

Watercolor Painting

Use this guide to help your students look at, discuss, and create watercolor paintings. Any questions or activities can be adapted for the appropriate grade level. Maine Learning Results achievements are included for all grade levels.

This lesson was designed for use with a selection of watercolor paintings. Examples may come from teacher resources or the following Museums by Mail programs:

- *Scenes of Our State* (MBM 2)
- *Maine Coastal Watercolors* (MBM 3)
- *Lake and Ocean Fish* (MBM 4)
- *Schildknecht's Rural Watercolors* (MBM 5)
- *Watercolors by William Möise* (MBM 6)
- *Two Books by Doris Holman* (MBM 19)
- *Watercolors of Maine by Doris Holman* (MBM 24)

Related Material:

Glossary of Watercolor Painting Terms (download from website)

Group Discussion

All the following questions can be used at different grade levels, but the expectations for students should be appropriate for their abilities. These questioning techniques will encourage students to learn that art can be experienced as communication between the artist and the viewer.

1. Talk about which work *you* enjoy most. Why does that work appeal to you? (the feelings it gives you, the art elements it incorporates; the colors, lines, shapes, and textures). Encourage the students to do the same.
2. Encourage students to think about and discuss why artists create art (to give pleasure, to make money, to illustrate or communicate thoughts and ideas, etc.).
3. Encourage students to contribute ideas based on their own experience. Talk about how the works in the show are similar to and different from other kinds of art that they have seen. Help them to find connections between the art in the exhibit and art seen in books, posters, or in their homes.
4. Encourage students to learn that art can be experienced as communication between the artist and the viewer. Discuss the message communicated in the art. What can be learned from these works of art and how that message could be communicated through other means?
5. Encourage students to critically analyze works of art by:
 - a. Looking long and carefully at the work and describing (in detail) all that is perceived. Convey to the students that looking at a work of art is like reading: you must look at each detail (word) to get the full meaning of the work.

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- b. Thinking about how the artwork is organized (how the artist composed the work).
- c. Thinking about how the artwork makes them feel (does it remind them of anything?).
- d. Make a value judgment based on craftsmanship (skill), affective content (feelings, or moods expressed), organization of the visual elements (design and composition), expressive content (message or meaning). Students should practice giving opinions on the value of the work and should always be asked WHY they are making that determination. Make a distinction between personal preference and critical judgment.

Other questions to be considered could be:

- Why do people create art?
- What is art?
- What is good art?
- What is beauty?
- How do our feelings about beauty affect the decisions and choices we make in our lives?

Activities 1-3

Review the following activities and corresponding Maine Learning Results achievements to determine which will best suit your class.

1. Writing Skills

- a) After discussing the works, have the students write about the one they enjoyed the most.
- b) Tell the students to imagine that these works are illustrations for a story, poem, or song and ask them to write the story, poem, or song to go with the illustration.

2. Seeing Skills

- a) Have a student volunteer pretend to be the artist. Other students can take turns asking the artist questions about the pictures. Encourage the “artist” to use his/her imagination trying to answer the questions as the artist would.
- b) Have all students, except one, turn away from the exhibit. Have that student describe a work in detail. See if the other students can determine which work was described, when they turn back to the exhibit. Encourage the student to be very specific.

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3. Art Skills (watercolor painting)

In this activity students will create a watercolor painting. It takes artist(s) many years to be able to create the visual effects seen in these exhibits. Thus in this activity, practicing and learning watercolor technique is more important than the final result or product.

Materials Needed:

Watercolor paper
Surface to draw on, drawing board (for outside)
Watercolors
Watercolor brushes
Palettes for mixing paint
Water containers
Sponge, paper towel
Spray bottle
Tape to hold paper on drawing board

Process:

1) Experiment with some basic watercolor techniques before starting a landscape or still life. Put down a transparent color wash. Paint over the wash with another color, working “wet on wet,” this allows the colors to “bleed” together. Let this dry, now add another transparent wash layer to this dry area, (“wet on dry”). On another piece of paper lay a wash down leaving some areas white. Create areas of texture by using the sponge or paper towel. Lastly practice working on details with a small “dry brush.”

