

Art + History Lesson Checklist

Works of art are special kinds of historical sources that spark inquiry in the classroom in remarkable ways. Use this checklist to design and strengthen your Art + History lesson.

Does my lesson:

- Get students interested and asking questions when exploring artworks' sensory qualities?**
 - Give students an extended amount of time to look closely at the artwork.
 - Explore the artwork through multiple modes: have students pose like the figures or imagine the sounds, smells, and other sensory aspects that the work of art evokes; pass out tactile objects and materials related to the artwork. Find more multimodal activities here.
 - Have students turn inferences into questions using the Analyzing a Work of Art worksheet.
- Pose questions that help students analyze artists' choices and assess their impact on viewers?**
- Contextualize all sources?**
 - Use the Building Context Worksheet to determine what background information about the artist, artwork, and time period students need to know in order to explore it.
 - Do the same with your other sources: determine what background information students need to know to support their analysis.
- Pay attention to the chronology of sources?**
 - Ensure all primary sources (including the work of art) were created within five years of each other and of the historical event(s) the lesson explores.
- Address the differences between past moments and the present?**
 - Anticipate and discuss differences between the present and past that may be challenging for students, i.e., the widespread use of cell phones today versus different modes of communication in the early 20th century.
- Use multiple and varied sources?**
 - Analyze the work of art alongside two or more contemporaneous primary sources.
 - Choose primary sources that present diverse points of view on the historical moment(s) students are studying.
 - Use varied source types and formats. You might pair a newspaper article with with a poem and a painting, or examine a film clip paired with song lyrics and a sculpture.
- Help students become comfortable with having more questions than answers?**
 - Think of student questions as a positive outcome for your lesson: encourage students to leave with more questions than answers.
- Prompt students to ask "What am I not seeing?" when evaluating sources?**
 - Include moments of reflection when students can think about how their own interpretations of sources are subjective and that others may see things differently.

Notes: