

Theme Unit

TRUTH: MYTH, FACT, and FICTION

CONTENTS

Introduction

- ❖ A Unit Overview
- ❖ An outline of the Curricular Connections, Frameworks Connections, and Learning Standards
- ❖ Essential Skills practiced through this theme
- ❖ Key Questions addressed by this theme
- ❖ Related Vocabulary
- ❖ The Role of Intention
- ❖ Works of art in the Museum’s collection that relate to this theme

Lesson Plans Included In This Theme

1. Introductory Lesson: The Meaning of “Truth”

ELA Lesson

2. What is True? The Meaning of Myth

History Lessons

3. How Myth Functions in Indigenous Cultures: The Bamana *Ci Wara* Headdresses

4. Point of View II: The Complex Truth of the Peloponnesian Wars

Art Lesson

5. Abstraction, Distortion, and Exaggeration: Another Kind of Truth

Science Lesson

6. Fact Checking – Two Truths and a Lie

Math Problem and Game

Introduction

Unit Overview

What do we mean when we say something is TRUE? Are there different ways of revealing truth? Do some truths change over time? Are there different kinds of truth? Are facts true? Are historical accounts true? How do we tell what is true and what is not? Can something be true for one person or at one time, and not true for another person, or at another time?

Issues related to “Truth” can be found in every area of the curriculum, as well as in students’ lives. An investigation of the many aspects of the theme of “Truth” can help introduce or deepen many different kinds of investigation. Below are some of the topics and curricular connections that can be connected to a theme of “Truth.”

Curricular Connections / Frameworks and Learning Standards

English Language Arts

- Literature – in what ways is each form true? (fiction, non-fiction, biography, fictional biography, drama, fantasy, poetry, historical fiction, Latin American magical realism);
- Mythology – two meanings of the word ‘myth;’ as something that is untrue but is believed, or as something that is believed and guides people’s lives. In what ways are myths pointing to deeper truths?
- Media Literacy – what is true, and how do we know? ADVERTISING, media & politics, persuasive speech, television, (sitcoms, reporting, commercials), newspapers, magazines (articles linked to advertising, norms that are being promoted, manufactured news); movies.
- Metaphoric truth, symbolism
- Poems, and poetic truth

History & Social Sciences:

- Stereotypes, Statistics, and Social Myths. How do we know whether to believe them?
- Truth in historical accounts; different people’s perspectives on an event; myths that have changed over time, and truths that have changed history (Ex., the earth is /is not flat);
- The role of deception and denial in history (Ex. World War II German and European ignorance about what was happening to the Jews; contemporary Holocaust deniers)
- The Judicial system - truth in the courts (testimony, “the whole truth,” burden of proof), witness vs. hearsay

Art:

- *Tromp l’oeil* painting, photo realism
- Realism, impressionism, expressionism, surrealism
- Metaphoric truth in art, use of metaphors and symbolism
- What kind of truth does a particular representation tell?
- Photographs vs. other kinds of art, the effect the invention of photography had on painting
- Digital manipulation of photographs and movies
- Exaggeration and abstraction to tell a different kind of truth
- Theater - theatrical illusions, (set, sound, mime, magicians)

Science and Technology:

- The scientific method, hypothesis and evidence, proof; ways of finding out the truth
- History of science and evolution of theories (Ex., historical progression of ideas about the nature of electricity); theories proved to be ‘true’ later disproved
- Camouflage and protective coloring (animals, insects, fish, plants)
- Optical illusions; psychology of vision; hallucinations, mirages; light, reflections, refraction, mirrors, telescopes, distortion, how the eye functions
- Psychology - states of mind, drugs (medical, recreational, ritual), trance, hypnosis

- Psychology – childhood development, play (fantasy play, make believe, pretending, imaginary friends)
- Psychology – imagination, creativity

Mathematics:

- Proofs, different methods of proving whether something is true
- Geometry, equations
- Estimation and prediction

Social / Emotional issues

- Deception
- Truth among friends and family (When is it difficult to tell the truth?), bragging, gossip, tricks, fooling you on purpose
- Ethics, ethical behavior

Essential Skills Practiced Through This Theme

Source checking	Looking for evidence	Making inferences
Proofing	Interpreting	Testing a hypothesis
Seeking alternative points of view	Forming an opinion	
Questioning	Analyzing	

Related Vocabulary

Accuracy	Imaginary	Perspective
Deception	Imagination	Persuasion
Certainty	Illusion	Point of view
Fact	Knowledge	Possible/impossible,
Fantasy	Lies, lying	Pretend, pretending
Fiction	Magic	Pretense
Guessing,	Make believe	Proof
Estimating	Mirage	Reality
Hallucination	Misinformation	“Tried and true”
Honesty	Myth	Truth
Hyperbole	Norms, normal,	
Ignorance	Perception	

Key Questions

- What is truth?
- What do we mean when we say something is TRUE?
- How do we know whether something is true or false?
- How can you test if something is true or not?
- Are there different kinds of truth?
- Are some truths objective and others subjective?
- Are there different ways of revealing truth?
- Are facts always true?
- Do some truths change over time?

Can something be true for one person or at one time, and not true for another person, or at another time?

In what kinds of situations do people intentionally or unintentionally hide the truth?

What is the difference between having a different perspective, and lying?

Why are imagination, fantasy, and fiction important, even if they are not literally true?

The Role Of Intention

Why do you think someone would not tell the truth? Why would they make something up? What situations might lead someone to lie or not tell the truth? What is the effect on you when a person's intended to lie, or if they don't tell the truth by mistake? How does each make you feel?

(They think they are telling the truth but really they don't have enough information. Or they are lying to you on purpose. Or they are too scared to tell you the whole truth. Or they are adding things or leaving things out to alter the truth.)

What situations can you think of where someone means to deceive you or persuade you of their version?

How does it feel when you thought something was true and then you find out it wasn't?

Works of Art Related To This Theme

Bamana headdresses

Other African objects

Aetna Waking by Carol Summers

The Hayward Children by Chandler

Cactus by Webster

Pre-Columbian Portrait with scar

Other Pre-Columbian objects

Roman Portrait Head

Buddha Heads

Greek Fragment - *Herakles slaying the Hydra*

Egyptian objects and paintings of Egyptian wall reliefs

Lesson Plans

(including an initial lesson to introduce the theme)

The Thematic Connections lessons presented here relate to objects in the Museum, but there are many lessons that would connect to the theme that do not relate directly to the Museum objects. You will likely be able to find many other ways to connect this theme to frameworks topics in Science, Mathematics, History and Social Sciences, English Language Arts, as well as topics in Social / Emotional skills. Every additional thematic lesson the students experience deepens their understanding of the core ideas of the theme.

1. Introductory Lesson - The Meaning of “Truth”

You can use this lesson to introduce the theme. Ask students to discuss and answer these questions:

1. “What is the difference between **Myth**, **History**, and **Fiction**?”
2. “In what sense is each TRUE? FALSE?”
3. “What kinds of information can you get from each?”
4. “In what ways can each be a guide for living?”

Write on a large paper a summary of the students’ ideas of how the three forms are different.

Have the students work in three small groups, one myth, one history, and one fiction. Ask students to discuss their form, and the ways in which it can reflect the truth, what kinds of truths it can tell. Ask them to keep notes so they can share with the rest of the class. (You may think of other questions to give the groups.)

MYTH: “What kind of truth does myth tell? Why do we say ‘That’s a myth,’ when we mean something is not true? Think of myths you are familiar with. Describe the kind of truth it is telling.”

HISTORY: “In what circumstances can history be true or false? Can you think of an example of people disagreeing about what was true historically?”

FICTION: What fiction have you read that you think is true in some way, and why do you think that? What fiction have you read that you feel is false? When does truth masquerade as fiction? What is an example of something false masquerading as the truth?”

Reflection: In what ways is each form true? In what ways can each be false? Discuss and debate. Add to the comparison list.

Follow up: Read examples of myth, history and fiction that might help focus or clarify this discussion. Add to the list of how these forms are similar or different.

2. What is True? The Meaning of Myth

Overview: Students will understand the meaning and power of myth by examining some examples of myth and the works of art connected with them.

Goals: This lesson will

Support concepts & skills: understanding different points of view, beliefs, and values.

Fulfill Learning Standards: ELA 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and especially 16.4, 16.6, 16.7, 16.9, 16.11; History and Social Sciences (gr. 7) Greece and Rome.

Practice: analyzing stories, identifying theme or message

Familiarize students with: the power of cultural myth



*Fragmentary jar,
Herakles slaying the Hydra of
Lerna
Greek*

Objectives for Students: Students will

Be able to: analyze works of fiction to identify the main idea and the theme.

Understand: that myths from many cultures over time have messages that are relevant to us today.

Key Questions (to be answered by students):

1. In what ways are myths true?
2. What message or meaning do myths from other cultures or times have for us today?
3. What are some current myths from our own culture?

Museum Object: *Fragmentary jar, Herakles slaying the Hydra*, Greek, ceramic, 350-325 B. C. (2001.3)

Pre-Museum Visit -- Discussion: “What is the meaning of myth? The words “myth” or “mythological” are often used to mean something that is not true, or not real. But are myths real and true in another sense? What are some examples of myth that you know?”

Form small groups. Either let them choose an example of a myth, or assign one that is relevant to the curriculum you are covering.

At the Museum -- To connect with works of art in the Museum, choose the story of Herakles (Hercules), and first view the Greek fragment showing Herakles slaying the Hydra. Ask students to describe what they see happening, and what they think the story is. Read the myth with them afterwards to confirm or alter their version of the story, and to attempt to identify the other characters shown on the fragment.

Information about the Greek *Fragmentary jar, Herakles slaying the Hydra*: The fragment shows Herakles (Hercules) trying to cut off the head of the mythical beast called a Hydra. Every time Herakles cuts off one head two new heads spring up in its place, so it seems

an impossible task. This task was one of Herakles' twelve labors, which he had to succeed at in order to become a god. The figure at the lower right is probably his nephew Iolaus, who was also his charioteer. Iolaus had the idea of cauterizing the Hydra's neck after a head was cut off, in order to stop new heads from appearing. At the right is a female figure, Nike Victory, who may be coming to help Herakles by binding up the Hydra with a ribbon (or the ribbon may be a victory ribbon for the hero).

Post-Museum Visit -- Working in small groups, the students will read and analyze their myth. "Read your myth carefully. Discuss together what you think it means. Is there a deeper truth you think the myth is presenting? Is there a message, or a lesson to be learned from this story? What might it be? What is your evidence in the text for your explanation? If this is a myth from another time or another culture, discuss how you think this myth might have functioned in that culture at that time. What was it communicating to the people? Is the lesson or message of the myth still relevant today? How? Take notes and be prepared to present to the class your ideas about the meaning of your example."

As a follow-up, ask students about contemporary myths. "Can you think of a modern myth? Discuss what a modern myth might be, and what lesson or message it is communicating. How might this myth communicate its message through a narrative story? What might the story be about?"