2) Using the images in the exhibit for ideas (or directly from nature outside, or set up your own still life inside) plan a simple composition. Tape the paper to a drawing board or desk, so it does not wrinkle. Lightly sketch the major shapes. Start by painting lightly, washing in major shapes of color (the sky, the ground, trees). Let dry, blot dry with the sponge or paper towel if you want texture, (leaves or clouds). Do not paint areas that will be white.

Do not worry about “accidents” (color settling at the bottom of a wash, two colors running together, color running into the wrong place) they add interest and surprise to your painting and can be incorporated.

3) Lastly wash the middle ground areas if any, or the areas you want to emphasize, by using slightly stronger colors, (mix enough color to cover the entire area you want to cover). Paint more detail in the foreground areas, or the areas of interest. Use just the tip of the brush for the smallest details.

Watercolor Painting

Note: MELRs are listed for Group Discussion and Activities 1-3.

Maine Learning Results: English Language Arts Standards

B. Writing: Students write to express their ideas and emotions, to describe their experiences, to communicate information, and to present or analyze an argument.

B1 Interconnected Elements (*Activity 1*)

Pre-K-2

Students use a writing process to communicate their ideas.

- a. Select a focus for writing and develop an idea, including a beginning, middle, and end.
- b. Respond to clarifying questions and suggested revisions.
- c. Edit, with assistance, for correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- d. Create legible final drafts.

3-5

Students use a writing process with an emphasis on the development of a central idea, for a variety of audiences and purposes.

- a. Select a purpose for writing.
- b. Pre-write using graphic organizers or other structures to organize their ideas.
- c. Establish an organizing structure and maintain a consistent focus.
- d. Include an introduction and conclusion.
- e. Write coherent paragraphs that have supporting sentences and a concluding sentence.
- f. Revise original drafts to improve coherence, provide better descriptive details, and to convey voice.
- g. Edit for correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- h. Create legible final drafts.

6-8

Students use a writing process to communicate for a variety of audiences and purposes.

- a. Determine a purpose for writing.
- b. Decide which information is included to achieve the desired purpose.
- c. Revise drafts to improve focus, effect, and voice incorporating peer response when appropriate.
- d. Edit for correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- e. Write to achieve a specific purpose.
- f. Create legible final drafts.

9-Diploma

Students use a writing process to develop an appropriate genre, exhibiting an explicit organizational structure, perspective, and style to communicate with target audiences for specific purposes.

- a. Locate, summarize, and synthesize information from primary and secondary sources, as necessary.
- b. Apply aspects of various genres for rhetorical effect, strong diction, and distinctive voice.
- c. Revise drafts to improve synthesis of information from sources, ensuring that the organizational structure, perspective, and style are effective for the targeted audience and purpose.
- d. Edit for correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- e. Create legible final drafts.

B2 Narrative (Activity 1)

Pre-K-2

Students write stories that describe an experience.

- a. Include descriptive details that enable the reader to create mental images.

3-5

Students write narratives that relate events, ideas, observations, or recollections.

- a. Provide enough details and description in an organized manner so the reader can imagine the event or experience.
- b. Develop major events, settings, and characters and deal with problems and solutions in a story.
- c. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.
- d. Include sensory details.

6-8

Students write narratives that convey complex ideas, observations, events, or reflections.

- a. Establish a plot or other narrative structure, point of view, setting, and conflict.
- b. Develop characters.
- c. Use a range of narrative strategies for effect including dialogue and suspense.
- d. Use stylistic devices including figurative language and point of view to clarify, enhance, and develop ideas.

9-Diploma

Students embed narrative writing in a written text when appropriate to the audience and purpose.

- a. Use diction, syntax, imagery, and tone to create a distinctive voice.
- b. Organize ideas in a logical sequence with effective transitions.

B3 Argument/Analysis (Activity 1)

Pre-K-2

Students write to inform an audience on a specific topic.

