



Grade Level: 4-6

Theme:

- The artist in his or her environment.

Curriculum Emphasis:

- Earth and Space Science
- The Arts

Benchmarks:

- Identify daily and seasonal weather changes.
- Describe weather in measurable quantities, such as wind direction and speed.

Objectives:

- Define Folk Art.
- Identify Folk Art images in Jack McLarty's artwork.
- Learn the origin and use of weathervanes.
- Identify cardinal directions.
- Read a thermometer. Determine wind direction.
- Record changes in weather.

Materials:

- Thermometer
- Compass
- Weathervane Reporter Calendar
- Weathervane supplies below (one set for each pair or group of students):
Ruler
Hammer
Serrated knife or small saw
2" long nail
One metal washer
12" long square wooden dowel
Aluminum pie plate
Broomstick or similar

WEATHERVANES: FROM FOLK ART TO WEATHER FORECASTING

Jack McLarty

ACTIVITIES

Part A – Folk Art in Everyday Life (60 minutes)

1. Consider the following questions prior to watching the Jack McLarty video:

- What is folk art? (See Teacher's Notes.)
- Can you think of some examples of folk art?

2. Today we are going to learn about a local artist named Jack McLarty. He is a long time Portland resident, who has also spent a lot of time in Japan and Mexico. In the video, Jack McLarty says, "Painting is my language." What do you think he might mean by that?

3. Ask students to notice two things as they watch the video:

- Examples of folk art. The folk art examples you see may or may not have been created by Jack McLarty.
- Artwork created by Jack McLarty using images from what he has seen around him in everyday life.

4. View the Jack McLarty video.

5. Discuss the images in Jack McLarty's artwork which reflect his personal observations in his environment, whether in his hometown of Portland, or from his travels in Mexico. His City Hall mural contains many images of life in Portland where he grew up. His etchings in Mexico reflect the local artwork and styles.

6. Ask students to list the examples of folk art in the video. (weathervanes in Jack's sketchbook, Mexican homes, baskets, screen/divider in Juan's studio with sun images)

7. Tomorrow we will discuss weathervanes and their use in forecasting the weather.

PART B – Weathervanes (60-90 minutes)

1. Discuss the origin of weathervanes, how weathervanes are used to detect wind direction, and the importance of wind direction in weather forecasting.

2. Separate students into pairs or groups. Each group will create one weathervane.

3. Using a diagram on an overhead transparency or using a sample weathervane, explain how the weathervane is constructed. (Diagram found at <http://sln.fi.edu/weather/todo/vane.html>)

4. Explain that after the weathervanes are constructed, they will be placed outside and the cardinal directions (N,S,E,W) determined in the local area.

5. Using the compass, determine the cardinal directions. Set markers out for students to refer to when recording daily weathervane and temperature observations.

VOCABULARY

folk art
wind direction
weathervane
Fahrenheit
Celsius
weather
climate
latitude
longitude
cardinal directions

ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

PART C – Observing and Predicting the Weather (45-50 minutes)

1. Using an overhead transparency, explain to students that they will be observing the weathervanes outside for one month, and recording the wind direction, temperature, and current weather conditions. Do a sample recording on the overhead.
2. Using an overhead transparency, or preferably real thermometers, teach students how to read a thermometer. Discuss the Celsius versus the Fahrenheit scale.
3. Print a monthly calendar page (a number of printable versions are available online) and write or type "Temperature," "Wind Direction," and "Weather" in each box with space for the students to fill in the daily data. Make copies of the Weather Reporter Calendar for each student.
4. Go outside with the students. Discuss and record the first daily observation together on the Weather Reporter Calendar.
5. Utilize the information collected and recorded on a completed Weather Reporter Calendar to make generalizations and predictions about the local weather.

EVALUATION

- Verbal questioning and discussion to evaluate students' understanding of the information about the artist.
- Monitor student's ability to read a thermometer through experiments with thermometers.
- Observe students' ability to follow directions and work cooperatively when constructing the weathervane.
- Successful completion of the Weather Reporter Calendar.
- Conclusions drawn and predictions made from the completed Weather Reporter Calendar.

EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS

- Research weather patterns in the local area.
- Compare local weather patterns to those from alternate latitudes.
- Create an anemometer or barometer to collect additional data to predict the weather.
- Visit online websites which use computer generated satellite images to predict weather.

RESOURCES

Franklin Online Institute. Make Your Own Weathervane. <http://sln.fi.edu/weather/todo/vane/html>

Thermometer and Temperature Chart. www.georgieacres.com

Wind Makes Weather. <http://chainreaction.asu.edu/weather/digin/windmake.htm>

Weather Whys: Weathervane Forecasting. <http://www.islandnet.com/~see/weather/whys/weathervane.htm>

The Weather Doctor Almanac: Weathervane styles and body shapes.
<http://www.islandnet.com/~see/weather/almanac/arc2001/alm01mar.htm>

Klamkin, Charles. Weather Vanes: The History, Manufacture, and Design of an American Folk Art. Copyright 1973. Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, New York.

Cultural Heritage Information Online. Definition of Folk Art. http://www.cimi.org/old_site/CHIO/deffolkart.html

TEACHER NOTES

What is Folk Art?

Folk art is a form of artistic expression made by people in a culture that also has a "high" art tradition carried on by trained, professional artists. People who create folk art typically learn their skills in a non-academic setting from relatives, other members of their community or are self taught.

Folk art is the creative expression of ordinary people making utilitarian objects that are often extraordinarily beautiful and convey meaning and significance to their owners and others about a specific culture. The applied ornamentation or design of the object itself is derived from a recognizable group of patterns, motifs, techniques and materials used over and over by the particular community producing the objects. The artist makes an individual statement and also reveals a feeling for form through her/his choice and arrangement of patterns, colors and techniques.

Functional objects such as: furniture and accessories, dress, personal adornment, toys, domestic utensils and tools, architectural details, living spaces and signage are elevated to "Folk Art" when someone makes an object special with applied decoration. Ornamentation and design are executed in an endless variety of media including wood, metal, textiles, glass, clay, found objects and by many techniques including scratching, sculpting, carving, piercing, painting, applique, embroidery, weaving, and knotting. Some cultures focus on using one or two types of media and techniques, making their art distinct from others, such as the Hmong embroidered pillows.

Paintings with characteristics such as flatness or two dimensionality, improper perspective, and questionable draftsmanship are often labeled as "folk art". The artistic skill range is vast, from little academic awareness to considerable attention to detail and nuances. In contrast to academically-trained artists who painted the upper class, these artists were not academically trained, painted the middle class and were often itinerant. Portraits of people, belongings and animals have a function as a document of a particular subject in a place in time and as interior decoration. However, there is still debate about whether naive or primitive styles should be considered as folk art or as specific painting genres.

Contemporary folk art is not confined to a particular set of patterns, rather it uses familiar aesthetics, patterns, designs, materials and techniques in new ways. Inspiration may come from one specific community's traditions and may combine those traditions with another community's techniques. In addition, the artist may use modern colors and materials.

In summary, there are several characteristics that define a work as the "folk art" style:

Both traditional and contemporary folk art must relate to some type of ethnic tradition through appearance, applied ornamentation, technique, design or material and, although created by individual artists, the work must have a connection to a larger cultural heritage and other objects produced by that culture.

Folk art is never the art of the elite. Other terms in the genre include "art populaire" and "naive painting".

Folk artists know what they are doing and receive training in a variety of ways, including self-teaching.

Folk art elevates an everyday object from the ordinary to the special.

Source: Cultural Heritage Information Online: http://www.cimi.org/old_site/CHIO/deffolkart.html