Supportive Material: Vocabulary list with definitions, Definition of Myth.

Documentation and Assessment Options: Pre- and Post-test: What is a myth?
T-Chart compare and contrast Classical myths with contemporary myths.

Other Works of Art in the Museum that can connect to this lesson:
Egyptian paintings and objects, *Buddha Heads*, Pre-Columbian objects, African objects, objects in the Greek and Roman gallery that show mythological figures, including the small bronzes. The black Etruscan vase, called a "*bucchero*" shows a Gorgon head, another mythological figure.

Links to Other Curriculum:

See also the lesson, "Myth in Art" on this CD-ROM.

History and Social Sciences: gr. 6 world cultures, gr. 7 Greece and Rome.

Author of the lesson: Anne Rhodes

VOCABULARY and DEFINITIONS

ICONOGRAPHIC - symbolic representation, using pictures and images.

HIERATIC - pertaining to the sacred; sacerdotal; a style of art fixed by religious or spiritual tradition.

METAPHORIC - utilizing a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something which is not literally applicable, in order to show a resemblance.

EMBLEMATIC - representing an object to symbolize something; as a symbol, sign, design, or figure used symbolically as the distinctive badge of something; an allegorical drawing or picture with explanatory writing; a fable or allegory capable of being expressed pictorially.

SYMBOLIC - pertaining to a symbol or symbols; standing for or calling up something else; representative; esp. a concrete object which stands for an intangible object or idea; an image which embodies a web of interrelated meanings or which evokes a complex of emotions.

STYLIZED - conforming to a particular style; in a particular or conventional representation or treatment .

SCHEMATIC - a diagram, plan or scheme; an abstract or conceptual outline or plan; reduced to or arranged according to a scheme.

ICONIC - an image, representation or picture; a religious image; an image considered sacred.

ALLEGORICAL - speaking figuratively; a figurative discourse, in which the principle subject is depicted by another subject resembling it in its properties and circumstances; a symbolic representation; a narrative in which abstract ideas are personified; a sustained metaphor.

MYTHOLOGICAL - How is a mythological story different from any of the above?

A MYTH

is a story or a vision based on the visionary experience of an individual, represented in metaphysically charged symbols, and presented to the community, in order to re-create and renew our ancient relationship to the universe.

MYTH speaks of the everyday reality in its deepest and most truthful essence, reminding us of the transcendent nature of our everyday existence.

MYTH plays an integral part in the ongoing psychic life of a people; it is a vehicle of transmission, of sharing, and of renewal.

MYTH speaks in a symbolic, poetic language that directly reveals to us the reality beyond simple linear or logical perception. It reminds us of our relation to the eternal, our place in our world and the universe.

3. How Myth Functions in Indigenous Cultures: The Bamana *Ci Wara* Headdresses

Overview: Students will understand the meaning and power of myth by examining an African myth and the works of art connected with it.

Goals: This lesson will

Support Concepts & Skills: understanding different points of view, beliefs, and values

Fulfill Learning Standards: ELA 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and especially 16.4, 16.6, 16.7, 16.9, 16.11; History and Social Sciences (gr.6) World Cultures.

Practice: analyzing and interpreting myths

Familiarize students with: the power of cultural myth



Ci Wara Antelope Headdress
Bamana

Objectives for Students: Students will

Be able to: examine and compare beliefs in two different cultures.

Understand: similarities and differences in human relationships to natural processes.

Key Questions (to be answered by students):

1. What do myths express about the lives of a people?
2. How are our beliefs and the ways we express them different from those of peoples of other cultures?
3. How does location and geography affect a people's beliefs and rituals?

Materials Needed: Map of Africa, annual rainfall information for Mali and for Massachusetts.

Museum Objects: Object shown is *ci wara* Antelope Headdress, Bamana, wood and fiber, 20th century (TVD1); or others that may be on view in the galleries.

Pre-Museum Visit – Ask students “How do you feel about rain? How do you feel about rainy days?” “What happens when there is too much rain? Too little rain? Does either of these situations affect you personally? How?” Then discuss with the students the following statement: “The rain is crucial to my existence.” Ask them to discuss why this is true, and write their thoughts on a large chart paper.

Look at a map of Africa. “What can you tell about rain on the continent of Africa?” Find the country of Mali. “What can we say about rain in Mali? How might the people in Mali have a different feeling about rain than we do?” Ask someone to look up the average annual rainfall in that part of the world, and another student to look up the average annual rainfall where they live. Compare the two. “Does this give us any more information about

their relationship to rain? Think again about the statement “The rain is crucial to my existence.” This is certainly true even in Massachusetts, but is probably felt more directly in places where rain is more scarce.

At the Museum – Look at the *ci wara* [pronounced chi wahr’-ra] headdress. “What do you see?” (Use the “Looking Closely Process.”) After the students have noticed everything they can about the headdresses, remind them that the class has been thinking about rain, and our connection to it, and that these headdresses are connected to that investigation. They may want to speculate about what that connection might be. Give them the information about the Bamana Antelope headdresses (“*Ci Wara* Headdresses and Their Role in Bamana Culture”). Discuss this information, and if you wish, ask a Museum staff person to answer any questions.

Post-Museum Visit – Go back to the original statement, “The rain is crucial to my existence.” And ask students to reflect on this again. “How do the Bamana express this dependence? How do we express it? Where does rain “really” come from? Does it come as a gift of the *Ci Wara* antelope god?” The myth that the antelope deity brings the rain to the people expresses a metaphor for a deep truth about humanity’s dependence upon the natural processes. “What kind of truth does the Bamana myth of the antelope express that our scientific explanation cannot express? What is the truth about the rain?”