- a. Write brief descriptions of objects, people, places, or events.
- b. Record and share, in writing, information that has been gathered.

3-5

Students write to identify and explain a position to an identified audience.

- a. Summarize information from reading, listening, or viewing.
- b. Write about a central question or idea by using relevant supporting facts and details.

6-8

Students write academic essays that state a clear position, supporting the position with relevant evidence.

- a. Summarize and paraphrase and/or explain information from reading, listening, or viewing.
- b. Write essays that support an idea and build a logical argument excluding extraneous information and differentiating between facts and opinions.

9-Diploma

Students write academic essays that structure ideas and arguments in a sustained and logical fashion.

- a. Explain and evaluate information from reading, listening, or viewing.
- b. Write thesis-driven essays that build a logical argument and support assertions with examples and evidence that are accurate, credible, and relevant.

B4 Persuasive (Activity 1)

Pre-K-2

Students write to explain likes and dislikes.

- a. Support opinions with examples.

3-5

Students write to persuade a targeted audience.

- a. Establish a clear position on a topic and support the position with relevant evidence.

6-8

Students write persuasive essays addressed to a specific audience for a particular purpose.

- a. Employ a variety of persuasive techniques, including presenting alternate views objectively or addressing potential counterclaims, in an essay that supports an idea using facts, supported inferences, and/or opinions appropriate to the audience and purpose and is intended to influence the opinions, beliefs, or positions of others.

9-Diploma

Students write persuasive essays exhibiting logical reasoning and rhetorical techniques.

- a. Employ a variety of persuasive techniques including anticipating, addressing, and refuting potential counterclaims in a thesis-driven logical argument to influence the opinions, beliefs, or positions of others.

D. Language: Students write and speak using the conventions of Standard American English. They apply knowledge of grammar and usage when reading to aid comprehension. They know and apply rules of mechanics and spelling to enhance the effectiveness and clarity of communication.

D1 Grammar and Usage (Activity 1)

Pre-K-2

Students demonstrate an understanding of the parts of speech and simple sentence structures to communicate.

- a. Identify and use nouns and verbs correctly.
- b. Use simple sentences.

3-5

Students use parts of speech and vary sentence structure to communicate.

- a. Use forms of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and interjections correctly.
- b. Use simple, compound, and complex sentences.

6-8

Students manipulate the parts of speech effectively and employ a variety of sentence structures to communicate.

- a. Use forms of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and their modifiers, adverbs, prepositions, transitions, conjunctions, and interjections correctly.
- b. Use compound complex sentences.
- c. Use active and passive voices effectively.

9-Diploma

Students apply rhetorical skills when reading, writing, and speaking through their understanding of Standard American English.

- a. Use appropriate diction, syntax, and figurative language to suit purpose, context, and audience.
- b. Use handbooks, style guides or other writing sources to confirm accuracy of Standard American English.

D2 Mechanics (Activity 1)

Pre-K-2

Students apply the rules of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to communicate.

- a. Use commas in the greeting and closure of a letter and in dates.
- b. Capitalize proper nouns and words at the beginning of sentences.
- c. Use periods, question marks, and exclamation points.
- d. Spell high frequency grade-level words.
- e. Use phonics patterns to aid in spelling.

3-5

Students apply the rules of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to communicate.

- a. Use end marks correctly.
- b. Capitalize correctly.
- c. Spell high-frequency grade-level words.

6-8

Students apply the rules of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to communicate effectively.

- a. Use correct capitalization and punctuation including commas and semi-colons.
- b. Correctly spell frequently misspelled words and common homophones.

9-Diploma

Students demonstrate the use of the structures and conventions of Standard American English in their communication.

- a. Use appropriate punctuation, spelling, and sentence and paragraph structure to suit purpose, situation, and audience.

E. Listening and Speaking: Students listen to comprehend and speak to communicate effectively.

E1 Listening (Group Discussion, Activity 1)

Pre-K-2

Students use early active listening skills.

- a. Ask relevant questions at appropriate times.
- b. Converse without interrupting.
- c. Follow one-step and two-step oral instructions.

