

# **Issues in Society Unit**

## **Lesson Plans**

### **Grades 7-12**

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Art 333

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## ➤ Lesson #1: Communicating Environmental Concerns

### Lesson Objectives:

- The students will create a written list about what they know about things that harm the environment.
- The students will get into groups of three and compare their lists with one another, then select one idea to work with.
- In their groups, the students will help each other come up with a solution to their idea.
- The students will create sketches illustrating their idea and solution that will eventually become a painting.
- The students will be introduced to artist Buster Simpson and how he deals with environmental concerns.
- The students will use the artist's ideas as examples to create their own painting about their idea and solution.

### Materials:

Gesso paper/ wood/ watercolor paper, acrylic paint, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, water cups, pallets, and images of Buster Simpson's "Southeast False Creek" art master plan and other plans.

### Instructional Strategies:

- At the beginning of class, the teacher will ask students, "What is the biggest environmental concern that you know of today?"
- The students will brainstorm and create a list titled "Environmental Concerns".
- The students will split up into groups of three and compare their lists with one another.
- Each student will pick their own one idea from the compared lists and discuss a solution to their idea in their groups.
  - You are allowed to use any idea discussed in your group.
  - Ask yourself: What is the problem that needs to be fixed? What is the best way to solve it? How can I illustrate this?
- The students will sketch out illustrations of their idea and solution, and then pick a final sketch.
  - At least three different sketches
  - Show teacher all three sketches before choosing one.
- The teacher will show slides of artists Buster Simpson's and Lillian Pitt's environmental work.
- Ask the students:
  - What environmental concerns are these artists representing?
  - Why is it important that we send a message about environmental concerns through our artwork?
- The students will begin working on creating a painting of their sketch using either acrylic or watercolor paints.
- Clean up at the end of the hour by tables/ groups.

**Assessment:**

Students will be assessed by the quality and content of their paintings using the following chart.

**Integrated Study:**

Earth Science

- Study of the environment and composition of the earth

Math

- Problems involving calculating the deterioration of earth's surface

➤ **Lesson #1**

**Assessment Chart for Student Artwork**

<b>Student Created Artwork:</b>	<b>Excellent 30 points</b>	<b>Good 20 points</b>	<b>Needs Work 10 points</b>
<b>Personal Experience in Artwork</b>	Artwork clearly displays a personal experience within the context of the social issue.	Artwork somewhat displays a personal experience and somewhat references the social issue.	Slight or no reference to personal experience or social issue.
<b>Social issue within Artwork explained</b>	The environmental issue and solution being addressed in artwork is clear and well thought out.	The issue and solution are fairly noticeable and somewhat thorough.	The issue and solution are not clear and are confusing.
<b>Artwork shows reference to example artist</b>	The style used in the artwork is parallel to the example artist's.	The style somewhat resembles the example artist's.	The style does not at all reference the example artist's.

**\*\* 10 points awarded for three initial sketches.**

## ➤ Lesson #2: 100% Natural

### Lesson Objectives:

- The students will examine leaves, pinecones, sticks, flowers, and petals and discuss with the class why or why they aren't natural pieces of art.
- The students will view images of artist Andy Goldsworthy's natural artwork and understand the importance of using natural mediums.
- The students will be assigned to groups of three and brainstorm ideas about how to create their own piece of artwork using natural mediums.
- After creating a sketch of their idea and a list of the mediums they will be using, the groups will go outside and create their natural piece.
- The groups will document their pieces with a digital camera.
- The groups will present their pieces outside to the rest of the class and compare their piece to Goldsworthy's.

### Materials:

Leaves, pinecones, sticks, flowers, and petals, a digital camera, and images of Andy Goldsworthy's "Autumn Cherry Leaves," "Icicle Star," and "Rowan Leaves and Hole." Projector/ Computer, worksheet.

### Instructional Strategies:

- Before students walk in, the leaves, pinecones, sticks, flowers, and petals will be in the middle of each table.
- As a class, the students will discuss why or why not these pieces of nature are an artwork or not. Ask:
  - Does art have to be manmade?
  - If these can be considered as art, what else can be art?
  - What IS art and what IS NOT art?
- The teacher will pass out a worksheet for the students to fill out throughout the class. Right now they will fill in Question #1.
- The teacher will introduce the artist Andy Goldsworthy's work using natural mediums. The importance of using strictly only natural sources will be stressed. After showing all of the pieces:
  - What is common among all three of these pieces?
  - Do you see anything that was manmade used in them?
  - Why do you think he only used natural objects to create his art?
  - Since they are made from nature, they won't last forever. Does art have to last forever in order to be art?
- The students will now fill in Question #2.
- The students will be assigned to groups of three and brainstorm ideas for a natural artwork related to Goldsworthy's. They will come up with a list of the natural medium they would like the use (that is available directly outside).
- The groups will go outside and create their piece.
- The teacher will document each group's piece using a digital camera.
- When each group is finished, they will do a small outside presentation of their final piece. The other students will consider and ask:

- How is this piece related to Goldsworthy's?
- Can this piece be considered an artwork?
- If this piece grew naturally on the earth, how could it still be considered art?

