



Montana | Activity 1.4: Famous Western Artists

Students watch biographical accounts of three artists of the West: Charlie Russell, George Catlin, and Evelyn Cameron. By completing a graphic organizer based on the videos, students compare and contrast the focus and perspectives of each of the artists.

Lesson Summary

Students watch biographical accounts of three artists of the West: Charlie Russell, George Catlin, and Evelyn Cameron. By completing a graphic organizer based on the videos, students compare and contrast the focus and perspectives of each of the artists.

This lesson is part of "*Great States: Montana | Unit 1: Introduction to Montana*" which will give students a nuanced introduction to the state of Montana. Students will be introduced to key events and people from Montana, as well as learn how boundaries are established and maintained, and how culture influences one's perspective and experience in the world.

Time Allotment

35 minutes

Learning Objectives

Standards:

- 4.1:** Identify and use various sources of information (e.g., artifacts, diaries, photographs, charts, biographies, paintings, architecture, songs) to develop an understanding of the past.
- 4.3:** Examine biographies, stories, narratives, and folk tales to understand the lives of ordinary people and extraordinary people, place them in time and context, and explain their relationship to important historical events.
- 4.6:** Recognize that people view and report historical events differently.

Supplies

- Video: *Profiles of the American West: Charles Russell - How the West is Fun*
- Video: *Profiles of the American West: George Catlin - How the West is Fun*
- Video: *Profiles of the American West: Evelyn Cameron - How the West is Fun*
- An interactive whiteboard, projector, or another type of screen to show videos to the class
- Class set of [Famous Western Artists](#) graphic organizer

- Famous Western Artists Answer Key

Directions

1. Distribute the Famous Western Artists handout to students, and tell them they will be watching short videos about each of the artists listed in the graphic organizer. Instruct students to take notes as they watch the videos.
2. Play the following videos from the series, *How the West is Fun*, for each artist. Give students a couple of minutes to complete their notes after watching each clip:
 - a. *Profiles of the American West: Charles Russell - How the West is Fun* [2:25]
 - b. *Profiles of the American West: George Catlin - How the West is Fun* [1:48]
 - c. *Profiles of the American West: Evelyn Cameron - How the West is Fun* [1:33]
3. Allow five to ten minutes for students to discuss their answers with one another.
4. As a class, go over the students' answers. Reference the provided answer key.
5. Discuss the following questions with the class:
 - a. In looking at all three of the artists' works, what similarities do you see?
[Answers will vary: All three captured life out West. Russell and Cameron both captured the lives of settlers. Russell and Catlin both captured American Indians in their work.]
 - b. How about the differences?
[Answers will vary: Catlin focused primarily on American Indian way of life, while Russell and Cameron did not. Cameron's work was in photographs, capturing the real-life moment, while Russell and Catlin's work was painted from their perspectives.]
6. Note to students that all three artists' work (and any artist or creator of any sort) come from their own perspective and point of view. Each person, even if they live in the same time in history, the same country, or even the same town, has his or her own perspective and point of view. With this in mind, touch on how valuable it is to have multiple (or many people's) points of view or perspectives, especially when dealing with historical events.
7. Ask students: Whose perspective is missing? *[The subjects themselves]*

Reprinted from *PBS LearningMedia: Montana* | Activity 1.4: Famous Western Artists
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