3-5

Students apply active listening skills.

- a. Ask clarifying questions.
- b. Attend and respond appropriately to classmates and adults.
- c. Follow multi-step oral instructions.

6-8

Students adjust listening strategies to understand formal and informal discussion, debates or presentations and then apply the information.

- a. Ask appropriate clarifying questions.
- b. Summarize and apply information presented.
- c. Acknowledge and build upon the ideas of others.

9-Diploma

Students adjust listening strategies for formal and informal discussion, debates or presentations, and then evaluate the information.

- a. Formulate clarifying questions.
- b. Examine and critique information presented.
- c. Expand on ideas presented by others.

E2 Speaking (*Group Discussion, Activity 1*)

Pre-K-2

Students use speaking skills to communicate.

- a. Make clear requests at appropriate times.
- b. Make simple presentations using eye contact.
- c. Use voice level appropriate to the situation.
- d. Share stories and information and support opinions using oral and visual examples.

3-5

Students use active speaking skills to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.

- a. Explain ideas clearly and respond to questions with appropriate information.
- b. Speak using eye contact, clear enunciation, clear gestures for emphasis, and appropriate volume and rate.
- c. Share information summarized from reading, listening, or viewing and form a position on a topic, supporting the position with a variety of print and non-print sources.

6-8

Students adjust speaking strategies for formal and informal discussions, debates, or presentations appropriate to the audience and purpose.

- a. Organize and present information logically.
- b. Adjust volume, tone, eye contact, and gestures to suit the audience.
- c. Use conventions of Standard American English.
- d. Seek feedback and revise to improve effectiveness of communication.
- e. Select appropriate media, relevant to audience and purpose that support oral, written, and visual communication.

9-Diploma

Students determine speaking strategies for formal and informal discussions, debates, or presentations appropriate to the audience and purpose.

- a. Choose and present appropriate information logically and ethically.
- b. Apply conventions of Standard American English to suit audience and purpose.
- c. Analyze feedback and revise delivery to improve effectiveness of communication.
- d. Select appropriate media, relevant to audience and purpose, to extend and support oral, written, and visual communication.

Maine Learning Results: Visual Arts Standards

A. Disciplinary Literacy: Students show literacy in the art discipline by understanding and demonstrating concepts, skills, terminology, and processes.

A1 Artist's Purpose (*Group Discussion, Activity 2 & 3*)

Pre-K-2

Students recognize a variety of purposes for making art, including telling a story, communicating emotion, or beautifying functional objects.

3-5

Students explain purposes for making art in different times and places, and the relationship to cultural traditions, personal expression, and communication of beliefs.

6-8

Students explain and compare different purposes of artists and their artwork, in the context of time and place.

9-Diploma

Students research and explain how art and artists reflect and influence culture and periods of time.

A2 Elements of Art and Principles of Design (*Group Discussion, Activity 2 & 3*)

Pre-K-2

Students identify features of composition.

- a. Identify Elements of Art: color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value.
- b. Identify Principles of Design including pattern and balance.

3-5

Students describe features of composition.

- a. Describe Elements of Art: color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value.
- b. Describe Principles of Design including balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, and pattern.

6-8

Students compare features of composition both within an art work and among art works.

- a. Compare Elements of Art: color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value.
- b. Compare Principles of Design including balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, rhythm, and unity.

9-Diploma

Students evaluate all the features of composition.

- a. Evaluate Elements of Art: color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value.
- b. Evaluate Principles of Design including balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, rhythm, and unity.

A3 Media, Tools, Techniques, and Processes (*Group Discussion, Activity 1, 2 & 3*)

Pre-K-2

Students name art media and associated tools, for multiple art forms and genres.

3-5

Students describe a variety of media and associated tools, techniques, and processes, for multiple art forms and genres.

6-8

Students explain the effects of media and their associated tools, techniques, and processes, using elements, principles, and expressive qualities in art forms and genres.

9-Diploma

Students compare the effects of media and their associated tools, techniques, and processes, using elements, principles, and expressive qualities in art forms and genres.