**Assessment:**

The students will fill out a worksheet at the end of class. The teacher will also evaluate their group piece with the following chart.

**Integrated Study:**

Earth Science/ Biology

- Studying nature and plant life

Social Studies

- Studying how cultures historically used nature in the past.

➤ **Lesson #2**

**Assessment Chart for Student Artwork**

<b>Student Created Artwork:</b>	<b>Excellent 30 points</b>	<b>Good 20 points</b>	<b>Needs Work 10 points</b>
<b>Personal Experience in Artwork</b>	Artwork clearly displays a personal experience within the context of the social issue.	Artwork somewhat displays a personal experience and somewhat references the social issue.	Slight or no reference to personal experience or social issue.
<b>Artwork shows reference to example artist</b>	The style used in the artwork is parallel to the example artist's.	The style somewhat resembles the example artist's.	The style does not at all reference the example artist's.

1.) Why do you think the items from the table are/ are not natural pieces of art?

2.) Why do you think it is important to use natural mediums in artworks?

## ➤ Lesson #3: Can This Be Art?

(Homework from previous class: Bring in four ordinary objects that you can carry and use almost everyday.)

### **Lesson Objectives:**

- The students will examine some everyday ordinary objects and put them in two separate categories: Art and Not Art.
- The students will observe Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain" piece and his "Readymades" via powerpoint.
- The students will come back to their objects and decide whether they want to keep their objects where they are or if they want to move them into a different category.
- The students will discuss with their groups and generate a list of why each object is either art or not art.
- The student will pick an object and change it in some way to make it less recognizable as what it is and more recognizable as a piece of artwork.
- The student will rename their object and write a paragraph describing what it looks like from an artist's perspective.

### **Materials:**

Students bring four ordinary objects to class, images of Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain" and "Readymades", hand out on principles of design.

### **Instructional Strategies:**

- At the beginning of class, students will get out their ordinary everyday objects brought from home.
- At their tables or in groups of four, they will all combine their objects and then separate them into two piles: Art and Not Art.
- The students will learn about the controversies of Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain" and "Readymades". Discuss:
  - Do you think this is art?
  - Thinking about the leaves and nature becoming art from the previous lesson, can these ordinary objects also become art?
  - Someone had to design these objects, so does that make them art?
- The students will come back to the piles they made with their objects and determine whether they want to move any of the objects to another category. Think about:
  - Why did you put them in the category they are in now?
  - Do any of these objects remind you of Marcel Duchamp's pieces?
  - Why would you consider moving it to the other pile?
- The groups will generate a list and explain why they put the objects in the piles that they are in.
  - Two columns: Art and Not Art
  - List the objects under the columns they are in and write a short explanation about why they are there.



- Why is this art and that isn't art?
- Each student will pick one of their objects and change it in some way so that it becomes less recognizable as that object and more recognizable as a new object/ art form.
  - What is the object and what is its intended purpose?
  - How could you change it so that it doesn't have a certain purpose anymore?
  - How could you change the appearance of it so it's not recognizable as the object it is?
- The teacher will remind students of the elements of design to aid them in creating their piece.
- They will rename their objects to help them see it as something new.
- The class will practice with the teacher describing one ordinary object using the principles of design.
- They will write a paragraph describing what their new creation looks like from an artist's point of view.

**Assessment:**

The students will be assessed on how they fill out the following worksheet.

20 points for altered object

10 points for filled out worksheet.

**Integrated Study:**

History/ Social Studies

- Studying other cultures and how they use practical things that could be art.

➤ **Lesson #3**

- 1) Pick one item from your pile of “Art” and explain why you put it there.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) Pick one item from your pile of “Not Art” and explain why you put it there.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Did you decide to move any of your objects to the opposite pile after learning about Marcel Duchamp’s work? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) Find another student’s sculpture to critique.  
Student:  
  
Is their object still recognizable?

What do you think this new piece is saying about the original object it was created from?

## ➤ Lesson #4: Controversial Artworks

### Lesson Objectives:

- The student will create a list of any controversial issues in society that they know of.
- The teacher will give an overview of artists Chris Ofili, Kara Walker, and Michael Ray Charles and some of their works.
- The students will select one artwork by one of these artists and write a paragraph about how they first interpret it.
- The students will then research their piece and describe the artist's intentions for it.
- The students will write a half-page on why it is socially controversial.