Supportive Material: “Looking Closely Process,” “*Ci Wara* Headdresses and Their Role in Bamana Culture,” “Masks as Agents of Social Control,” “Possible Information Linkages for Bamana Masks.”

Author of the lesson: Anne Rhodes

Ci Wara Headdresses and Their Role in Bamana Culture

These headdresses are powerfully connected to RAIN in the Bamana culture. They figure prominently in an annual ritual that expresses gratitude for the life-giving rains that nurture the crops. This is an unfamiliar reality to most of us raised in Western cultures, but many indigenous cultures express their interdependence with animals and the natural processes, like rainfall, through ritual. The headdresses were worn in annual rituals performed during the time before the rains come to nurture the seeds planted in the fields.

The headdresses are in the form of Antelopes, male and female (*ci wara* means “antelope headdress”). The antelope is an animal that is very familiar to the Bamana people, as they share the same habitat. They know this animal well – what it looks like, the way it moves, all its habits, its likes and dislikes, and its intelligence. (Roan Antelope – *Hippotragus equines*.) The *Ci Wara* is a gift-bestowing spirit, credited with inventing agriculture. The *Ci Wara* antelope is a mythical antelope, and represents this deity who brings water to the fields. These ritual antelopes embody the Bamanas’ connection to the rain, the water that provides nourishment for the seeds to grow. In this way both the antelope and the rain are necessary for Bamana life. The antelope walks across the planting fields and the rain follows. When you think of it, it is pretty magical and mystical that we can put a tiny kernel into the ground where the natural forces of the soil, the sun and the rain produce food that will sustain us.

The young men of the Bamana wear the headdresses secured on the tops of their heads, with long strands of raffia attached covering their heads, faces, and bodies, and obscuring their identity as they dance. They wear many, many necklaces of cord strung with cowrie shells. The men prance and leap, mimicking the antelope. They dance from the center of the village, with musicians walking alongside playing drums and wind instruments, to the fields. When they reach the fields they dance and leap to symbolically recreate the miracle of the antelope god’s gift of bringing the rain.

Looking Closely Process

1. What do you notice first? What else do you see?
2. Look closer, what details do you notice?
3. What things in the work are related to each other? How?
4. What do you notice about the shapes? The colors? The lines?
5. Do you see any patterns or any repetition?
6. Can you find anything you didn't notice before?
7. How do you think it was made? What kinds of tools were used? What was it made out of?
8. Which part is most interesting to you? Why?

MASKS AS AGENTS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Traditional African art for the most part was more closely integrated with other aspects of life than arts which might be described as purely aesthetic. Art for art's sake - as a **governing** aesthetic concept - seems not to have existed in Africa. Indeed, the more closely an art form is related to a major non-aesthetic aspect of culture such as religion, the more distant it is from such separatist philosophical concepts.

In fact traditional African sculpture might best be described as based on a concept of art-for-life's-sake. It was, in most cases, closely allied to those cultural mechanisms dedicated to the maintenance of order and well being. In short, sculpture was oriented to those social values upon which depended the sense of individual and tribal security.

These values were often formalized in exceedingly practical and common sense terms, as is demonstrated in this Bamana prayer addressed to the ancestors:

“I sacrifice this to you in the name of my children and myself. Protect us from all evil. Give us rain at the time the rains begin; give us a good harvest, a happy old age, women, children, and the health to cultivate our fields. Do not be angry with us. We love you, we honor you. Be happy during your sojourn in Lehara, the realm of the invisible.”

In these circumstances it is necessary for the art historian to realize that his [sic] responsibility extends beyond stylistic, biographical, and iconographic studies into the realm of social values, if he is to lay claim to an understanding of these arts, or, for that matter, if his findings are to have interdisciplinary relevance.

Roy Sieber, “Masks as Agents of Social control,” African Studies Bulletin, V (May 1962), No. 11, 8-13.

POSSIBLE INFORMATION LINKAGES FOR BAMANA MASKS

- * **MASKS** - How they are made, how they are held on; what they are made of; how they are decorated; what masks mean; why and when masks are worn (Bamana and contemporary U.S.);
(the “da” plant fiber is originally white, but is dyed for the costumes; the dye is made from the leaves and branches of the “ngalaman” plant, Anogeissus leiocarpus, and the “ntjankara trees, Combretum glutinosum. The dye turns the fiber yellow. It is then soaked in a solution of mud for from 24 hrs to several months.)
- * **DANCE** - Meaning of dance; when do you dance? Why do you dance? When do you watch dance? What does it give you? Comparison with the U.S.;
(The ci wara dancers mimic the movement of the antelope – leaping and jumping forward. When they dance as the hyena they move in a characteristic zig-zag pattern mimicking the hyena.)
- * **GEOGRAPHY** - Where do the Bamana live - traditionally/now? What is the climate like - then/now? What are the indigenous plants (raw material to work with)?
(The raffia is made from the “da” plant, about 28” high, which is also used in making rope.)
- * **HISTORY** - History of Sudan; Migration in Africa; Colonization; History of the Bamana people, size of communities, relation to nearby peoples; Way of life - ancient and contemporary;
- * **ART** - Spectator (art for art’s sake) art vs. Participatory (culturally embedded) art; Traditional and contemporary forms of art and music, and their comparative social meaning; Comparison with the U.S.;
- * **TRIBAL LIFE** - Comparison between tribal life and students’ own neighborhoods; cultural differences being more than different dress, food, and holidays;
- * **“PRIMITIVE”** - prime, primary, first; dealing with primary forces; compared to modern; value judgments about cultural differences;
- * **POWER** - How it is conferred to people; Who has the power in a community? How do you know from looking at someone whether they are powerful? Many different ways of having power or being powerful;
- * **ECOLOGY** - Web of life, including human beings; deep understanding of the players and the forces and how they are interdependent.

