

Art and Community Activism Lesson Plan

Acknowledgements

This guide is inspired by Learning for Justice and their unit on Art and Activism.

Grade Levels:

Primary (3-6)

Time Needed:

One 55-minute class period

Lesson Summary:

In this lesson, students are introduced to the concepts of art, community & activism. Most children have some experience being part of a community. This is an opportunity to think about what community means. Talking about activism, activists, and leaders, helps children understand how change can happen in a community. This lesson allows students to think about what these concepts mean and to consider the relationship between community activism and the visual arts.

This lesson uses examples of various artworks to facilitate classroom discussion. The examples provided can be used for this purpose or the educator can incorporate artworks that best speak to their classroom's culture.

Common Core Standards:

ELA-Literacy. CCRA. W.2; W.4; SL.1; SL.2; SL.3; SL.4; L.1; L.2; L.4

Essential Question (EQ) [What question will all students be able to answer at the end of the lesson?]:

What is an activist? What does an activist do? What is community activism and what is its purpose?

Learning Objectives (LOs) [What will most students be able to do at the end of the lesson?]:

- Students will be able to write words related to the terms community, activism and activist.
- Students will be able to identify how an activist is a person who works - in ways that can be quiet or loud - to solve a problem, improve a community, or reach a larger goal.
- Students will be able to begin thinking about the role art can play in activism

Enduring Understandings:

An activist is a person who works to solve a problem or improve a community by standing up for, and with, those who do not have the same opportunities as others.

Community activism provides a way for people to work together to solve a problem where they live or that is part of their lives.

Key Vocabulary Terms:

- Activism
- Activist
- Community

Opening - 10 minutes

Project or pass out the artwork samples to students' tables. Remind them that art can take many forms (painting, dance, etc.) and ask them: *What do you see in this piece of art? Why do you think the artist made it? How does art make you feel? Do you think art can be important?*

This lesson uses examples of various artworks in order to facilitate classroom discussion. The example provided (*VOTE* mural visible in the provided worksheet; further examples available: [K-2](#), [3-5](#)) can be used for this purpose or the educator can incorporate artworks that best speak to their classroom's culture.

Direct Instruction (I Do) - 3 minutes

Assign students to work in three small groups, or you may choose to lead this lesson as a whole group shared writing activity.

Give each group a concept map **with one of these words written in the middle: community, activism, art**. Note: you will have to write one of these words onto the worksheet prior to class.

Group Work (We Do) - 15 minutes

Have students to work together and write as many words as they can think of that **connect to, define, or question the word on their chart**. (Note: Students may also draw pictures).

Help your students understand these words better by offering some more context and explanation of the words in action such as: *"We often think of community as a group of people living or working together and sharing some common ideas. Activism is a way of working for change or for what you believe in. And we can say that art is a creative way of showing people, feelings, stories and ideas."*

Group Discussion (We Do) - 10 minutes

Have each group share the concept map they have created with their multiple meanings and associations with their classmates. Then help students come up with class/collective definitions of the three terms. Remind them that artists make art in order to communicate and convince others, as well as for opportunity to express themselves.

Continue the discussion until your students are comfortable using these terms. *Ask them to give examples of these words in action to gauge understanding when they present.*

Paired Assessment (You Do) - 15 minutes

Have students work in pairs, matching each student with someone who had a different term. Note: If you did the first step as a shared writing activity, you can pair up any students.

Ask each pair to collaborate on drawing a picture that demonstrates how the two terms relate to each other.

Ask: *"How does activism relate to community? How does art relate to community? How does activism relate to art?"* Encourage students to be creative and take risks with their picture.

Emphasize that the questions do not have right or wrong answers. Challenge your students to think of examples from their lives to illustrate relationships or connections. After students have had ample time to create their illustrations, *ask them as a whole group to discuss the*

illustrations each pair created.

Assessment [How will the educator determine students have achieved the EQ and LOs?]

Educators will be able to determine students have achieved EQ and LOs when students have been able to demonstrate an understanding of the key terms and how they relate to each other.