### Materials:

Slides of the artists Chris Ofili's "The Holy Virgin Mary", Kara Walker's "Camptown Ladies", Michael Ray Charles' "Cut and Paste," packet of pictures of their work, computer lab time.

### Instructional Strategies:

- The students will first create a list of any controversial issues in society that they know of, and then compare their list with two other students around them.
- Class discussion on what is controversial. Ask:
  - What does controversy mean?
  - Why is this issue controversial?
  - Why is it important for artists to express controversial issues in their work?
- Show slides of above artists' work and explain why they are controversial for an example for the students.
  - "The Holy Virgin Mary" has elephant dung as part of its medium. Is that saying something about the subject matter? Artist's intentions were not understood by the public.
  - "Camptown Ladies" is about the "real slavery" and truths untold.
  - "Cut and Paste" shows the typical stereotypes of African American males.
- The students will pick one piece out of their packet and describe in a paragraph how they interpret the piece and why they think it is controversial.
  - What is this piece about?
  - What do you think is controversial about it?
  - How is the artist conveying their ideas?
- The students will go to the computer lab and research their piece and find out why it is controversial in society and what the artist's intentions were.
  - Keep in mind the questions from above.
- The students will summarize their findings from their research in a half-page.
- They will then compare their first interpretation paragraph with their research. They should consider:

- Was your interpretation right?
  - Are there things you notice now that you didn't notice before in the work?
- At the end of class, there will be a class discussion on what they found after comparing their two writings.
  - In general, were your first interpretations correct?
  - What did you learn about your piece?

**Assessment:**

The students will be assessed on their two paragraphs and depth of research. They will also write a paragraph on what they found after comparing and contrasting their interpretation paragraph and research.  
 0-5 points on initial paragraph  
 0-5 points on research paragraph  
 0-5 points on ending paragraph

**Integrated Study:**

Social Studies

- Studying slavery and other controversial events in our history.

Language Arts

- Writing quality

## ➤ Lesson #5: Current Events

### **Lesson Objectives:**

- The students will interpret collage artworks by Peter Kennard in a class discussion.
- The students will look through magazines and newspapers and find an article dealing with a social issue.
- The students will create a collage about the social issue in the article they found using old magazines and newspapers.

### **Materials:**

Slides/ Internet access of Peter Kennard's "Broken Missile," "Dispatches from an Unofficial War Artist," and images of his "Domesday Gallery," up to date newspapers and current events magazines, old newspapers and magazines, scissors, glue, construction paper.

### **Instructional Strategies:**

- At the beginning of class, slides will be shown of Peter Kennard's work and the class will first have a discussion on how they interpret the pieces.
  - What do you see? How do you interpret the pieces?
  - What kind of issues are they about?
- The teacher will explain the pieces more thoroughly and explain what they mean and how they relate to issues in society.
  - "Broken Missile" is about nuclear disarmament.
  - Other images are about the "uncontrolled power of the free market."
  - All of his pieces comment on societal problems using simple imagery that can be understood easily.
- The students will then look through current newspapers and magazines and find an article that involves a current social issue and cut it out.
- Then the students will look through older newspapers and magazines and create a collage of the social issue in the article they chose.
  - Find at least 3 images to work with.
- An assessment chart will be handed out for the students to have a guideline to follow for their collages.
- After the collages are completed, clean up.
- The class will critique each collage and guess what the social issue was that each student used. Ask:
  - What social issue do you think is being illustrated?
  - Why is this issue important to know about?

**Assessment:**

The students' collages will be assessed using the following chart.

**Integrated Study:**

Social Studies/ History

- Controversial issues in society that made the headlines

Political Science

➤ Lesson # 5

**Assessment Chart for Student Artwork**

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## ➤ Lesson #6: In the Media

### Lesson Objectives:

- The students will watch some commercials on television and point out what each commercial is advertising.
- The students will watch the film “Killing Us Softly 3” and learn how the media manipulates society.
- The students will watch everyday commercials again and point out the real underlying message in them. How do they affect how you personally buy products?
- The students will discuss in groups how the director of each commercial used people, products, and the environment to create both the obvious and underlying message.
- The class will have a discussion on the importance of the media in society.

### Materials:

Television with cable or videotape with commercials, the film “Killing Us Softly 3” by Jean Kilbourne.

### Instructional Strategies:

- When the students enter the room, the television/ tape will be on showing everyday commercials.
- The students will be asked in a class discussion to point out what each commercial’s message is.
  - Takes notes to help you remember.
  - What do they want you to buy/ have/ do?
  - Why do they think that you should do this?
- The class will watch the film.
- They will apply their new knowledge from the film and watch the commercials from the beginning of the class again.
  - Think about what the film said about what the media is telling us.
  - How easily are we influenced?
- Discuss as a class what they think the underlying message is now. (Ex: A new washing machine is perfect for every *mom*, not dad.)
  - Take notes on each commercial again.
  - Think about the deeper, influencing meaning, not the obvious one.
- In groups of three, the students will dissect three commercials and write how they think the director of the commercial used people, products, and the environment to sell both the obvious message and the underlying message to society. They will fill out a corresponding worksheet.
- The class will discuss how the media plays a large role in how society acts today:
  - What is the evidence that a particular underlying message is actually influencing society?
  - How could the director change their commercial so it will influence society in a positive way?



**Assessement:**

The students will be assessed by filling out the following worksheet.  
0-5 points on thoroughness.

**Integrated Study:**

Health Class

- How does this kind of advertising affect a person's self image?

## ➤ Lesson #6

- 1) What three commercials did you dissect?
- 2) What are the obvious messages of these commercials?
- 3) What are the underlying messages?
- 4) Pick one commercial. How did the director use people, products, and the environment to sell both the obvious and underlying messages to you?
- 5) What would you change about the commercial to make it send a positive message to the public?

## ➤ Lesson #7: Graffiti Art

### Lesson Objectives:

- The students will have a class discussion on whether graffiti can be art or not.
- The students will be shown images of graffiti, among them British graffiti artist Banksy's work, and will be asked if any of these are images are "art."
- The teacher will briefly discuss Banksy and his graffiti art and the messages he tries to get across in his work about societal issues.
- The students will review the main point of this unit and what they have learned so far about issues in society.
- The students will pick one issue they worked with in a previous lesson to work with again in this lesson.
- The students will be shown how to make a woodcut using simple imagery as Banksy does.

### Materials:

8x10" blocks of MDF wood, woodcut tools, drawing paper, box of hardy plastic spoons, internet access to Banksy's website, images of regular everyday graffiti on buildings, examples of woodcuts, three rollers, ink.

### Instructional Strategies:

- At the beginning of class the students will be shown images of regular everyday graffiti from the sides of buildings.
- They will have a class discussion on why or why not they think this is art.
  - Is spray paint an art medium?
  - Does only imagery count as art? Not words?
  - What separates graffiti from other forms of art?
- Then they will be shown Banksy's website and images of his graffiti art in England.
- They will discuss whether this is the same as regular graffiti or if it's art.
  - How does his work differ from regular graffiti?
  - Even with simple imagery, can you understand the message he is trying to convey?
  - If he used words, how would it affect the moods of his work?
- They will learn more in depth about Banksy and his intentions of making social issues known to the public by using simple, somewhat humorous imagery.
  - He uses simple, one color silouhettes, like stencils.
  - Taking a somewhat humorous approach reaches more of his audience in a personal way.
- The class will review what it means to be controversial (Lesson #4) and apply their previously learned knowledge from the unit to Banksy's work.
  - What does controversy mean again?
  - How do you see Banksy's work as being controversial like the other artists we saw in lesson #4?

- The students will pick one issue that they worked with before in the previous lessons to work with in this one.
  - i.e. an environmental concern, issues in society, articles from magazines or newspapers.
- They will each sketch out an idea of how to make their issue into a simplified one or two image artwork.
  - Think of the most important parts of the issues you are working with.
  - Who are the subjects? Who is affected by the problem?
  - Keep it simple!
- The teacher will show the students how to use woodcutting tools and show some examples of woodcuts.
- The students will draw out their sketch onto a block of wood and then carve it away with woodcut tools.
- When they are done, they will ink up their blocks using one of the rollers.
  - Teacher will demonstrate how.
- Then they will print out their woodblock by placing a piece of paper on top of the wet ink and spoon printing it.
- The students will hang up their pieces and have a class critique.
  - What do you think the issue was in this piece?
  - Is the piece successful in showing the issue?
  - Do you have any suggestions?

**Assessment:**

The students will pick another student's piece to critique and fill out a worksheet.

0-5 points on thoroughness.

**Integrated Study:**

Social Studies/ History

- Studying controversial events that shaped our lives today

Political Science

- What issues are at hand today they we are voting on?

## ➤ Lesson #7

- 1) Select another student's piece to critique.  
What do you think the message is that they are trying to get across? What is your reasoning for this conclusion?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) Find the person who critiqued your piece.  
Did they understand what you were trying to say in your piece? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Rate the clarity of your piece:  
  
1 = Not so clear, the viewer was completely off.  
2 = Somewhat clear, the viewer came close to the intended message.  
3 = Very clear, the viewer was dead on.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) In what ways could you improve your piece to enhance its message?