

Picture This!

GRADE 1



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 the students for the interactive component of the tour.

Tour Description

See how artists have portrayed stories and historical events from the past to the present. Examine symbols and their meaning while viewing portraits, landscapes, sculptures, and more.

Tour Objectives

1. The student will observe the differences between past and present while viewing a variety of images.
2. The student will learn that artists are inspired by historical events and people, stories, poems, and their own imagination.

Virginia Standards of Learning for First Grade

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

History

- 1.2 The student will describe the stories of American leaders and their contributions to our country, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington Carver, and Eleanor Roosevelt.
- 1.6 The student will describe how the location of his/her community, climate, and physical surroundings affect the way people live, including their food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and recreation.
- 1.11 The student will recognize the symbols and traditional practices that honor and foster patriotism in the United States by
 - a) identifying the American flag, bald eagle, Washington Monument, and Statue of Liberty;
 - b) demonstrating respect for the American flag by learning about the Pledge of Allegiance.

Virginia Standards of Learning for First Grade

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

Visual Arts

- 1.4 The student will create works of art inspired by stories, poems, and themes.
- 1.5 The student will create art from real and imaginary sources of inspiration.
- 1.7 The student will identify and use the following in works of art:
 - 1. Colors—primary
 - 2. Lines—zigzag, dotted, wavy, spiral
 - 3. Shapes—geometric, organic
 - 4. Patterns—alternating, repeating
- 1.13 The student will recognize and describe how art is an integral part of one’s own culture.
- 1.16 The student will describe the visual qualities and content of works of art.
- 1.17 The student will describe similarities and differences among works of art.
- 1.20 The student will discuss the reasons why works of art have value.
- 1.21 The student will express a point of view regarding what art is and what purpose art serves.

English

- 1.1 The student will continue to demonstrate growth in the use of oral language.
 - a) Listen and respond to a variety of electronic media and other age-appropriate materials.
 - b) Tell and retell stories and events in logical order.
 - c) Participate in a variety of oral language activities, including choral speaking and reciting short poems, rhymes, songs, and stories with repeated patterns.
 - d) Participate in creative dramatics.
 - e) Express ideas orally in complete sentences.

Science

- 1.8 The student will investigate and understand that natural resources are limited. Key concepts include
 - a) identification of natural resources (plants and animals, water, air, land, minerals, forests, and soil);
 - b) factors that affect air and water quality; and
 - c) recycling, reusing, and reducing consumption of natural resources.

Pre-Visit Activities

Object 1: Mellon Sporting Art Galleries



***An Extraordinary Musical Dog*, before 1805**
Philip Reinagle, R.A. (British, 1749–1833)
Oil on canvas, 28¹/₄ x 36¹/₂ in.
Paul Mellon Collection, 85.465

Seated at a piano with its paws touching the keys, this spaniel looks ready to entertain us. How extraordinary! The sheet music on the piano, which will show our canine friend what to play, appears to be a version of “God Save the Queen”. This song is the British national anthem.

Spaniels, as well as being wonderful pets, were originally working dogs that helped hunters retrieve or find game, usually birds. There are no records of a piano-playing dog from the artist’s lifetime, so this image is probably an invention for a proud music and dog lover! Before people used cameras, they hired artists to paint portraits of themselves and, sometimes, their pets.

We do not know this dog’s name, but Philip Reinagle based the dog’s pose on a famous portrait of the classical composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The artist must have used his imagination for this image!

Pre-Visit Activities

Questions

- Do you think that a dog could play the piano?

Probably not on his own, but there are lots of videos on YouTube of dogs and cats pounding on piano keys!

- Why do you think that Reinagle would paint a portrait of a dog playing a piano? Do you think he used his imagination to paint this image?

Answers will vary

- “God Save the Queen” is the national anthem of the United Kingdom. What is the national anthem of the United States?

“The Star Spangled Banner”

- Do you have a dog?

- Do you have pictures of your dog or pets? Are they paintings or photographs?

Today we may use a digital camera to take pictures of our pets, but before the camera was invented, people with enough money would hire an artist to paint a pet’s portrait. Today, some people still enjoy having portraits painted of their pets.

Pre-Visit Activities

Object 2: Mellon American



***Ba-da-ah-chon-du (He Who Outjumps All), a Crow Chief on Horseback* , ca. 1865–70**

George Catlin (American, 1796–1872)

Oil on canvas, 21³/₈ x 26³/₄ in.

Paul Mellon Collection, 85.609

Ba-da-ah-chon-du was a chief of the Crow people, a Native American tribe that lived in present day North Dakota. He was the most famous horseman on the Plains at the time. Here we see the chief with his long flowing hair wearing a large, feathered headdress. His leggings, moccasins and shirt were made of goatskins. The horse is dressed the same way as the rider! Even the horse's long black tail looks like chief's hair.

This is a very accurate portrait of the Crow chief and his horse. There is a legend (or story surrounding this portrait) that Catlin had been trying and trying to paint this famous chief, but the chief wouldn't allow it. One day, when Catlin emerged from his tent in the morning, Ba-da-ah-chon-du was circling in the field near Catlin's tent dressed in his finest attire. His horse reared back on its hind legs and Catlin began to paint. The legend is that Ba-da-ah-chon-du and his horse stayed in this position until Catlin finished the painting! This probably didn't happen, but it's a good story and makes Ba-da-ah-chon-du and his horse seem even stronger and more important than they already were!

Pre-Visit Activities

Questions

- How is the chief dressed? What about how his horse is dressed? Why do you think they would have the same headdress?

He is wearing what appear to be animal skins with fringe and a feathered headdress. He holds a spear in his right hand. The horse also wears a feathered headdress. They both wear a headdress to show their importance.

- Do you know what the Great Plains are? Do you think they travelled by boat on the Great Plains?

The Great Plains are an area of the United States that has large areas of very flat land. The people living around them did not often travel by boat, but usually on horseback.

- Do you think that the chief and his horse could have stayed in this position for long?

Probably not

- If you could have your portrait made, what animal would you choose to be pictured with?

Answers will vary.

Post-Visit Activities

- Asked the students what they learned from their visit? Have them fill in the answers on their K-W-L charts. Ask them if the questions they had before their visit were answered.
- Ask them what their favorite image was and why?
- Show students the two images again and ask what they remember about seeing the works of art in the galleries. Did they look different than expected? What did they learn about the subjects of the two works of art as well as the works themselves? Did they see other works that helped them understand these two works?
- Sometimes artists are inspired by stories, real or imaginary, and even poems to create their works of art. Ask the students to collectively choose an object they saw that they were inspired by. Have the students tell a short story by each going around the room and adding a sentence to help fill in the details. Write down what the students say and read it aloud when they are done.
- Make a list of the works of art students remember visiting on their tour and ask them which ones were based on real or imaginary events.
- Have students draw works either based on real or imaginary events.
- 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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