



Oratory and Art | Ford's Theatre

Students create artwork which visually conveys their understanding of a historical speech and how it relates to today.

Lesson Summary

This lesson sequence asks students to choose a historical speech to analyze, to research the context of the speech, and to relate those themes to today.

The students will then create art visual representations to demonstrate their understanding. Then the class will create a gallery of their work complete with exhibit labels.

This lesson plan can be easily adapted to focus on a particular historical time period or historical theme such as civil rights, environmental issues, slavery, etc.

Time Allotment

This lesson plan is scheduled to last for eight instructional periods of 45-minutes. It can be shortened by assigning some of the research as homework or lengthened by going into more depth.

Learning Objectives

- Identify key events that led to the creation of the chosen speech
- Identify important contributions of the speaker
- Analyze an historical speech in order to understand its themes and purposes
- Connect the historical speech to events of today
- Produce a text-based art piece that communicates the connection of the speech to today's events

Prep for Teachers

There are options provided on which resources to use in this lesson plan. Look ahead and select which resources work best for your students.

Supplies

- markers/colored pencils
- watercolor or acrylic paints
- scissors
- glue
- paper

- Student Resource Packet
- [Examples of Text-Based Art](#)
- [Examples of Label Writing](#)
- "Writing Effective Museum Text" by Helen Hales
- [Writing Effective Art Exhibit Labels](#)

Guiding Questions

- What inspires someone to speak out?
- How does the past connect to the present and future?

Introductory Activity

LESSON ACTIVITY ONE

RESEARCH

Students will begin by choosing a speech that interests them. If you want to focus on a particular historical theme or time period, give the students criteria in making their choice or create a list of speeches for them to choose from.

The American Heritage Book of Great American Speeches for Young People is a great starting point for choosing speeches. The editor, Suzanne McIntire, has done an excellent job shortening major American speeches to make them more manageable for students. I have found the book lacking in speeches by women, so I supplement with Denise Graveline's exceptional collection of speeches by women on her [website](#).

Students will then research their orator, identifying 10 facts that everyone should know about him or her.

We like the following resources: EBSCO Student Research Center; Britannica School, or EBSCO Kids Search because they are constantly updated and most of them allow the student to change the information based on their reading level. See Student Resource Packet, p. 2

Next, students will research the event at which their speaker is presenting. Students need to understand the context of their speech. The students identify five facts about the event that everyone else should understand. See Student Resource Packet, p. 3

Learning Activities

LESSON ACTIVITY TWO

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Students will annotate their speech. To help students truly understand their speech, they need to annotate it. There are many different ways to annotate. It is important that they identify the theme of their speech at this point. See Student Resource Packet, p. 4

Three of my favorite resources on annotating are:

[Analyzing a Speech](#) or [Remixing a Speech](#)

[Teaching Tolerance](#)

LESSON ACTIVITY THREE

TIMELINE CREATION

Students will create a Timeline. This activity requires students to reflect on how history may have influenced their chosen speech and orator, inspiring him or her to speak out, as well as identifying contemporary connections. Student can use the same research resources as they did in Day One, adding Newsela, SIRS Discoverer or Student Research Center Jr. These resources add more current events than the previously listed sites. See Student Resource Packet, pp. 5-6. The student timeline can be done by hand in the Resource Packet or electronically.

The [Read Write Think website](#) allows students to easily create a timeline and include pictures. [Northwestern University](#) created a program that allows anyone to make a timeline for a website that can incorporate video.

LESSON ACTIVITY FOUR

SYMBOLISM AND ART PIECE EXAMPLES

Students will identify symbolism in art and poetry. Students will begin thinking about what symbols they can use in their art piece by looking at examples. See Student Resource Packet, p. 7.

Students will then compare text-based art pieces. Using the examples listed under materials, students will use Visible Thinking Strategies to examine the artwork. Have students work in pairs. Give each pair a copy of at least five different pieces of artwork. Have students ask each other:

What is going on in this picture?

What makes you say that?

What more can you see?

If you are unfamiliar with Visible Thinking Strategies, you can find a guide to using this one in the classroom from [Project Zero](#).

After students look at all the artwork, have them make a T-Chart listing how the pieces are similar and different. See Student Resource Packet, p.8.

Extension: You can also have students look at how these art pieces were made. Here are several resources for them to explore:

Tim Rollins and KOS - [Animal Farm](#) (after George Orwell) and [The Process](#)

[Tom Phillips](#)

[Great Ideas of Western Man Series](#) (Paul Rand, Dimitri Petrov, Joseph Low)

LESSON ACTIVITY FIVE

ART CREATION

Students create their own text-based art piece. Provide copies of the speeches, scissors, paper, markers and glue for students to work on their own art piece that connects the theme of the speech to modern society, culture, politics, history, etc. If your students have had little experience in art creation, try connecting with your school's art teacher. This provides a great opportunity for cross-curricular instruction.

Additionally, you can find student produced examples of oratory art and art exhibition labels under additional resources.

LESSON ACTIVITY SIX

LABEL EXAMPLES AND CREATION

Students will compare art exhibition labels. Using the examples listed in the materials section, have students work in pairs looking at a minimum of three different labels. For each label, they should list what they like and don't like about the label. Working together they should come up with five rules for writing an effective label. See Student Resource Packet, p. 8

Students will write their own art exhibition label. Their label should connect the art piece to the historical speech explaining how the theme is still relevant today. See Student Resource Packet, p.9

Culminating Activity

LESSON ACTIVITY SEVEN

GALLERY WALK

After students finished both their art piece and exhibition label, hang these around your classroom. Have students look at each one. After looking over the pieces, have a class discussion on what they liked about the pieces and what they learned from the process.

ASSESSMENT

Use the rubric on page nine in the Student Resource Packet.

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