



“LOOKING AT MEANING IN CONTEMPORARY REALISM”

Lesson Plan designed for DVI by Camilla S. Haneberg



*Young Mary with a Pomogranate and a Putti,
James Van Fossan*

SUMMARY

This lesson plan looks at criteria for forming an opinion about artworks through the lens of what artists communicate and how they do it. Students have a chance to form an opinion about specific artworks and to analyze what is being said and whether or not they think it is good art or not, and (very importantly...why).

This will open channels for analysis that later can be applied to a students own art, and/or what they hang on the walls of their homes.

OBJECTIVES

- using predetermined questioning to analyze art
- developing relevant criteria for analysis of art
- using appropriate vocabulary for describing art
- explaining opinions about art
- writing about art using opinions, appropriate vocabulary and relevant criteria

STANDARDS

National Art Standards:

- VA:Re9.1.Pka
- VA:Re9.1.Ka
- VA:Re9.1.1a
- VA:Re9.1.2a
- VA:Re9.1.3a
- VA:Re9.1.4a
- VA:Re9.1.5a

“LOOKING AT MEANING IN CONTEMPORARY REALISM”

K-5 / MEANING IN REALISM

Common Core Literacy Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.A
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.B
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.A
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.B
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1.A
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1.B

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Who gets to decide whether specific artworks are good or bad? Does everyone have to agree on this? Do some people like bad art? And do some people dis-like good art?

If we are judging good or bad art by whether the artist is successfully communicating a concept, what kind of criteria does that require?

Let's look at developing criteria based on whether or not an artist is communicating an idea. We can analyze the objects in the artwork, the composition/placement, the symbology, the style of representation by using adjectives that describe the work and how or why the artwork clearly communicates a message.

Working with grades K-5 we will think in bigger idea terms such as how the artwork makes you feel, and what do you think the story is that goes with the image. This way the student is looking for meaning in preparation for a later more detailed approach.

ACTIVITY 1

QUESTION CARD ANALYSIS

This introductory activity exposes students to the idea of analyzing artworks for general feelings and ideas, using question cards that promote thinking and analysis, which will lead to a more informed opinion about whether they think the work is “good” or “bad”.

Using the attached handout sheets labeled A1y in the upper right hand corner, copy onto cardstock and laminate (optional, for repeated use), then cut into question cards along the dotted lines.

Distribute one card per student, or if students do not read yet, call on students and read the question to them.

Either project onto a screen, one of the two digital images with A1x in the upper right hand corner, or distribute color copies of one of the images, enough to be shared by students. Students look silently at the image for two timed minutes (it will seem like a long time, but do it anyway.)

Now inform students that can read their own cards, that they will have one silent timed minute to again really LOOK at the image and see how the question on their question card relates to the image in some way. Tell them they need to be ready to have a relevant one sentence share out at the end of the one timed minute.

If you are reading the question cards to the student count (1000 one, 1000 two, up to 5 in your head) to leave them thinking time if they need it. Resist moving on to someone else until each student (even slower processors) get a chance to share. Its fun to have a pair of sunglasses with the lenses taken out for the student that is sharing to wear, to “help them see better”.

“LOOKING AT MEANING IN CONTEMPORARY REALISM”

K-5/ MEANING IN REALISM

MATERIALS:

- one copy each on cardstock of A1y, laminated if you choose
- color copies of A1x, enough for every three students, or project the digital image onto a promethean board
- a pair of old or thrift store sunglasses with the lens taken out

ACTIVITY 2

BINOCULAR/TELESCOPE ACTIVITY

This activity is a fun way to examine artwork using a goofy prop. Ask your school custodian to save paper towel and toilet paper tubes (you are probably already doing that).

Use the paper towel tubes as telescopes, or the toilet paper tubes stapled together in the center (one staple per end...add string if you want to)



for binoculars to “look closely” at artworks (labeled A2y taped up in the classroom, around the edges on different walls or surfaces-not linearly in a row on one wall).

Handout A2x(only for you) has questions per each image and as you read a question, you will more than likely see binoculars looking in all different directions that will gradually end up all looking at the “correct” image. If they become split between two then they are seeing something that my question did not allow for having only one “correct” response to...this is a great teachable moment.

They don't have to know that the question led them to look at a different artwork than the question was intended for.

Move around the questions randomly from different images so that you are keeping the game alive, avoiding patterns that the students will pick up on. Mark them off as you ask them if that is helpful.

The second handout lists questions that can purposely have different answers, you can inject them into the other portion of the game, or, use them as a second portion of the same activity.

When finished, ask students to stand next to their favorite artwork. Then ask them to talk with others that like it, to tell what they like and why.

MATERIALS:

- copies of A2x questions and A2y images, one each
- laminator, optional
- tape
- paper towel tubes one per student, or
- toilet paper rolls, two per student
- stapler
- staples
- yarn or string
- scissors

Without the eye, the head is blind. Without the head, the eye is adrift.

(Darby Bannard)

“LOOKING AT MEANING IN CONTEMPORARY REALISM”

K-5/ MEANING IN REALISM

SOME FUN PROPS FOR “SEEING”



These finger eyes are great for “looking” at and then “hand puppet” explaining what the student sees.



These Lazer fingers have five finger lights that are each a different color. The elastic bands tend to come off, but they are a lot of fun.

Here are a few other goffy things that make it more fun to look at and talk about art.



ACTIVITY 3

LIKE...DON'T LIKE

This is an introductory activity to making a judgement about an artwork. Generally the younger kids are okay with saying whether they do or don't like an artwork, and this is a gentle approach just in case.

Again using the images from Activity 2, marked A2 in the upper corner, have one color copy of each, laminated if you think it is necessary for your students, or if you want to reuse them.

Students and teacher sit in a circle on the floor.

Each person takes a turn around the circle momentarily holding the image copy and the attached handout labeled A3, with the smiley/frowny face on it (right side up=smiley, upside down=frowny).. If the student does not like the work she/he silently holds up the smiley/frowny showing the class the smiley side for “I like it” and the frowny side for “I don't like it”. When her/his turn is over she/he silently hands the materials to the next student in the circle.

You can do this with any amount of the 5 images that works for your group size and attention span. Just be sure that if you start a rotation, that everyone gets to take a turn!

MATERIALS:

- copies of A2 images, one each
- copy of A# smiley/frown on cardstock and laminated, if you so desire

ACTIVITY 4

FILL IN THE SEQUENCE

This activity segways into story telling from an art image, which is one way to find meaning in the artwork.

Using first A4x, then A4y (or whatever meets your students needs) attached handout, explain that each student gets to tell the story that they see in the artwork by either drawing or writing what happens before and after the image itself. When complete, the story board should be in a logical order and students can share out what they have drawn or written.

MATERIALS:

- copies of A4 x or y, one per student
- pencils and/or pens

“LOOKING AT MEANING IN CONTEMPORARY REALISM”

K-5/ MEANING IN REALISM

ACTIVITY 5

SALES PITCH

This activity will probably work better for grades 2-5, but you know your students and can decide that for yourself and them. The idea here is that the students are going to design an advertisement to sell the artwork, by surrounding the image on the attached handout A5x with the strong points of the artwork that will “sell it”. A5y has shapes that the students can cut out and glue on (if they want to) that can contain desirable consumer information and eye catching collage style design. Display these designs and poll the students as to which one has the most compelling sales pitch.

MATERIALS:

- copies of A5x, enough for students to have a choice between the three designs
- copies of a5y, one per student
- scissors
- glue
- any of the following art materials-colored pencil, crayons, markers
- pencils
- erasers
- rulers (optional)
- push pins or tape for displaying finished work

GENERAL RUBRIC

| OBJECTIVE | CRITERIA | YES | PARTIAL | NO |
|--|--|-----|---------|----|
| Using predetermined questioning to analyze art | Student can apply opinions to artworks within provided activities | | | |
| Developing relevant criteria for analysis of art | Student can generate original thoughts and opinions about an artwork | | | |
| Using appropriate vocabulary for describing art | Student can clearly describe an artwork | | | |
| Explaining opinions about art | Student can clearly express her/his opinion about an artwork | | | |
| Writing about art using opinions, appropriate vocabulary and relevant criteria | Student can write, draw and/or talk about an artwork and her/his opinions about it in a clear and convincing way | | | |



The Abandoned, Victoria Radionova



Serenity, Gordon Hanley

QUESTION CARDS:

Is this a happy picture?
Why do you think so?

Is this picture empty or
full? Why?

Is the artist that made
this happy or sad?
Why do you think that?

Where would you hang
this artwork in your
house? Why there?

Are the colors in this
artwork bright or dull?

Are the people or things
in this artwork real?

Why do you think the
artist made this picture?

What would you like to
ask the artist?

QUESTION CARDS:

Do you think the artist is telling a story in this artwork?

Do you think grown ups would like this artwork? What would they like?

Do you think the artist used the right colors? Why?

Who do you think would buy this artwork?

How do you feel when when you look at the artwork?

Is the artist old or young or somewhere in between?

Do you think the artist is good at drawing/ painting?

How much would you pay for this artwork?

QUESTION CARDS:

Do you see rounded shapes in the artwork?

Are there any pointy shapes in the artwork?

Are the people/things in a big space or a little space?

Are the people/things close together, or far apart?

Is there anything that looks like it doesn't belong in the picture?

Is this something that you have seen before?

What is your favorite part of the artwork?

What don't you like about the artwork?

QUESTION CARDS:

Do you want to know
more about the artist?
Like what?

Do you want to know
more about the artwork?
Like what?

Are there any lines that
you see in this artwork?
Where?

Do you see any textures
in this artwork? Where?

If you could give this
artwork to someone, who
would you give it to?
Why?

Would your brother/
sister like this artwork?
Why?

Is this picture taking
place indoors or out?
How do you know?

Is this artwork valuable?
Why do you think that?

BINOCULAR/TELESCOPE QUESTIONS:

Cherokee Matriarch, Clark Gussin

Look for....

1. a person that looks really old
2. someone wearing a black and white striped jacket
3. a solid black background
4. someone who's hair is combed back
5. a person that is looking off to the left



Young Mary with a Pomogranate and a Putti, James Van Fossan

Look for...

1. a girl sitting in a chair
2. a person with a bunch of babies flying around them
3. a red apple
4. a person with one finger in her mouth
5. someone with long brown hair



Kick the Can, Debra Keirce

Look for...

1. a black roller skate
2. a flying pair of scissors
3. a fancy eye mask
4. two blue butterflies
5. one read butterfly
6. a sculpture hanging on a string



Heroes of the West, Stephen Gjertson

Look for....

1. a feather in a hat
2. a red scarf
3. a stuffed horse
4. a person reading
5. a black cowboy hat
6. a gold vest



The Muse of Silence, Luis Jose Estremadoyro

Look for...

1. a black, white and gray artwork
2. a serious looking face
3. draped cloth
4. a spilled glass
5. musical instruments



BINOCULAR/TELESCOPE QUESTIONS:



THESE QUESTIONS CAN BE INJECTED IN BETWEEN THE FORMER ACTIVITY, OR SAVED FOR A SECOND PORTION OF THAT ACTIVITY:

Look for...

- a girl
- an open book
- someone sitting
- a plain black background
- wrinkles in fabric
- something red
- someone wearing black or white
- something or someone who is in the center of the artwork
- a still life
- a portrait
- an artwork that has a story
- an impossible artwork
- an artwork that is not real
- a calm artwork
- a busy artwork

When finished, ask students to stand next to their favorite artwork. Then ask them to talk with others that like it, to tell what they like and why.



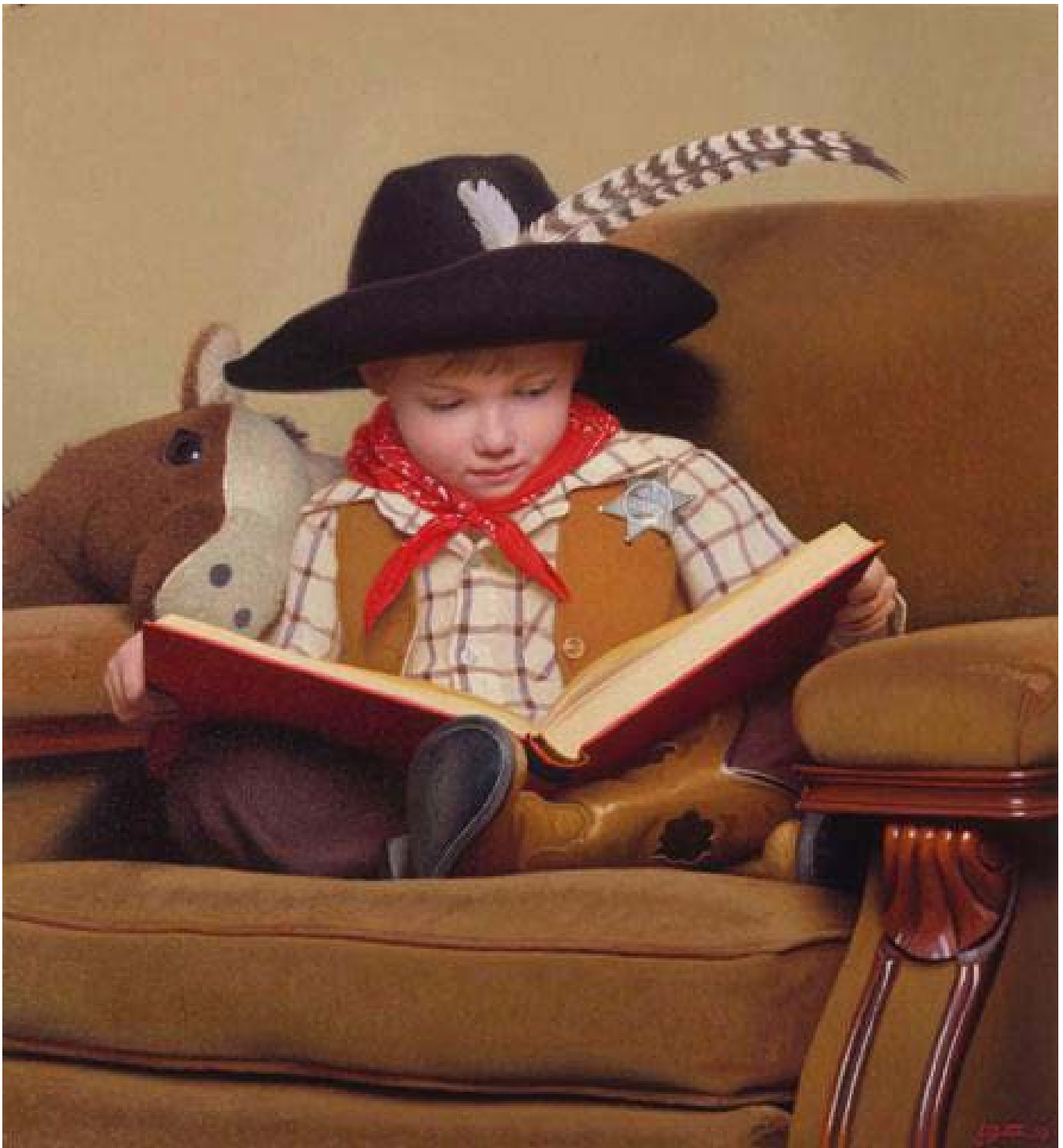
Cherokee Matriarch, Clark Gussin



Young Mary with a Pomogranate and a Putti, James Van Fossan



Kick the Can, Debra Keirce

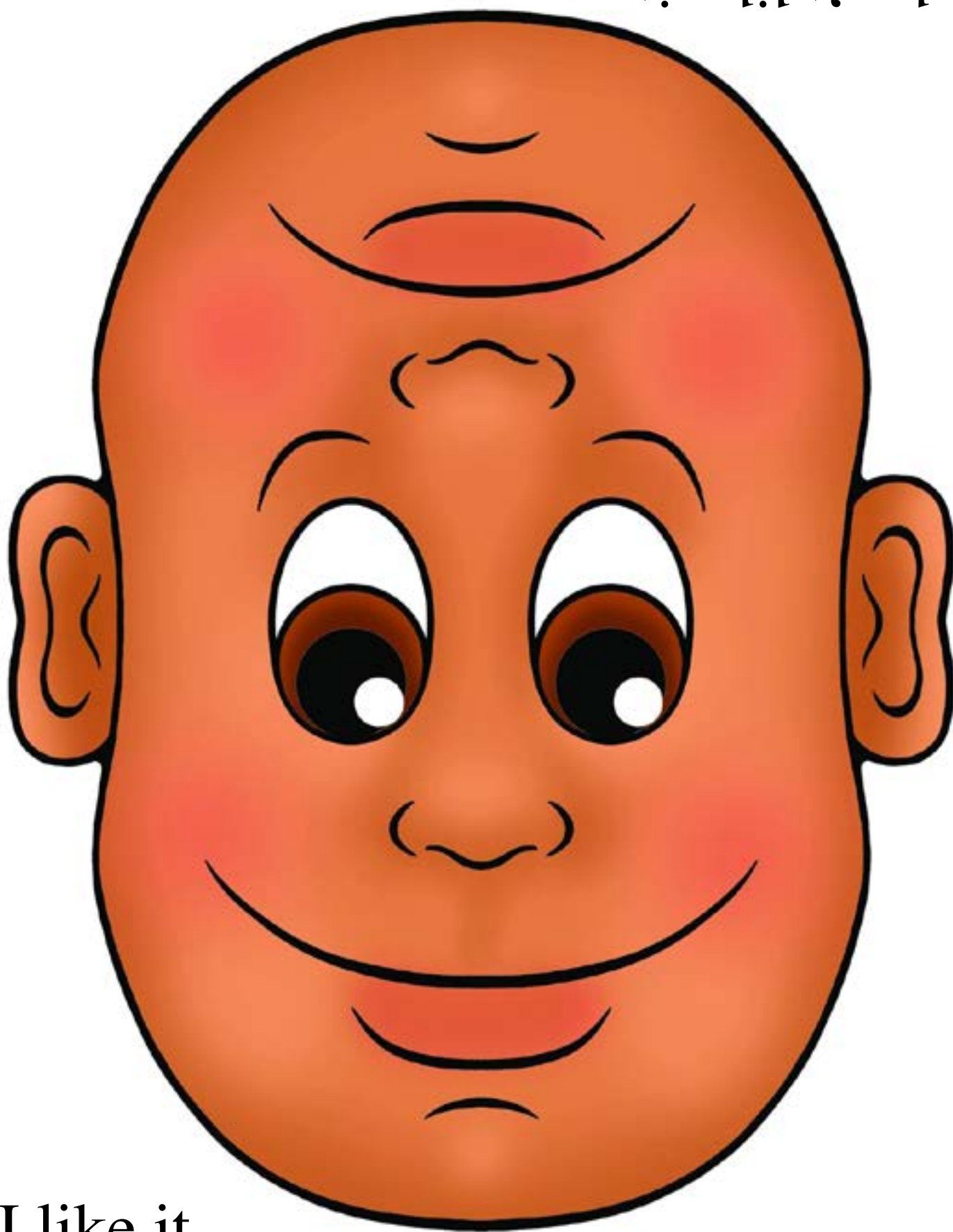


Heroes of the West, Stephen Gjertson