4. Point of View II : The Complex Truth of the Peloponnesian Wars

Overview: Students will see an historical event from different points of view in order to think about the truth of that event.



Battle Helmet
Greek, Corinthian Period

Goals: This lesson will

Support concepts & skills: analysis, interpretation

Fulfill Learning Standards: ELA 8.3, 8.12, 8.23, 9.4, 12.3, 12.6, 17.5; History & Social Sciences: Guiding Principle #4

Practice: thinking from multiple perspectives

Familiarize students with: Greek history, the similarities and difference between current events and ancient history, multiple points of view.

Objectives for Students: Students will

Be able to: identify and articulate multiple points of view.

Understand: there are many perspectives on any event, and none is exclusively correct.

Key Questions (to be answered by students):

1. How do we know what is true in history or in the present?
2. What sources are reliable, and which are not?
3. What happens to our understanding of something when we hear or see multiple perspectives on it?

Museum Object: *Battle Helmet*, Greek, bronze, Corinthian Period, 690-680 B. C., Museum Purchase (1994.66)

At the Museum – Visit the Greek and Roman gallery. Ask the students to look at the objects for clues about what warfare was like in ancient Greece and Rome. “Look for objects that directly relate to war, as well as objects that may give you a clue about what warfare might have been like during Greek and Roman times.” Gather their ideas and discuss in what ways war in ancient Greece and Rome was different from and similar to war in contemporary times.

Post-Museum Visit – Students will work in small groups. Give them the textbook account of the Peloponnesian Wars and ask them to read it and talk about what happened. (A short version is included in this lesson, but you may want to use your own book.) Each small group will together write a brief summary of the events. Ask each group to read their versions of the summary to the whole group.

Reflection: “Do you think this account is the truth of what really happened? Why or why not?”

Read them the personal account of the citizen of Athens. Ask them to talk in their small groups again about this new information. “Do you need to rewrite your summary to reflect more of the truth? If you don't think your first summary represents this new perspective, make the needed changes.”

Reflection: “Did you make any changes to your summary? Why?” Ask each group to read the new version.

Read them the second personal account (Sparta). “Do you need to change your summary again?”

Reflection: “How can the full truth of these events be reflected? What really happened? What would be a truthful or balanced account of these events? Can you think of an event in your experience or in recent history where there was an unbalanced account, or where a more balanced account would have been helpful? Who gets to decide which account is balanced, what is true?”

Supportive Material: “Textbook Account of the Peloponnesian Wars,” “The Peloponnesian Wars through the Eyes of an Athenian Citizen,” “The Peloponnesian Wars from a Spartan Perspective”

Links to Other Curriculum:

See related lessons on this CD-ROM: “Point of View I” and “Hypothesis and Evidence”
ELA: different points of view of characters in a work of fiction or drama.

History and Social Sciences: You can repeat this activity focused on any historical event you are currently working on.

Author of the lesson: Anne Rhodes

Textbook Account
Peloponnesian Wars - Greece - 446 BC

In 446 BC the great City-State of Athens held influence over a wide region beyond their own territories. The Delian League had been formed by Athens to protect their allies and secure their influence throughout the region. First Euboea rebelled, then the Megarians, and eventually Sparta, Corinth, Sicyon and Epidaurus joined the rebellion against the Athenian empire. These Peloponnesian neighbors destroyed Athens' security almost overnight. The invading army was too strong for the Athenians. Many wished to destroy Athens entirely, but the Peloponnesians inexplicably withdrew, and Athens negotiated a peace agreement, letting go of its territory in Peloponnesus.



The Peloponnesian Wars through the Eyes of an Athenian Citizen

If a man has something wonderful it is his obligation to share it with his neighbors. Do you not think that is so? We Athenians have devised a wonderful citizen-led government, which we call democracy, and which naturally we want to share with our neighbors. We are trying to bring democracy to our sister city-states, but Sparta resists. Of course Sparta rules with an iron fist, and is nothing more than a military camp, so she cannot see the benefits that democracy brings. We have bestowed the blessings of democracy and our glorious culture on the islands of the Aegean and the cities of Asia, and now we want to give them to our sister city-states in Greece. Does that not make sense to you? How is it that our neighbors in Sparta and her allies do not want these blessings? Why do they battle us so? Golden Athenian culture! The safety of our Empire! How could they not want these?

Instead the Spartans and their allies try to check us at every turn. They have now encircled us and forced us to build our Long Walls. We are hemmed in! The gods know we will prevail, but the Spartans will forever be remembered as the people who forced us to live behind our walls where disease and shortages of food and water have cut the number of our people in half.

Luckily we have the sea. No matter how long they encircle us we will always be able to bring in supplies from the sea, and also to raid their cities on the Peloponnesus. We will prevail, as we did against the Persians, who have a mightier army, of a million men, who we finally sent scurrying back to Persia with their tails between their legs. We did not do that alone, no, we had Sparta at our side then, and all of Greece united. Why cannot we all unite now? That is all we are trying to do. Why can't the Spartans understand this?

