

Culture Cruise

GRADE 5



Based on images of two works of art from VMFA's collection, these activities will provide students with background information before their visit and, afterwards, encourage them to use critical thinking skills to draw conclusions from what they saw. The works may or may not be shown on your guided tour, but they are related to the tour theme, and the pre-visit activities will help prepare students for the interactive components of the tour.

Tour Description

Get your passports ready for this cruise around the world! Students will visit North and South America, Europe, India, Africa, and more to learn how environment, geography, and the natural and man-made landscapes of these different places influenced the creation of artworks and objects found in VMFA's collection.

Tour Objectives

1. Focus on world studies and geography as a bridge between studying the ancient world (grades 2 and 3) and world history (high school).
2. Introduce students to regions of the world that are increasingly important to our country.
3. Understand and gain an appreciation for other cultures around the world.

Virginia Standards of Learning for Grade 5

The following SOLs are for the tour and follow-up activities:

History and Social Science

- 5.12 The student will examine the influence of historic events on works of art.
- 5.13 The student will describe similarities and differences among art and artists from a variety of cultures.
- 5.15 The student will describe how artists contribute to society.
- 5.17 The student will compare and contrast natural and constructed environments.
- 5.18 The student will analyze and interpret works of art based on visual properties and context.
- 5.19 The student will analyze an artist's point of view based on contextual information.

History/Geography

Note: This tour addresses the Chesterfield County Framework Curriculum for grade 5.

- WS 1 Geography of World and North America; History and Culture of Mexico
- WS 2 Geography of South America; History and Culture of Peru
- WS 3 Geography of Europe; History of Culture of Europe: Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment; The French and Industrial Revolutions
- WS 5 Geography of Africa
- WS 6 Geography, History, and Culture of Asia: India (or China)

Pre-Visit Activities

Object 1: South Asian Galleries



Seated Buddha, 2nd – 3rd century
Unknown Artist, Indian: Gandhara
Dark grey schist
Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2002.556

Buddhism is a world-wide religion named after Siddhartha Gautama, called the Buddha, who is believed to have lived in India during the 6th and 5th centuries BC. Buddhists believe in a cycle of life: a person is born, lives life, passes away, and then is reborn. The only way to end this cycle is to understand the causes of worldly suffering and to extinguish that suffering, which is called reaching Enlightenment.

There are certain ways of representing the Buddha in art. He can be shown with some of the 32 marks (lakshanas) said to distinguish the Buddha from other people. On this sculpture he has the ushnisha—a fleshy protuberance, here shaped like a bun, on the top of his head that stands for superhuman wisdom. Another mark, depicted as a raised circle, is the urna, a whorl, or tuft, of hair between his eyebrows that symbolizes extraordinary insight. When the Buddha renounced worldly things to seek enlightenment, he left behind all of his possessions. His elongated earlobes are a sign that he once wore heavy gold earrings.

Pre-Visit Activities

Questions

- Allow students time to examine the image.
- Do you think this person could be important? What clues do you see that tell you that?
Answers will vary.
- Have you heard of the Buddha before? What can you tell about him by looking at this image?
Answers will vary.
- Is the Buddha expressing any emotion in his facial expression or by his pose? Why do you think he was depicted this way?
Possible answers: peaceful, content, because he has achieved Enlightenment, which brings true happiness
- Do you notice any details about this sculpture that could help identify this figure as Buddha?
Ushnisha or bun on the top of his head and urna, raised circle or tuft of hair between his eyebrows
- What do you think the Buddha is wearing? What could this tell us about the region where this sculpture was created?
A robe with multiple layers, which suggests the sculpture was created in a cold region. Gandhara lies in what is now Pakistan and Afghanistan, where temperatures can drop in the winter.
- What do you think this sculpture is made out of?
Dark grey schist
- If we were able to touch this sculpture what do you think the texture would feel like?
Answers will vary.

Pre-Visit Activities

Object 2: Pre-Columbian Galleries



Qero, 17th century
Colonial Inca (Peru)
Wood with polychrome pigments
Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund, 59.28.12

This vessel was created by the Incan people who resided in the Andes mountain range of South America between the 13th and 16th centuries. Their empire was centered in Cusco, a city in what is now the country of Peru. The Incan Empire was the largest pre-Columbian empire in America. Its territory stretched into modern Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia. The Spanish, led by Pizarro, first arrived in Inca territory in 1526. They came back a few years later from Spain with permission to conquer the Inca. After years of fighting, the Spanish defeated the Inca in 1572. The effect of the Spanish conquest on the native cultures of the Americas was catastrophic. European diseases almost completely destroyed native populations, and those that did survive often faced slavery.

This object is a qero, also spelled kero or quero, which is a ritual drinking vessel. Traditionally, chicha, a beverage made of corn, was drunk from these cups. Incan qeros were made in pairs with the expectation that two individuals would drink together. Both of these vessels would have been identical in decoration. The figures—hunters and animals—seen on this qero reflect European styles of painting, while the geometric patterns and stepped platform in the center of the work are distinctly Incan designs. Qeros were often given along with textiles to leaders from other areas as a sign of generosity.

Pre-Visit Activities

Questions

- Allow students time to examine the image.
- What do you think this work could be?
Drinking vessel.
- Does this object look like something you have at home, or have seen before?
Answers will vary--cups, bowls, containers, vases, etc.
- How does this object differ from cups and other containers we have today?
Answers will vary—detailed ornamentation, etc.
- Do you think this vessel was used every day or for special occasions? Can you think of what might have been inside?
Qeros were used for special occasions, such as religious ceremonies. Traditionally, chicha, a beverage made of corn, was placed in the qero.
- Where do you think this object could have come from? Why do you think that?
South America, Peru
- What specific details do you notice on this work? How could these details help identify where and when this object was made?
Answers will vary
- What material do you think this could be made from?
Wood and pigments
- Why do you think this vessel, along with textiles, was given to leaders from other areas?
To demonstrate generosity and promote peace
- If you were going to make a decorated drinking vessel today, how would it look? What specific details would you include?
Answers will vary.

Post-Visit Activities

- Ask the students what they learned from their visit. Have them fill in their answers on their K-W-L charts. Ask them if the questions they had before their visit were answered.
- Ask the students what their favorite work was and why.
- Show students the two images of the works again. Ask what they remember about seeing these works in the galleries. Did they look different from what they expected? What did they learn about the subjects of the two works of art as well as the works themselves?
- Remind the students that these works of art are from two entirely different cultures and locations. Then ask the students to make a chart and write down similarities and differences between the two works and cultures.
- Ask the students to think back to the Seated Buddha and try to remember the two physical details on Buddha that helps us distinguish who this figure is. Ask if they remember what these details symbolize, or mean?
- Now ask the students to write a paragraph about themselves, or someone else, and identify different features or characteristics that help identify him/her as an individual.
- Show the students the image of the Qero again and allow them to examine the details. Now ask them to draw their own qero and design the outside with different details, shapes, images, and designs that are significant to them in some way. After the students have finished their drawings, allow each student to stand up, show their work, and explain the meaning behind the decorations and details.
- Make a list of the works students remember visiting on their tour. Ask what their favorite work was and why. Then have them draw the work and add as many details as they can.
- Please let us know how your students have been inspired by VMFA! Visit our tumblr page and submit images of student works at: <http://vmfaeducation.tumblr.com/>



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