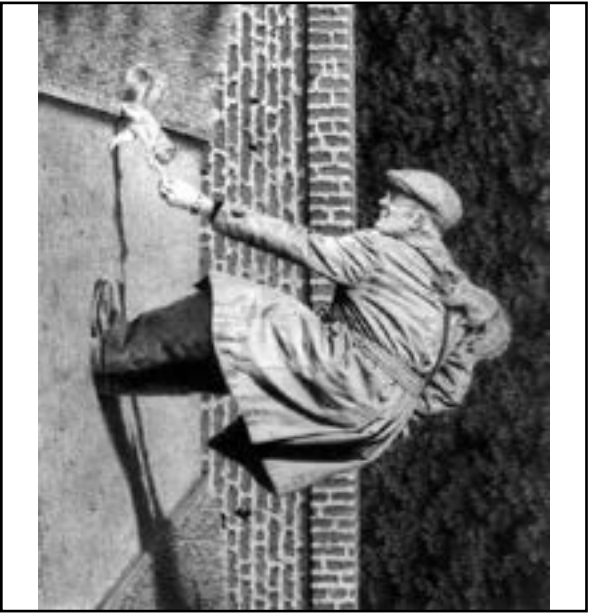
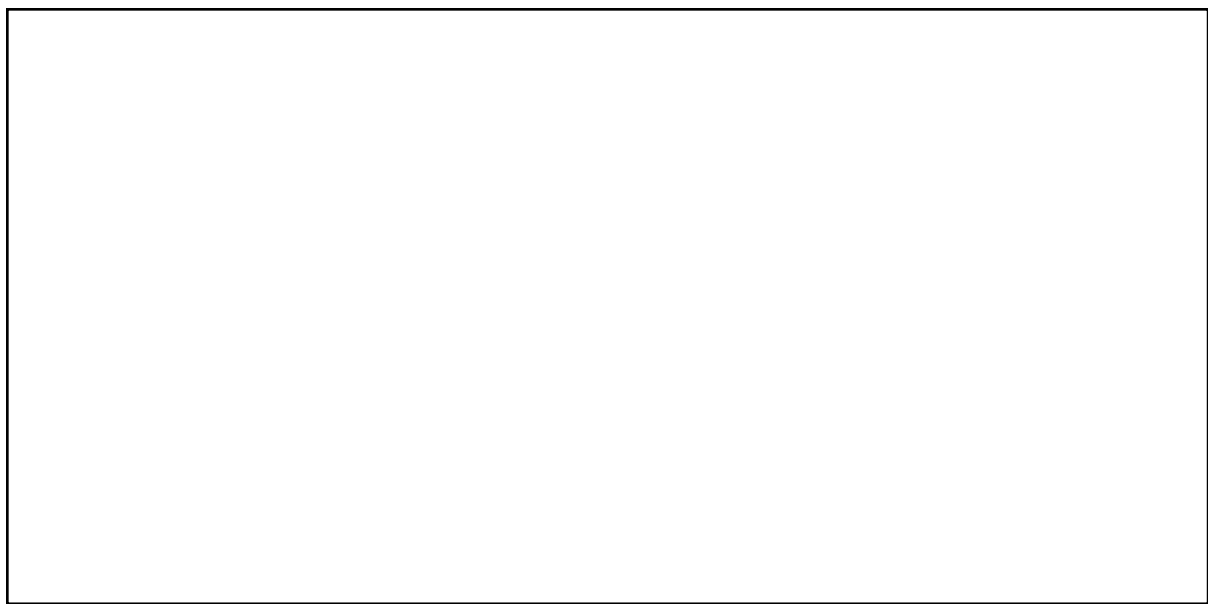
The Muse of Silence, Luis Jose Estremadoyro

I don't like it

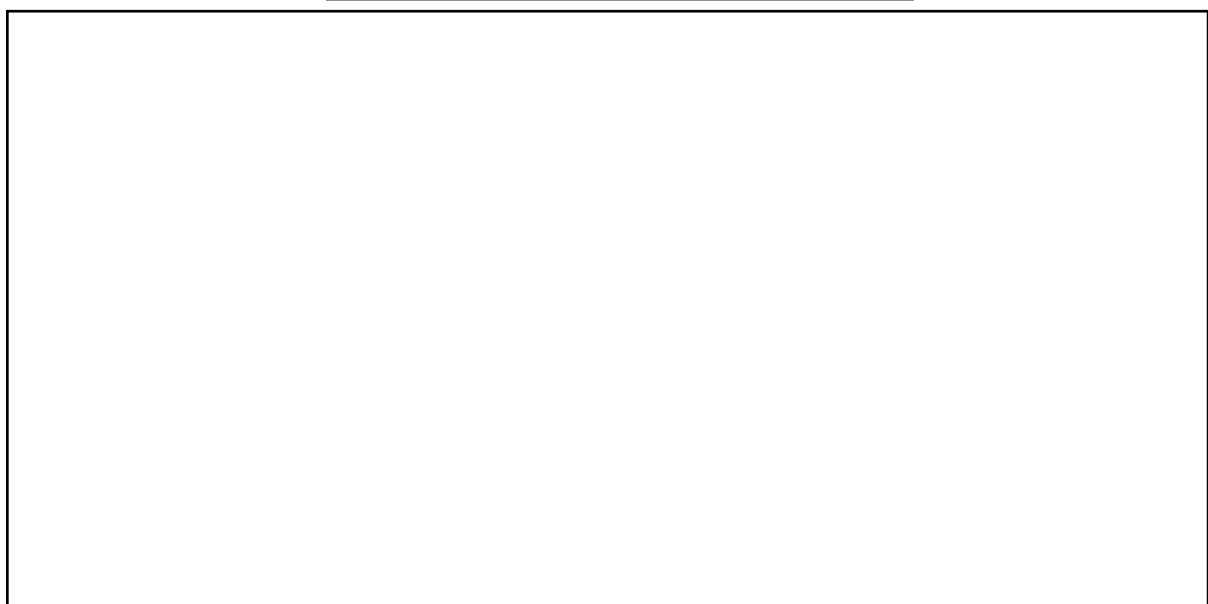


I like it

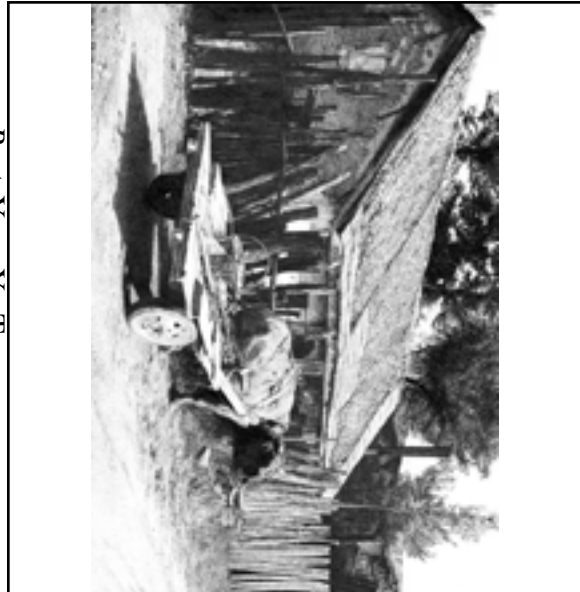
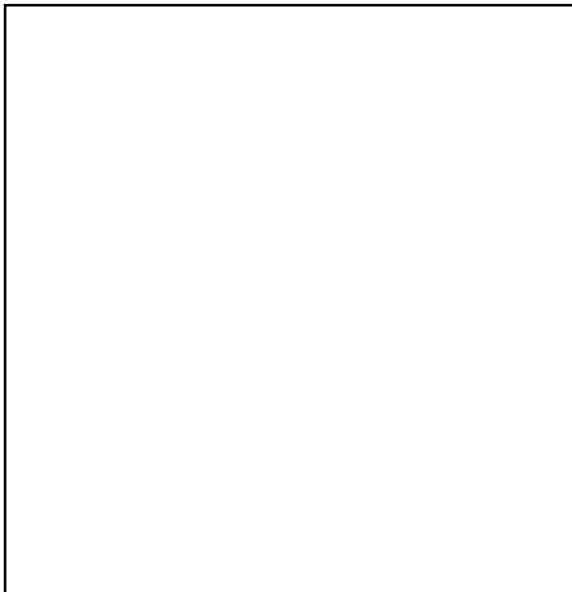
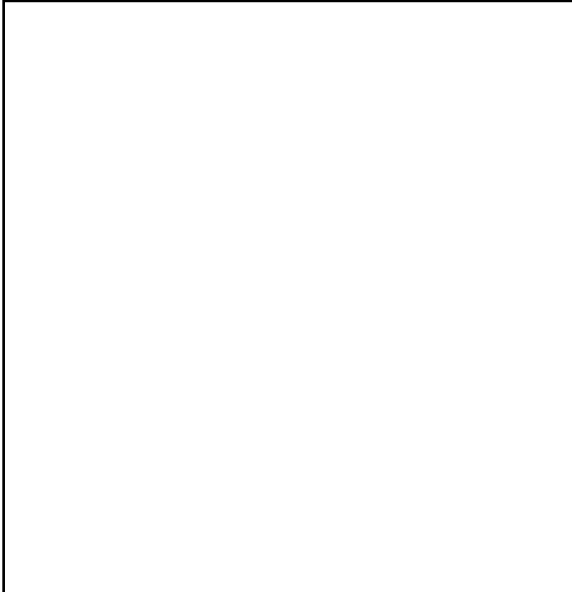
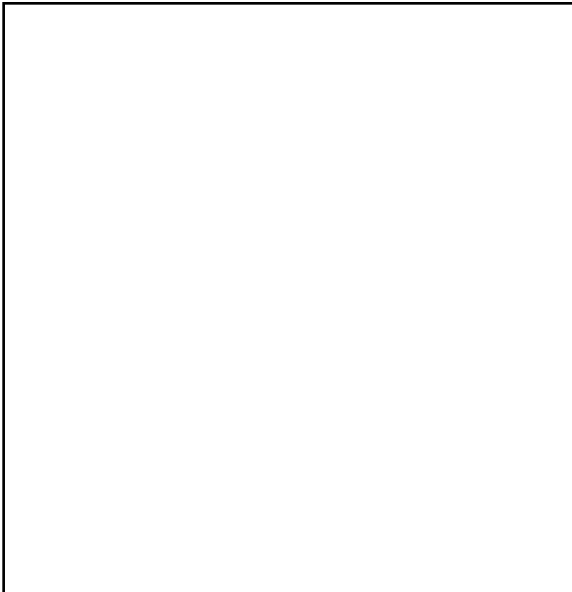
Name _____ Period _____