The Peloponnesian Wars from a Spartan Perspective

What pure arrogance! The Athenians are always lecturing us – the other Greeks – about how superior they are. They have enslaved the people of the Aegean islands by giving them the protection of their great navy, and now they wish to enslave us. They say they only want to bring democracy to the islands, but they have forced them to pay dearly for their protection. And they require exorbitant tribute, which they hold in the Athenian treasuries on the island of Delos. We see what they are up to. What would happen, do you think, if one island refused to pay this tribute money? I can tell you. The Athenian fleet would sail in and collect their tribute or destroy the island. Do they think we cannot see what they are doing? Do they think we are blind?

And what do they do with all this money? They build their great temples and set up their monstrous statues on the Acropolis in Athens. And then they cry “Behold glorious Athens! Behold our Golden Age! Marvel at our new way of government called democracy!” But if we looked too closely we would see that their precious democracy is built on the backs of 75,000 slaves. Slaves who give their lives to support the decadent ways of the wealthy landholders. Of what use is their democracy? Even their greatest philosopher, Plato, has stated that rule by the rabble yields only chaos. The people are not competent to govern themselves. We Spartans, like all the other Greeks, believe that running our own city-state is enough for us. We do not need to conquer other peoples and tell them how to live. Down with the cursed Athenian Empire!

5. Abstraction, Distortion, and Exaggeration: A Different Kind of Truth

Overview: Students will analyze and interpret works of art that employ abstraction, distortion or exaggeration to see ways in which each reveals a truth. Representing the idea of the thing, rather than the thing itself; creating a representation which is stylized, schematic, hieratic, metaphoric, symbolic, iconic, emblematic, or metaphoric. This lesson includes activities in English Language Arts, the Arts, and in the Museum.

Goals: This lesson will

Support concepts & skills: analysis, interpretation,

Fulfill Learning Standards: Visual Art 1.11, 2.11, 2.16, 3.2, 3.9, 4.10, 5.4, 5.5, 5.10

Practice: experimentation in art, multiple drafts, making choices to create a specific effect.

Familiarize students with: non-realistic techniques in art, different ways to represent something.

Objectives for Students: Students will

Be able to: analyze and interpret works of art.

Understand: that there are many ways to represent a thing that are not “realistic.”

Key Questions (to be answered by students):

1. What are abstraction, distortion, and exaggeration, and how are they used in art?
2. Why would someone use these in visual art or in literature?
3. How do these tactics tell a different kind of truth?

Museum Objects: *Ci Wara* Antelope Headdress, Bamana, wood, fiber, metal (TVD2) and *Ci Wara* Antelope Headdress, Bamana, wood, fiber, (TVD1)

Pre-Museum Visit – In English class students will explore the FOX activity: Part One. In the days before they begin the activity ask them to use the resources of the school, community and home to gather as much information as they can about foxes. Define and discuss the terms: abstraction, distortion, and exaggeration, asking them for examples of the three from their experience (such as the distortion or exaggeration of advertising, abstraction or exaggeration in architecture, exaggeration in fiction, etc.). In Art class students will work on FOX activity: Part Two. You can work with tracing paper for the different versions of the FOX body, as they revise their drawings. Ask the students to work individually or in pairs. Give each pair a large piece of white paper and soft pencils. They will work two dimensionally, to reduce a complex form (animal form) to its essential lines and shapes, using only paper and soft pencil.



Ci Wara Antelope Headdress,
Bamana

FOX ACTIVITY

Materials Needed— a number of different resources about foxes: pictures, text information, stories, photographs, drawings, poems, information about fox biology, habitat, predator / prey information, whatever you can find. (You can pick another animal of you wish, but it should be one that most students are at least a little familiar with, and one that you can find a variety of resources about.)

PART ONE

1. Work in small groups. Before you look at the resources gathered, write everything that any one in your group knows about FOX.
2. Notice: What is the source of your information?
Do you know it from direct experience with foxes? From reading about foxes? From pictures? From what you've heard about foxes?
3. Share what you have written with the other groups.
4. Look at FOX. Go out and wait to see them in the woods, go to zoos, look at videos, look at pictures. What do you see? Take notes to bring back to your group.
5. Use any of the resources about FOX that you or your teacher have gathered. What have you learned? Take notes to bring back to your group.
6. Together as a group write a description of FOX that incorporates all the resourced information and the personal information that you have about FOX.

PART TWO

Materials Needed: Large photograph of FOX, or copies of smaller photograph for each group. Three pieces of 11 x 14" paper, tracing paper, soft pencils, erasers, for each student.

7. With your group, look at FOX's body – shapes, size, proportions, texture - and talk about what you see. Notice the shapes that make up FOX's body. Imagine reducing FOX's complex shape to its simplest geometric shapes.
8. Work individually. Decide what simple geometric shapes you want to use to show the IDEA of FOX. Draw simple shapes (circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, ovals, parallelograms, etc.) to construct the IDEA of FOX. It is not possible to make a FOX; only Nature can do that. It is not even possible to make a reproduction that has the same power and meaning as the real FOX. But you can show the IDEA of FOX by reducing the complex form to its essential shapes.

9. Talk about what aspect of FOX seems most important or beautiful or meaningful to you, and why. Find a way to represent not just the IDEA of FOX, but also the MEANING and the POWER of FOX. Can you exaggerate some part of FOX's body? Can you distort something? Can you change the shape or size somehow to communicate what you think is important, interesting, meaningful, or powerful? How could you exaggerate the shapes of a part of FOX to accentuate the beauty or importance? Find a way to change your drawing to reflect these ideas.
10. Are there any of the shapes that would make your drawing more true to the idea of FOX if they were not solid, but were cut into or opened up? See if there is a way you would like to change any of the shapes by opening them or cutting into the shape. Alter your drawing to use negative space more expressively.
11. Talk about what details of FOX you have had to eliminate or leave out as you reduce FOX to its essential shapes. Are there any details that you would like to add back, add on, in order to enhance the meaning of the idea of FOX? Would you like to add details by adding texture or surface decoration to emphasize or accentuate something?

How do you think your drawing of FOX might change if you knew a lot more about FOX? Or if you had a closer relationship with FOX? If your life and the lives of foxes connected more. How might you feel different about foxes? What might FOX symbolize in your life if you lived closer to foxes and knew them better? What choices do you think you might have made differently in your drawing? How might your drawing be different?

Reflection: Ask students to compare and contrast with each other their choices about what to keep and what to eliminate, and what to exaggerate, what details to add, in order to represent the idea of the animal.

At the Museum – Look at the *ci wara* headdresses. “What do you notice about SHAPE? Which shapes were chosen to be included? Exaggerated? Diminished? Why do you think these choices were made? What patterns do you see? Which bigger shapes were cut into? Where do you see negative space being used? Where are details added onto the shapes? Why do you think those details were added? How are the shapes different in the male and the female headdress?”

“What impression do you have about the antelope from looking at these headdresses? How do you think the artist felt about antelopes? What do you think their relationship with the ANTELOPE was?”

Look at the resource sheet for information about how these headdresses were used in Bamana culture. “Does this give you any more information about why the artist used exaggeration, distortion, or abstraction in the way he did?”

Post-Museum Visit – Reflection:

1. “Where do we use stylistic representations (symbols, shorthand) in our culture?” (traffic signs, other signs, chemical symbols, mathematical symbols, alphabet, etc.) “Where do we see exaggeration or distortion?” (cartoons, parody,)
2. “Why are they used?” (expediency, clarity, power, enhanced meaning, exaggerate a characteristic, aesthetic value, to create humor, to create fear, to threaten etc.)

Supportive Material: “Aesthetic Techniques Used in the Bamana Headdresses,” “Vocabulary and Definitions,” “*Ci Wara* Headdresses and Their Role in Bamana Culture.”

Documentation and Assessment Options: Keep copies of the progressive versions of their drawings of FOX to analyze.

Other Works of Art in the Museum that can connect to this lesson: Charles Sheeler’s *Chartres Cathedral* (positive / negative space), Thai *Buddha Heads* (distortion, exaggeration), paintings by Joseph Stella (distortion).

Links to Other Curriculum:

ELA: Exaggeration, distortion in fiction, in poetry, in drama. Hyperbole, metaphor, persuasive speech.

Author of the lesson: Anne Rhodes

Aesthetic Techniques Used in the *Ci Wara* Headdresses

- * **CREATIVE ABSTRACTION** - representation of the idea of the thing rather than the thing itself; shapes and forms reduced to their essentials; use of exaggeration, elements moved around for effect (horns).
- * **ELABORATION** - details manipulated to become decorative (anteater legs, antelope mane); one main line or shape, plus elaboration; repetition; “activating” the space.
- * **POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SPACE** - “pierced shape.”
- * **BALANCE of HORIZONTAL with VERTICAL, BALANCE of CURVED with STRAIGHT**
- * **CONCAVE / CONVEX SHAPES**
- * **COMPOSITE OF FORMS** - combination of representational forms; mother and baby.
- * **ACTIVE, LIVELY VS. QUIET, RESTIVE** - in both line and texture.
- * **ANGULAR, SHARP, and RIGID are BALANCED with CURVED and SWEEPING** - rectangularity complemented with arcs and curves, creating a rhythmic impression.
- * **COUNTERBALANCE OF SHAPES** - “static harmony;” (heavy head balanced by tall horns).

Vocabulary and Definitions

ICONOGRAPHIC - symbolic representation, using pictures and images.

HIERATIC - pertaining to the sacred; sacerdotal; a style of art fixed by religious or spiritual tradition.

METAPHORIC - utilizing a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something which is not literally applicable, in order to show a resemblance.

EMBLEMATIC - representing an object to symbolize something; as a symbol, sign, design, or figure used symbolically as the distinctive badge of something; an allegorical drawing or picture with explanatory writing; a fable or allegory capable of being expressed pictorially.

SYMBOLIC - pertaining to a symbol or symbols; standing for or calling up something else; representative; esp. a concrete object which stands for an intangible object or idea; an image which embodies a web of interrelated meanings or which evokes a complex of emotions.

STYLIZED - conforming to a particular style; in a particular or conventional representation or treatment .

SCHEMATIC - a diagram, plan or scheme; an abstract or conceptual outline or plan; reduced to or arranged according to a scheme.

ICONIC - an image, representation or picture; a religious image; an image considered sacred.

ALLEGORICAL - speaking figuratively; a figurative discourse, in which the principle subject is depicted by another subject resembling it in its properties and circumstances; a symbolic representation; a narrative in which abstract ideas are personified; a sustained metaphor.

MYTHOLOGICAL - How is a mythological story different from any of the above?

Ci Wara Headdresses and Their Role in Bamana Culture

These headdresses are powerfully connected to RAIN in the Bamana culture. They figure prominently in an annual ritual that expresses gratitude for the life-giving rains that nurture the crops. This is an unfamiliar reality to most of us raised in Western cultures, but many indigenous cultures express their interdependence with animals and the natural processes, like rainfall, through ritual. The headdresses were worn in annual rituals performed during the time before the rains come to nurture the seeds planted in the fields.