Closure - 2 minutes

Ask students to begin thinking about the role art can play in activism.

Lesson Materials

See the worksheet provided below. <https://www.readingrockets.org/content/pdfs/conceptmap2.pdf>

Differentiation and Modification Options [How can this lesson be modified to reach all students?]:

Content: see resources below for different forms of content (videos, podcasts, etc.)

Process: students can work individually on their assignments if they prefer; place students in differentiated groups based on ability and/or interest.

Product: students may provide their assessment work in a format that best suits them (written paragraph, diorama, etc.).

Learning Environment: lesson can be provided in an in-person, virtual, or hybrid format by incorporating online tools such as Jamboard.

Extension resources: students may explore the resources provided below for extra content and evidence for their assessment work.

English Language Learners (ELLs): Vocab words defined in detail during direct instruction; can use notes in assessments; extended time.

IEPs and 504s; lesson can be modified in content, process, and product to reflect learning accommodations.

Further Resources on Allied Topics

Educators

- More Art and Activism mini lessons: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/art-and-activism>
- Teaching about activism and justice in the classroom: <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/stirring-up-justice>

Additional Books

- A is for Activist by Innosanto Nagara
- Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin
- That's Not Fair!/No Es Justo by Carmen Tafolla
- Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles
- For All/Para Todos by Alejandra Domenzain

Students will be able to write words related to the terms community, activism and activist; they will identify how activism and change are important to communities and begin thinking about the role art can play in activism.



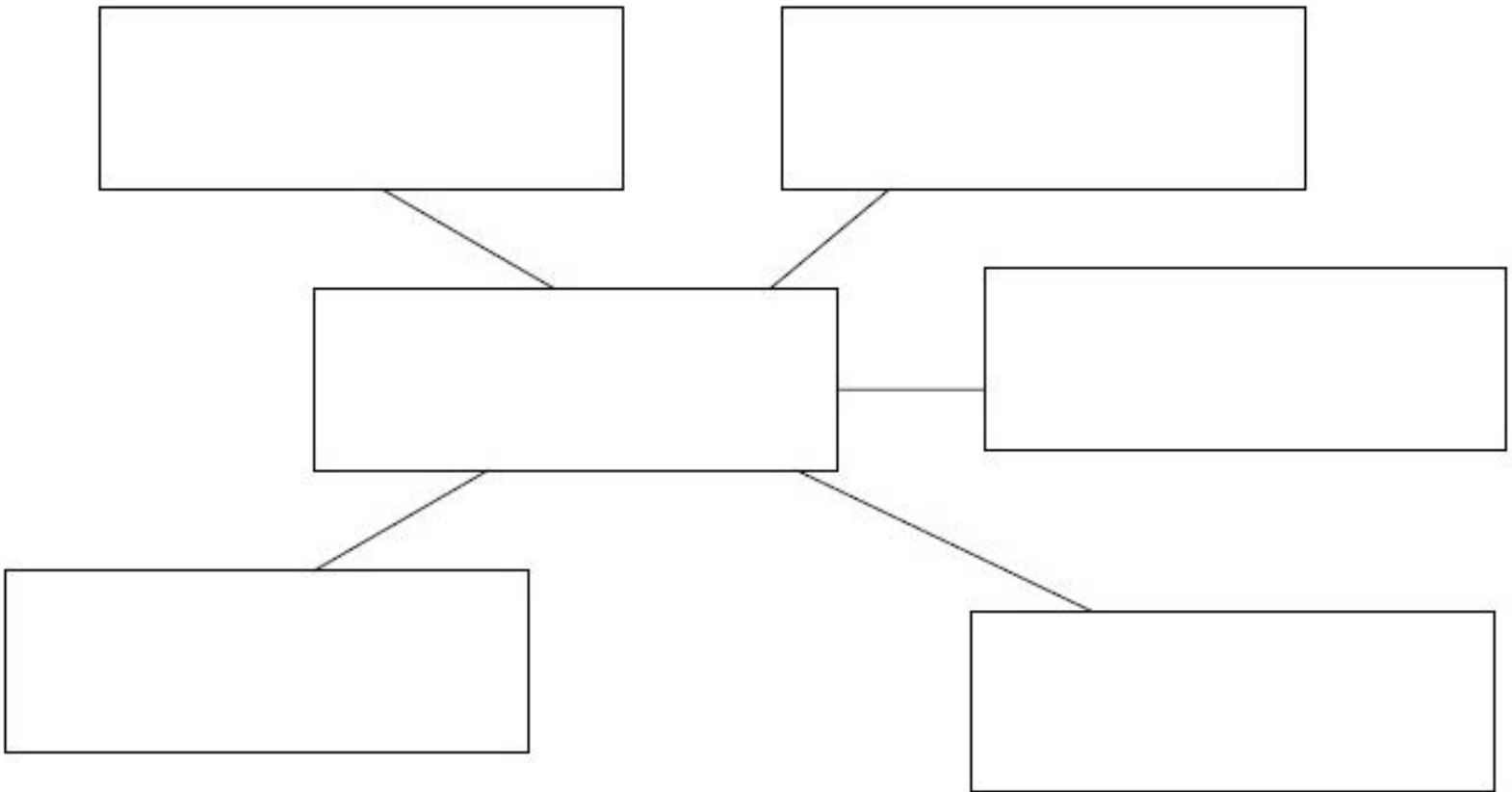
What do you see in this piece of art? Why do you think the artist made it? How does this piece make you feel? Do you think art can be important?

