

Art and Language Arts

During this lesson, students uncover the “stories” told by works of art as they experiment with the different tools that writers and artists use to make an engaging work. Activities encourage careful observation, analysis, and discussion, and include creative, persuasive, and descriptive writing and poetry. This lesson can be adapted for English-language learners.

Grade Level

Grades 4–12

Common Core Academic State Standards

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4](#)

National Visual Arts Standards

- Responding: understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning

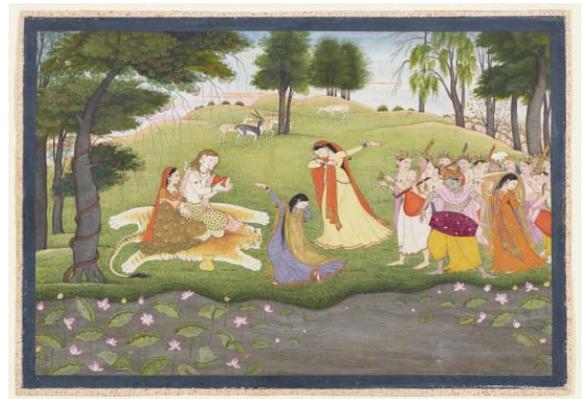
Suggested Learning Goals

Students will be better able to:

- Find and interpret story elements, such as plot, character, setting, and theme, in works of art
- Describe visual elements that convey meaning and emotion
- Analyze artwork for multiple points of view
- Write in a variety of genres in response to artwork
- Express ideas and opinions about artwork in discussion with others

Essential Questions

- What kinds of stories can we discover by looking at works of art?
- How can we learn to “read” a work of art like we read literature?
- How can we respond to art?



The Gods Sing and Dance for Shiva and Parvati, c. 1780–90
Attributed to Kushala (Indian)

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper

Image: 8 x 12 inches (20.3 x 30.5 cm) Sheet: 9 x 12 15/16 inches (22.9 x 32.9 cm)

125th Anniversary Acquisition. Alvin O. Bellak Collection, 2004
2004-149-77

Suggested Vocabulary

Author	Illustrator	Narrative	Theme
Character	Illustration	Plot (beginning, middle, end)	Visualize
Dialogue	Metaphor	Setting	

Lesson-Specific Activity

This activity is designed to prepare students for thinking and talking about artworks they may see during a “Stories in Art” lesson.

- Select a detailed, descriptive passage from a short story or a book that is familiar to your students. The passage could be a description of a person, a place, or an object. Try to find imaginative uses of metaphorical language if you can. One good example is the description of Mrs. Granger in Andrew Clements’s *Frindle* (Chapter 2).
- As you read the passage out loud to students once, ask them to visualize what is described.
- Distribute blank paper to each student, and then read the passage out loud a second time. As you read, ask students to write down examples of descriptive language that helps them to create a mental image.
- Finally, read the passage out loud a third time while students draw a sketch of what they imagine this person, place, or thing looks like. Tell them to sketch whatever is in their imaginations. Their sketches could be realistic or fantastic, as long as they reflect the descriptive language.
- When students have had time to complete their sketches, put them in pairs. Ask them to compare and contrast their drawings. Are they the same or different? What do you think might account for any differences? Which descriptive phrases stood out to them, and why? How did this influence their drawings?
- Ask students to think about a big idea, emotion, or character trait captured in their drawings. They will give their sketches a title that reflects that theme.

Extension Activity

- Ask students to bring in an object from home that holds a memory or tells a personal story.
- Create a class “gallery” of these memories and stories by having students write labels for their objects. Labels should include a title that communicates what they believe is most important about the object, a date of creation, and a caption describing the memory or telling the story in one or two sentences.

Supplementary Materials

- *Frindle*, by Andrew Clements