The headdresses are in the form of Antelopes, male and female (*ci wara* means “antelope headdress”). The antelope is an animal that is very familiar to the Bamana people, as they share the same habitat. They know this animal well – what it looks like, the way it moves, all its habits, its likes and dislikes, and its intelligence. (Roan Antelope – *Hippotragus equines*.) The *Ci Wara* is a gift-bestowing spirit, credited with inventing agriculture. The *Ci Wara* antelope is a mythical antelope, and represents this deity who brings water to the fields. These ritual antelopes embody the Bamanas’ connection to the rain, the water that provides nourishment for the seeds to grow. In this way both the antelope and the rain are necessary for Bamana life. The antelope walks across the planting fields and the rain follows. When you think of it, it is pretty magical and mystical that we can put a tiny kernel into the ground where the natural forces of the soil, the sun and the rain produce food that will sustain us.

The young men of the Bamana wear the headdresses secured on the tops of their heads, with long strands of raffia attached covering their heads, faces, and bodies, and obscuring their identity as they dance. They wear many, many necklaces of cord strung with cowrie shells. The men prance and leap, mimicking the antelope. They dance from the center of the village, with musicians walking alongside playing drums and wind instruments, to the fields. When they reach the fields they dance and leap to symbolically recreate the miracle of the antelope god’s gift of bringing the rain.

6. Fact Checking: Two Truths and a Lie

Overview: Students will conduct research into a science topic and into works of art.

Goals: This lesson will

Support concepts & skills: recall of facts learned, careful listening, determining plausibility, assessing sources.

Fulfill Learning Standards: Science frameworks and standards for chosen topic; Visual Art 5, 6, 8.

Practice: research skills, fact checking, collaboration.

Familiarize students with: current topic in science, works of art in the Museum.



The Artist's Mother Pouring Water Into a Carafe
Edouard Vuillard

Objectives for Students: Students will

Be able to: become more confident about facts learned, review a topic through recall and research.

Understand: the importance of listening carefully, and questioning facts and sources.

Key Questions (to be answered by students):

1. Can I believe every fact I hear?
2. How can I discriminate between the facts that are true and those that are not?
3. What resources are available to me to check facts?

Materials Needed: Resource information about the science topic to be covered.
Resource information about the works of art in the Museum.

Museum Objects: Almost any work of art will be appropriate for this lesson. Object shown is *The Artist's Mother Pouring Water Into a Carafe* by Edouard Vuillard, oil on millboard, 1900-04, Gift of Mrs. Paul Mellon in memory of her grandfather (1983.71).

Pre-Museum Visit – First ask students to define the word ‘Fact.’ This will probably bring up issues of whether all facts are true, and whether or not something is a fact if it isn’t true. Then ask students if they are familiar with the game “Two Truths and a Lie,” in which people try to guess which statements are true and which are not. Let the students explain the game to anyone who might not have played. If they are not familiar with it you can explain: there are teams who put together a series of three statements about a particular topic. They present the three statements to the other teams who then try to guess which two statements are true and which is the lie. Discuss what makes a lie easy to spot, and what tactics they might use to disguise the lie.

Pick a science topic that you have introduced or are currently finishing up with. Create teams, and assign each an aspect of the topic (for example, studying landforms, assign each team a different landform; studying simple machines, assign each team a different

simple machine. This can work with almost any topic: planets, rocks, body systems, periodic table, chemical compounds, etc.)

Give students time to review and research their topic, locate facts, and produce their three statements. If they are able to produce more than one set of statements they will have more chances to stump their classmates. As you play the game, reveal the truths, writing the correct information up where students can refer to it as you continue your work on the topic. One version of the game allows the teams that are guessing to have a limited amount of time to try to look up the answer if their guess was wrong. You can keep score and give prizes if you wish.

Reflection: When you have played the game, discuss what made it easy or difficult to spot the lie. “Relate this to other situations when someone is trying to fool you. What are some indicators that someone may be lying? What kind of checking do you need to do to determine what to believe?”

At the Museum – Use the same teams. Assign each team a work of art, or let them pick one they would like to play the game with. The students can use the information about the objects on the CD-ROM or use resources in the Museum library, the school library, as well as their own observations and interpretation of the work of art. Their research should help them make up one or more sets of three statements – two truths and a lie. Have the class stand in front of each work of art as the students make their statements about it. After each round of the game ask students whether they have any questions about this work of art. Keep track of these questions so that a Museum staff person can provide the answers to the students.

Reflection: When you have played the game, ask students how their perceptions of the works of art have changed as a result of playing this game. “What is something that you now know that you didn’t know before we played?”

Post-Museum Visit – Reflection: “How was the process in the Museum the same or different from the process with the science topics? Do you think this was a useful process to help you learn about the science topics? Why or why not?”

Documentation and Assessment Options: This game is useful as an informal assessment of how much the students are retaining about a topic: students are more easily able to spot the lie if they have learned the content thoroughly.

Links to Other Curriculum: This game can be played with History and Social Sciences topics, genres in ELA, or styles in visual art, among other things.

Author of the lesson: Anne Rhodes

MATH PROBLEM:
Wrestling with Complex Content

What can you do to see if it reflects the truth?

$$2(3x^3 - 2x^2 + _) - (2 + 2/3 + 4/12 + 6/4 + 6/12) = 4^2/4 - 3 + 1^2$$

MATH GAME:
True or False??

Can you guess or prove whether it reflects the truth?

Have teams of students make up sheets of at least five statements or equations about math topics that you are currently working on. Teams trade sheets and have a limited amount of time to guess, estimate, or figure out together which are true and which are false. Use a timer with a sound signal.

Reflection: “Which tactics were most useful to you in figuring out which statements or equations were true?”