Life – Practicing with Value

Learning Targets: Students will review understanding of light and shadow.

Students consider options for their drawing subject (must come from home).

Students identify an 8-step value-scale and practice applying value by drawing a 3-D form of their choice (cube, cone, cylinder, and sphere) (Value Study assignment).

5. Charcoal Still-Life – Starting Creative Process: Subject Imaging and Thumbnail Sketch

Learning Targets: Students will continue working on and finish Value Study assignment. Students watch “Rule of Thirds” video and define the concept (good composition) and its vocabulary (thirds, lines and intersections, focal-point).

Students will apply the creative process by drawing thumbnail size (about 2 inches) sketches for their final charcoal still-life drawing with a personal object for subject. Students will identify the photo-booth to take a digital photo of their subject under a lamp to show shadows and highlights.

6. Charcoal Still-Life – Creative Process: Subject Imaging, Thumbnail Sketches, and ½-page Rough Sketch

Learning Targets: Students apply understanding of “Rule of Thirds” by applying concept to 3 thumbnail sketches and 1 ½-page rough-draft, also showing understanding of composition and perspective. Students read the Charcoal Still-Life Final Requirements and review the Scoring Rubric. Students photograph their subjects under a lamp.

7. Charcoal Still-Life – Review: Art Concepts and Vocabulary

Learning Targets: Review understanding of art elements (line, shape, value, form) as they are applied to the context of still-life drawing. Show progress of understanding and by completing assessment worksheet (draw 3-D forms).

8. Charcoal Still-Life – Creative Process: Practice, Drawing Tips, Beginning your Final Drawing

Learning Targets: Students practice drawing to prepare for their final. Students observe demonstration of drawing tips and reminders on art concepts (shadows, perspective, and using implied line). Students begin final drawing using charcoal paper when they feel ready after practicing.

9. Charcoal Still-Life – Applications in the real world. Creative Process: Working on Final Drawing.

Learning Targets: Students will consider and discuss examples of using knowledge of light/shadow, perspective, and observation would be used in real-world contexts. Students will continue working on their final charcoal still-life drawings.

10. Charcoal Still-Life –Creative Process: Finalizing Drawing, Partner Critique, and Self-Reflection Writing

Learning Targets: Students will observe demonstration of final drawing finishing and turn-in procedures. Students observe and read directions for partner-critique. Students participate in partner-critique, continue to finish final drawing, then upon finishing will write answers to reflective questions showing understanding of creative process, art concepts & vocabulary, and art techniques.

[2] The learning targets in the progression of lessons build upon on one another by first focusing on the core techniques and concepts, introducing new content, and demonstrating basic applications. The unit builds on the introduction lessons (1-4) and corresponding targets (language functions including vocabulary and discourse, art concepts, drawing techniques, and process of art-making), by having students then apply their foundational knowledge through lessons (5-7) with practice activities (value study, thumbnail and rough sketches) and assessments (Egg-notes and form quiz). Finally students apply all the learning targets of the previous lessons by creating an original charcoal still-life illustration that shows application and understanding of the techniques and concepts taught. Students will deepen understanding, relating understanding to real-world contexts and completing the creative process through peer critique and reflective writing assignments (lessons 9-10) which leads to formally assessing learning targets from all 10 lessons.

[3] The central focus of the unit is: Students apply understanding of art elements (line, shape, value, form) with knowledge of art techniques to make an original charcoal drawing from still-life while applying the creative process. The learning targets from the 10 lessons relate directly to this focus by first activating prior knowledge of the targets through the pre-survey, then by identifying and defining new content and language, and finally by creating and writing to show application and understanding of the visual art creative process.

[4] In Lesson 3, Charcoal Still-Life – Shading Light and Form, students will identify and define light and shadow parts (vocabulary) to complete the Egg-notes worksheet. Students will apply knowledge of light and shadow by practicing shading a sphere from

direct observation. In this lesson students watched a video clip that identifies the parts of light and shadow on an egg form. To support students understanding of the vocabulary and concepts, they each labeled the egg on a printed worksheet, giving them practice interacting with the language. To scaffold learning, I verbalized my own simplified definitions of the vocabulary to aid in understanding the language. Next students apply understanding of light and shadow by drawing a practice sphere with charcoal. [5] As students practice drawing, I circulate all tables and visually assess if they are applying the concepts. When I talk to individual students I use the art vocabulary to model its correct use, and I ask questions to informally assess the students understanding of the concepts and terms. Students who are struggling with technique will be supported with teacher sketches (to the side of their own) to give them a correct visual aid. As closure, the students are asked to turn and talk to their neighbor about what they learned during class, and what they still don't understand. Students share out responses and I address misconceptions and reinforce correct understanding of the learning targets. I take note of any reoccurring misunderstandings or missed targets so that they may be readdressed in the next lesson(s).