B. Creation, Performance, and Expression: Students create, express, and communicate through the art discipline.

B1 Media Skills (Activity 1 & 3)

Pre-K-2

Students use basic media, tools and techniques to create original art works.

3-5

Students use a variety of media, tools, techniques, and processes to create original art works.

6-8

Students choose suitable media, tools, techniques, and processes to create original art works.

9-Diploma

Students choose multiple suitable media, tools, techniques, and processes to create a variety of original art works.

B2 Composition Skills (Activity 3)

Pre-K-2

Students use Elements Of Art and Principles Of Design to create original art works.

3-5

Students use Elements of Art and Principles of Design to create original art works including paintings, three-dimensional objects, drawings from imagination and real life, and a variety of other media and visual art forms.

6-8

Students use Elements of Art and Principles of Design to create original art works that demonstrate different styles in paintings, three-dimensional objects, drawings from imagination and real life, and a variety of other media and visual art forms.

9-Diploma

Students use Elements of Art and Principles of Design to create original art works that demonstrate development of personal style in a variety of media and visual art forms.

B3 Making Meaning (Activity 1 & 3)

Pre-K-2

Students create art works that communicate ideas and feelings and demonstrate skill in the use of media, tools, and techniques.

3-5

Students create art works that communicate ideas, feelings, and meanings and demonstrate skill in the use of media, tools, techniques, and processes.

6-8

Students create art works that communicate an individual point of view.

- a. Demonstrate skills in the use of media, tools, techniques, and processes.
- b. Demonstrate knowledge of visual art concepts.
- c. Communicate a variety of ideas, feelings, and meanings.

9-Diploma

Students create a body of original art work.

- a. Demonstrate sophisticated use of media, tools, techniques, and processes.
- b. Demonstrate knowledge of visual art concepts.
- c. Communicate a variety of ideas, feelings, and meanings.

C. Creative Problem Solving: Students approach artistic problem-solving using multiple solutions and the creative process.

C1 Application of Creative Process (*Activity 1 & 3*)

Pre-K-2

Students identify and demonstrate creative problem-solving skills.

- a. Improvise to solve problems in the performing arts.
- b. Imagine and share possible solutions to apply to challenges in creating art.

3-5

Students describe and apply steps of creative problem-solving.

- a. Identify problem.
- b. Define problem.
- c. Generate a variety of solutions.
- d. Implement solution(s).
- e. Evaluate solution(s).

6-8

Students describe and apply creative-thinking skills that are part of the creative problem-solving process.

- a. Fluency.
- b. Flexibility.
- c. Elaboration.
- d. Originality.
- e. Analysis.

9-Diploma

Students apply and analyze creative problem-solving and creative-thinking skills to improve or vary their own work and/or the work of others.

D. Aesthetics and Criticism: Students describe analyze, interpret, and evaluate art (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts).

D1 Aesthetics and Criticism (*Group Discussion, Activity 1 & 2*)

Pre-K-2

Students observe, listen to, describe and ask questions about art forms.

- a. Describe the art form by applying grade span appropriate arts concepts, terminology, skills, and processes as referenced in Standard A: Disciplinary Literacy.
- b. Ask questions about the art form to further understand how the artist created/performed the work of art.
- c. Recognize a variety of purposes for making/performing art works, including telling a story and communicating emotions and ideas.

3-5

Students describe and compare art forms.

- a. Describe and compare art forms by applying grade span appropriate arts concepts, terminology, skills, and processes as referenced in Standard A: Disciplinary Literacy.
- b. Ask questions about an art form to further understand the concepts, skills, and processes used to create/perform the work of art.
- c. Explain purposes for making art in different times and places, including cultural traditions, personal expression, and communication of beliefs.

6-8

Students compare and analyze art forms.

- a. Compare and analyze art forms by applying grade span appropriate concepts, vocabulary, skills, and processes as referenced in Standard A: Disciplinary Literacy.
- b. Compare the quality and effectiveness of art works using multiple criteria from observations, print and/or non-print resources.
- c. Compare the effectiveness of selected media, techniques, and processes in communicating ideas.
- d. Explain and compare different purposes of artists and art work in the context of time and place.

