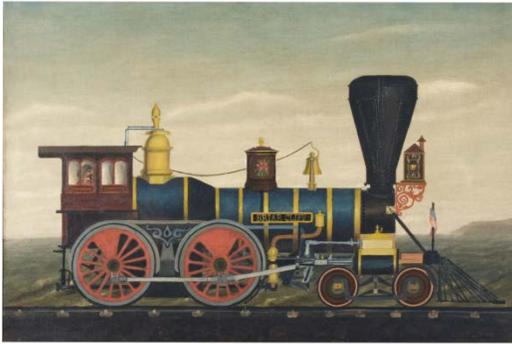


ALL ABOARD! RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION: LOCOMOTIVE BRIAR CLIFF

The lure and the lore of trains seems central to our culture, so it provides an effective way to engage young children in an exploration and discussion of movement, transportation, machinery, profession, and function. This lesson highlights all of these concepts through the in-depth examination of a key work of art.



Locomotive Briar Cliff, c. 1860
W. L. Bresse, American
Oil on canvas
24 1/8 x 35 3/4 inches (61.3 x 90.8 cm)
Gift of Frank and Alice Osborn, 1966
1966-68-55

Curricular Areas

Early elementary

Grade Level

Pre-K

Common Core Academic Standards

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.2](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.4](#)

Art Images Required

Click on the title below to view high-resolution photographs on the Philadelphia Museum of Art website. Images that are available in the ARTstor Digital Library are indicated by an ID number or search phrase. Entering that number or phrase into the ARTstor search bar will direct you to the corresponding image in that database.

- [Locomotive Briar Cliff](#), c. 1860, by W. L. Bresse
ARTstor search: Not available

Vocabulary

railroad	conductor
engineer	train tracks
engine	caboose
train	whistle
locomotive	boxcar

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Lesson Process

1. EXPLORE: As a class, read and discuss Donald Crews's book *Freight Train* (1978) and compare with W. L. Bresse's painting *Locomotive Briar Cliff* (c. 1860). Use the following questions as a guideline to begin your discussion.
2. What do you see? Both the book and the painting describe trains. Crews's book shows us the whole train from engine or locomotive to caboose; Bresse's painting shows a locomotive. Ask children to describe the colors, shapes, and other details of the trains.
3. What is similar? What is different? Does the train appear to be moving? In what direction? Where is it going? What parts help the train move? What are the boxcars and other freight cars for? What is the purpose of the caboose?
4. The train in Crews's book moves fast! A railroad engineer is visible in Bresse's locomotive, but it doesn't appear to be moving because there is not any smoke. To learn more about trains, look together at a book about trains such as DK Publishing's *Big Book of Trains* (1998).
5. What parts of the train make noise? What noises do they make? Responses might include:
 - o Bell
 - o Whistle
 - o Wheels against the train tracks
6. ENGAGE: What would it feel like to be a train? As a class, pretend to be a train. Lay out "tracks" in your classroom or an outdoor play area using masking tape, chalk, or string. Designate children to be a locomotive, tender car, boxcars and other freight cars, and a caboose. Have all of the "train cars" line up along the track with each "car's" hands on the shoulders of the "car" in front. Practice moving along the train tracks. (Don't forget to make train sounds!) Challenge the students by stopping and starting, speeding up and slowing down. Use this game as a time to practice classroom skills for walking in a line.
7. If you have a train set or train toys in your classroom, gather them together and look at them as a group. Allow students to touch the toys and talk about them.
8. CREATE: Using their knowledge of trains have each student make a picture of a boxcar for a train to decorate your classroom.
 - o Supplies: One full sheet and one half-sheet of 9 x 12" construction paper per student (the two pieces of paper should be the same color, but using different colors for each student will create a train that is visually interesting); glue; paper circles (pre-cut); popsicle sticks; crayons or markers; and collage materials such as buttons, beads, torn paper or found objects.
 - o Process: Begin by folding the smaller piece of paper in half like a greeting card. Apply glue to the backside of the folded paper and attach to the larger piece of paper. This part will be the door of the boxcar. Next, have children glue wheels onto their boxcar. Finally, add in details by drawing or gluing them. Popsicle sticks, for example, could be used to represent the slat boards of the boxcar. Make sure to decorate the inside, too! What is the boxcar carrying? Draw or glue objects under the paper flap to show the cargo.

Assessment

- Although a formal assessment is not indicated, informal assessment can be determined as you observe the activities within the lesson. Be sure to focus on whether the child
 - o Uses vocabulary words
 - o Demonstrates knowledge of train function and purpose

For more information, please contact Division of Education and Public Programs: School and Teacher Programs by phone at 215-684-7580, by fax at 215-236-4063, or by e-mail at educate@philamuseum.org.