

STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

Unit Title: Art as a Narrative

Established Goals: Students will evaluate and explain how art can be a form of storytelling through the concepts of character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme.

Connections with ELA Standards:

CC.1.3: Reading Literature: Students read and respond to works of literature – with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.

CC.1.3.5.C: Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text

Understandings: *Students will understand that...*

- Artists can use subject matter, background, and mood to suggest narratives in their work.
- The use of formal elements and principles can provide indication of characters, setting, plot, conflict, and theme in artworks that suggests a narrative.
- Artists can create narratives in their work to enhance themes and content.

Essential Questions:

- How can artists tell a story?
- How can an artwork provide clues about character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme?
- How can implied narratives help to understand artist themes and content?

Students will know:

- Art has been used as a means of storytelling throughout history and across the world.
- There are many types of art in which artists create narratives, such as portraiture.
- There are many contemporary artists, such as Cindy Sherman, who use storytelling as a means to convey theme and content in their work.

Students will be able to:

- Observe and inquire about subject matter, background and mood in selected artworks that suggest a narrative.
- Identify a character and setting and formulate a plot, conflict and theme of selected artworks.
- Students will evaluate and explain what artist's intended content and themes of selected artworks might be

STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Performance Tasks:

- Create a narrative Pixton cartoon inspired by one of Cindy Sherman's Untitled Film Stills that depicts what occurred either before or after the photograph was taken and gives indication of character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme
- Reflection of classmate's cartoon via VTS session that includes a title and synopsis and mention of character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme

Other Evidence:

- Oral response to one of the essential questions based on VTS session
- Think/pair/share activity answering questions related to parts of a narrative in relation to selected film stills
- Participation in VTS session of student based work

Key Criteria:

- Narrative Pixton cartoon inspired by one of Cindy Sherman's Untitled Film Stills that depicts what occurred either before or after the photograph was taken and gives indication of character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme
- Written/oral reflection of classmate's cartoon via VTS session that includes a title and synopsis and mention of character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme

STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

Summary of Learning Activities:

- Review character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme in writing
 - Ask students to write down a bullet point list of their 5 favorite stories
 - Ask students:

- How do you identify a main character in a story?
- What makes a character stand out for you?
- What are some of your favorite characters?
- Why do you like them so much?
- What kind of character would you be in a story and why?
- Have students write responses after each question in sketchbook

Visual Thinking Strategy (two classes)

- In groups of four, observe the following visuals, *Cindy Sherman's Untitled Film Stills* from <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2012/cindysherman/> Film Still #5, Film Still #46, Film Still #35, Film Still #84

- Allow student observation
- "What is going on in this picture?"
- "What do you see that makes you say that?"
- "What more can you find?"
- Review the parts of a narrative with students:
 - Characters
 - Setting
 - Plot
 - Conflict
 - Theme
- Using VTS as basis for discussion:
 - Review Untitled Film Still #5. Who is this woman? Where is she? Who is she looking at? What in this picture suggests a plot? Have students "think, pair, share" answers at their team tables in partners.
 - Review Untitled Film Still #46. What do you think happened to cause this moment on film? Have students "think, pair, share" answers at their team tables in partners.
 - Review Untitled Film Still #35. What do you think the character is thinking at the moment? Have students "think, pair, share" answers at their team tables in partners.
 - Review Untitled Film Still #84. What do you think occurred after this moment on film? Have students "think, pair, share" answers at their team tables in partners and then with class.
 - Review Untitled Film Still #5, #84, #46, and #35. What do you think might be the theme of this story? Have students "think, pair, share" answers at their team tables in partners and then with class.

ART STUDIO

- Review use of Pixton app
- Choose one Untitled Film Still to use as inspiration for Pixton cartoon
- Allow students time to create sketches and write down ideas before creating Pixton cartoon
- Allow students time to create cartoon

ART CRITICISM

- Using student artifacts, conduct a VTS session in which students can break up into partners or small groups to critique each others work. Begin by using two to three student cartoons as an example for class to discuss. Then allow students to answer the same VTS questions with their partner's cartoon. Do this with each question several times.
- Create a written/oral reflection of classmate's cartoon that includes a title and synopsis and mention of character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme
- Ask partner if the reflection accurately portrayed his/her cartoon
- If not, provide examples on how to better align student's intended theme and content with the character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme portrayed by his/her cartoon
- Repeat reflection two more times with two additional partners
- Allow time to revise cartoons according to collaborative results

Additional Notes:

I often include contemporary artists in my lessons with students. Cindy Sherman is a contemporary photographer who transforms into different characters in her portraits. Sherman's work suggests ideas of transformation as well as a multitude of narratives. I introduced her work to my fifth graders to make a connection between art and narratives.

Because I write this lesson with the idea that students already have knowledge of Pixton, I simply review the application. Students get to select the film still that they are most interested in and recreate it in Pixton. They must invent a before or after scene that is based on and includes the original film still. The final cartoon must exhibit characteristics of a narrative and

include character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme. I have found that students appear engaged with online cartoon applications such as these. They are present all over the internet with many results on Facebook and Flickr. I feel that allowing them to re-create a scenario through an e-based cartoon would peak their interest much more than simply drawing in their sketchbooks.

To help check student understanding, in addition to the student generated Pixton cartoon, I observe student partners. Students present cartoons in pairs and critique each other's work by providing a written or oral reflection that includes a title and synopsis and mention of character, setting, plot, conflict, and theme. If a partner's reflection doesn't accurately portray student's intentions, that partner can provide constructive criticism to assist. This critique, as well as the think/pair/share questioning activity, allows for students to generate and collaborate on ideas as well as revise their results. The product of this lesson is not intended to be completed in one instance, but rather reviewed and revised through peer collaboration. By allowing revision, students have the opportunity to alter their final product into one that they feel accurately depicts their intentions and meets the objective of the lesson.