9-Diploma

Students analyze and evaluate art forms.

- a. Describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate art forms by applying grade span appropriate arts concepts, vocabulary, skills, and processes as referenced in Standard A: Disciplinary Literacy.
- b. Analyze and evaluate varied interpretations of works of art using evidence from observations and a variety of print and/or non-print sources.
- c. Demonstrate an understanding of the difference between a personal opinion and an informed judgment.
- d. Research and explain how art and artists reflect and shape their time and culture.

E. Visual and Performing Arts Connections: Students understand the relationship among the arts, history and world culture; and they make connections among the arts and to other disciplines, to goal-setting, and to interpersonal interaction.

E1 The Arts and History and World Cultures (Activity 2)

Pre-K-2

Students identify family or community symbols and celebrations in the visual/performing arts from different world cultures.

3-5

Students explain that the visual/performing arts help people understand history and/or world cultures.

6-8

Students compare products of the visual/performing arts to understand history and/or world cultures.

9-Diploma

Students analyze the characteristics and purposes of products of the visual/performing arts to understand history and/or world cultures.

E2 The Arts and Other Disciplines (Activity 2)

Pre-K-2

Students identify connections between and among the arts and other disciplines.

3-5

Students describe characteristics shared between and among the arts and other disciplines.

6-8

Students explain skills and concepts that are similar across disciplines.

9-Diploma

Students analyze skills and concepts that are similar across disciplines.

E3 Goal-Setting (*Activity 2*)

Pre-K-2

Students identify choices that lead to success in the arts.

3-5

Students identify and demonstrate choices that will lead to success in the arts including time management, interpersonal interactions, skill development, and goal-setting.

6-8

Students set goals related to time management, interpersonal interactions, or skill development that will lead to success in the arts.

9-Diploma

Students make short-term and long-term goals based on rigorous criteria and related to time management, interpersonal interactions, or skill development that will lead to success in the arts.

E5 Interpersonal Skills (*Group Discussion, Activity 1, 2, & 3*)

Pre-K-2

Students identify positive interpersonal skills that impact the quality of their art and participation in the arts.

- a. Getting along with others.
- b. Respecting differences.
- c. Working as a team/ensemble.
- d. Managing conflict.
- e. Accepting/giving/using constructive feedback.
- f. Accepting responsibility for personal behavior.
- g. Demonstrating ethical behavior.
- h. Following established rules/etiquette for observing/listening to art.
- i. Demonstrating safe behavior.

3-5

Students identify and demonstrate the positive interpersonal skills necessary to get along with others and participate in the arts.

- a. Getting along with others.
- b. Respecting differences.
- c. Working as a team/ensemble.
- d. Managing conflict.
- e. Accepting/giving/using constructive feedback.
- f. Accepting responsibility for personal behavior.
- g. Demonstrating ethical behavior.
- h. Following established rules/etiquette for observing/listening to art.
- i. Demonstrating safe behavior.

6-8

Students demonstrate positive interpersonal skills and analyze how interpersonal skills affect participation in the arts.

- a. Getting along with others.
- b. Respecting differences.
- c. Working as a team/ensemble.
- d. Managing conflict.
- e. Accepting/giving/using constructive feedback.
- f. Accepting responsibility for personal behavior.
- g. Demonstrating ethical behavior.
- h. Following established rules/etiquette for observing/listening to art.
- i. Demonstrating safe behavior.

9-Diploma

Students demonstrate positive interpersonal skills and reflect on the impact of interpersonal skills on personal success in the arts.

- a. Getting along with others.
- b. Respecting differences.
- c. Working as a team/ensemble.
- d. Managing conflict.
- e. Accepting/giving/using constructive feedback.
- f. Accepting responsibility for personal behavior.
- g. Demonstrating ethical behavior.
- h. Following established rules/etiquette for observing/listening to art.
- i. Demonstrating safe behavior.