

Picture This

TEP Exhibition: *Utah State Fair Photography 2012*

I n t e n t i o n s

- Students will become familiar with photography as an artistic medium.
- Students will learn techniques for close looking and interpretation that can be applied to works of art.
- Students will implement writing and language art skills to report on information gathered from the process of inquiry.
- Students will explore multiple facets of a work of art such as the subject, object, and contextual approaches.

M a t e r i a l s

- Paper, pens or pencils
- Access to the State Fair Photography 2012 Traveling Exhibition

B a c k d r o p

The word Photography translated in Greek means "drawing with light". Today, various modes of photography, both digital and traditional, involve complex science to capture light and create an image. Historically, photography has many uses, such as fine art, recreation, business, science, entertainment, and philanthropy. The photographic medium was paramount in raising public awareness of many important historical events such as The Great Depression and The Civil Rights Movement. Photography also played a major role in aiding scientists with important discoveries by recording observations accurately. For example, astronomers were some of the first scientist to explore the use of photography in observing the sun and eclipses. The uses and methods of photography have expanded greatly over time since the invention of the camera. Although photography is also considered a fine art, the accessibility of the camera in modern times makes it a media that often permeates our daily lives.



Activity

Divide students into small groups of 4-5. Groups will need access to the State Fair Photography Traveling Exhibition for this lesson. Choose 3-4 photos that the groups will examine. These will be the basis for this writing exercise. Students will be writing short reflections on the photographs with their group.

Write the following directions/questions either on a hand-out, or a large piece of poster board so students can see them. Each group will focus on a different photograph to begin, and conclude by drafting a response to each of the 3-4 photographs chosen. Depending on the student's age, you can adapt questions and limit responses to the appropriate time frame, e.g. 5 minutes.

1. Make a personal connection to the photo. Does the work remind you of anything? (e.g., "It reminds me of my family vacation to California when I was seven.")
2. Write a question the photo brings to mind (e.g., "Why is only part of that person's face shown?")
3. Write a detailed observation about the photo. Describe what you see. (e.g., "It seems like there is bright light almost everywhere — maybe from a lamp, reflecting on the girls dress, and the person in the background is hard to see.")
4. Write what message the work might convey or the overall mood or feeling of the photograph. Is there a story here?

** Portions of these questions were adapted from the New York Times Learning Network.*

Once the process is complete bring the entire class back together and ask students to discuss their responses to the photographs for each question.

- Do any of the responses to question #1 have anything in common?
- Does your background or situation affect how you interpreted the work? What factors are contributing to how you viewed it? A memory; religion; experiences & background; interests; race; place I live; etc?
- Ask the group to answer some of the questions that students generated for question #2.
- Did anyone observe something that no one else did regarding question #3?
- What observations in question #3 led to common responses in question #4 regarding the overall mood or feeling of the work?

Links to the Core

Visual Arts:

- Use a visual arts form as a help in expressing an idea in a non-art subject. Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.
- Students will find meaning by analyzing, criticizing, and evaluating works of art.
- Synthesize art with other educational subjects.

Language Arts:

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*
- Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.*
- Develop language through viewing media and presenting.
- Write to report information gathered from the process of inquiry.

**indicates link to
Common Core*