

THE KEEPERS OF NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE

SUBJECTS/GRADE LEVEL

Social Studies, Visual Arts

Grades 2-4

OVERVIEW

Students will explore how culture is transmitted from one generation to another, specifically how Native American people adapt to change, yet preserve their culture through the arts. As an introduction to the concept of continuity, young students will examine authentic historical artifacts, comparing them to more contemporary forms of art. A better grasp of the role of artists and craftsmen, including the mission of museums, will enhance students' understanding of their place in history and society.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to describe how artists and craftsmen utilize the natural environment to create items and tools needed for survival.
- Students will be able to explain how artistic design and subject matter of artwork preserves and transmits the cultural identity of a people.
- Students will be able to trace major forms of Native American art as a means for passing unique cultural characteristics from one generation to another.
- Students will examine why the preservation and continuity of culture is vital to historical and contemporary groups of people.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- Why is it important for people to save their culture?

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- What is culture and how does it make a group of people unique?
- How is culture seen in everyday objects and artwork?
- How are Native American people "keepers" of their culture?

OKLAHOMA ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

2.VA.CHP.1.1 Compare and contrast cultural uses of an artwork from different times and places.

2.VA.CHP.1.2 Explore the variety of motivations and materials used to create art.

3.VA.CHP.1.1 Compare and contrast works of art from various times, places, and cultures.

3.VA.CHP.1.2 Explore ways that people have created artwork using available resources.

4.VA.CHP.1.1 Through observation, infer information about time, place and culture in which a work of art was created.

4.VA.CHP.1.2 Explore ways that people have created artwork using available resources.

THE 5-E LESSON FORMAT

The five steps of a "5E lesson" are: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate. This model encourages active student learning by first sparking interest, then allowing student-centered exploration, followed by teacher-led explanation, further application of new understandings by students and finally assessment of understanding.

ENGAGEMENT

The “Engagement” phase is designed to capture students’ attention with relevant questions, real-world scenarios or brief interactive experiences to activate prior knowledge and elicit curiosity about the topic.

1. Introduce the lesson by presenting student pairs with two images of shoes: one historical pair of Native moccasins and one contemporary pair of children’s beaded tennis shoes. (Photographs provided in the lesson can be printed; the presentation contains a digital version which can be viewed by the whole class.)
2. Provide each partnership with a copy of the “Alike and Different” two-column note-taking chart (or guide students into creating a chart of their own from a folded sheet of paper). Challenge student partners to list all the ways that the two pairs of shoes are alike, calling time after 3 minutes.
3. Encourage students to share their observations. Repeat the same procedure, asking partners to note all the ways that the two pairs of shoes are different. Provide a brief time for sharing their thoughts with the class.
4. Conduct a brief discussion to elicit ideas from students regarding why someone would want to take the time and effort to embellish tennis shoes with beadwork? Which pair of shoes do they think is the oldest? How do they know? What would be the reason that anyone would want to create something new that looked like something old?

EXPLORATION

The “Exploration” phase provides students with opportunities to work collaboratively through hands-on investigations actively exploring a concept, gathering information data, and making observations from evidence.

1. Provide student pairs with a set of printed “Old and New Artifact” cards. Instruct students that their task is to look and talk about what they see on each card. Then, they will determine whether each item appears to be one created long ago or recently. (A digital collection of Artifact Cards is available as an option for printing colored cards.)
2. Inform students to sort the cards into two stacks, one for “old” items and one for “new” items. Remind students to discuss why they made their decision and be prepared to share their reasoning later with the class.
3. Encourage student partners to walk about the classroom and silently observe how others have sorted their artifact cards. Do they see similarities in the conclusions made by other students?

EXPLANATION

During the “Explanation” phase, the teacher provides in-depth explanations and clarifies key concepts related to the topic, often incorporating student-generated observations from the exploration phase.

1. Use the presentation, “The Old and the New” to engage the class in a brief teacher-guided explanation of the origins of culture, how cultural objects represent the unique lifestyle and traditions of a people and how artists and craftsmen preserve the history, as well as culture of their people.

2. Note: A primary goal of the presentation centers upon the reasons why and methods used by Native American people to pass their cultural heritage forward to future generations.
3. Note: One major section will highlight how objects in everyday life, as well as works of art, utilize the natural environment and how the environment of a culture determines the types of materials available to craftsmen and artists. This background is necessary to assist students in continued investigations.
4. Pause frequently to confirm student understanding and to elicit responses from guiding questions included in the presentation. Encourage students to examine the artwork and additional artifacts in the presentation to help explain their answers.

ELABORATION

Students during the "Elaboration" phase are expected to return to partnerships or group collaborations, as they apply their deeper understanding of the topic, making connections and formulating answers to essential and supporting questions.

1. Inform students that they will be exploring the connection between Native American cultural objects that are preserved by their respective Tribes and the natural environment that helped produce those objects.
2. Ask student pairs to return to their artifact cards and provide each partnership with one copy of the "Old and New Resources" chart.
3. Provide time for partners to select four of the objects that interest them. Instruct them to closely examine each of the four objects. What are the materials used to create it? Can students identify the materials as natural resources (i.e., from the earth, from plants, from animals) or man-made resources (i.e., from manufacturing processes, such as glass beads, rubber, etc.)?
4. Encourage partners to discuss what they see and to test each other's conclusions as they note their observations in each column of the chart.
5. Ask volunteer partnerships to share their observations and conclusions. Challenge the class to explain how access to newer materials changes how cultural artifacts and art is produced today? How have modern Native American artists combined traditional and modern designs and resources to keep their culture alive for future generations?

EVALUATION

The "Evaluation" phase assesses individual student learning, which can be achieved through multiple formats beyond traditional tests or quizzes. For example, questioning, discussion, creative products, etc. can be effectively used to gauge comprehension.

1. Ask students to apply what they have learned to their own experiences. What objects in their own households are important to them and their family? What personal object(s) would they like to pass along to their children and grandchildren one day? How could their own culture be preserved by actions they take today?
2. Provide each individual student with a copy of the "My Old, My New" assessment form. Ask students to silently think about one family or personal object which is older and one object which is newer, both of which reflect their own culture or family traditions.
3. Ask students to draw each object and explain the significance of each object. How important is it for all groups of people to preserve their culture, history and experiences for future generations?

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

1. Encourage students to learn more about the Kiowa Six artists of Oklahoma:
 - A. Watch the videoclip, ["Explore the West: Kiowa Six"](#) from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. What role do institutions, like the University of Oklahoma, and museums, such as the Smithsonian Museum and the National Cowboy Museum, play in preserving their history and ways of life?
 - B. Use the brief reading, "The Kiowa Six Artists" to describe how their families and communities influenced their work and careers.
2. Research other Native American artists from Oklahoma and the region of the West, such as Enoch Kelly Haney, using the reading, "The Guardian."

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

- Alike and Different photograph and Student Handout (one per pair of students)
- Old and New Artifact Cards (one set per pair of students)
- "Old and New Collection" (optional digital format for whole class viewing)
- "The Old and the New" presentation
- Old and New Resource chart (one per pair of students)
- "My Old, My New" Assessment Form (one per student)
- "The Kiowa Six Artists" reading (optional)
- "The Guardian" reading (optional)