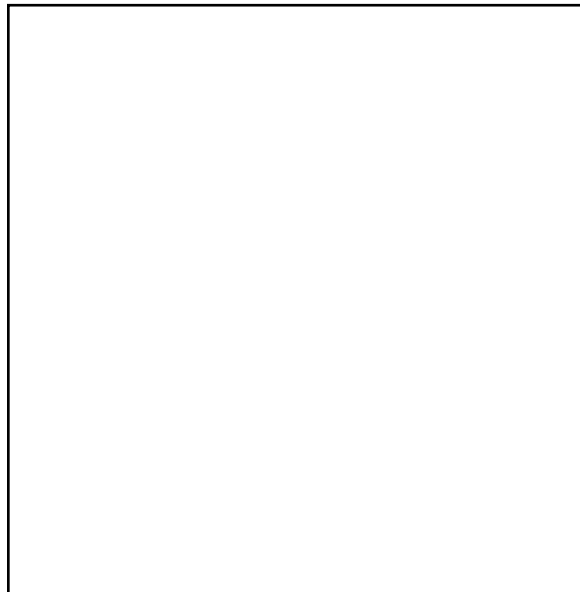
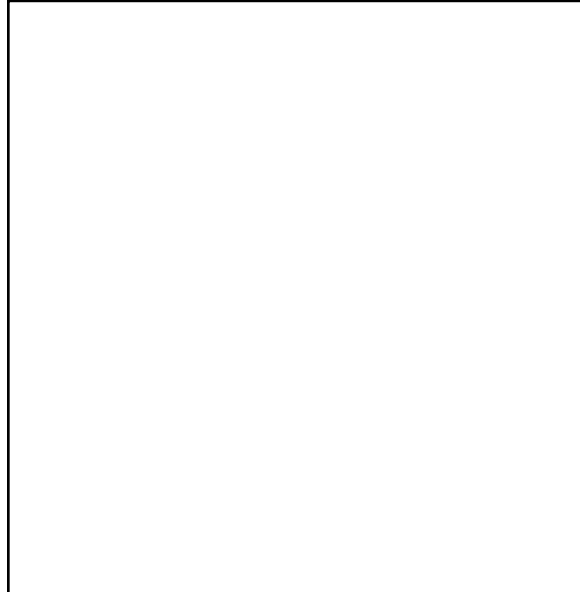
Morning Routine, Ann James Massey



Name _____ Period _____



Rest, Yang Yu-Tang



Name _____

Period _____



Marcellus, James Childs



Marcellus, James Childs

Name _____ Period _____



Marcellus, James Childs