Art and Community Activism Worksheet

Instructions (Pt I):

Work together and write as many words as you can think of that connect to, define, or question the word on your chart. (Note: Students may also draw pictures).

Concept Map



Thinkport © 2003

Art and Community Activism Worksheet

Instructions (Pt II):

Work in pairs, with someone who had a different term. Collaborate on drawing a picture that demonstrates how the two terms relate to each other. Note: If you did the first step as a shared writing activity, you can pair up any students.

Closing Reflection: Begin thinking about the role art can play in activism.

Activate Activism: Planning Our Mural Lesson Plan

Grade Levels:

Primary (3-6)

Time Needed:

One 45-minute class period

Lesson Summary:

This lesson builds upon the Art and Community Activism lesson by focusing on one art form: murals. Students will learn how to work and plan collaboratively to get their message of activism across in an artistic way. This lesson allows students to consider how to translate their thoughts into visual form to create a plan for lasting vestige of their activism.

Common Core Standards:

ELA-Literacy. CCRA. W.2; W.4; SL.1; SL.2; SL.3; SL.4; L.1; L.2; L.4

Essential Question (EQ) [What question will all students be able to answer at the end of the lesson?]:

What is a mural? How can different artistic techniques and genres work together in one project? What skills help multiple artists work together to communicate a message?

Learning Objectives (LOs) [What will most students be able to do at the end of the lesson?]:

- Students will be able to collaboratively plan a mural project.
- Students will be able to translate their activism to art form.
- Students will be able to combine different techniques to create a mural.

Key Vocabulary Terms:

- Mural
- Collaborate
- Activism
- Genre

Learning Activities:

“Ask students, ‘What is a mural?’ Allow them to share examples of any murals they have seen or know of. If they brought images from home, give them a chance to share. Otherwise, present them with the following images ([K-2](#), [3-5](#)) so that they can get a sense of what a mural might look like. As students view these images, ask them to discuss the following questions: **1)** What makes murals a unique genre? **2)** Why might a mural be a particularly good genre for expressing an activist message? **3)** What messages do these murals convey? How can you tell? **4)** What do you like/not like about these murals?”

“Explain to students that working communally on a piece of art is a serious and important undertaking. Ask them to think about what they think might be challenging about this work, and how they might address these challenges. Using these ideas as well as your classroom rules or guidelines, come up with a list of guidelines for working collaboratively on an activist mural. Create a chart of your guidelines and have all students sign their names to the chart.”
“For the rest of the period, allow the class to work together to plan what their mural will look

like. First, they should do this by talking, and then they can switch to sketching a mock-up on a piece of chart paper. Student groups can be organized according to how best serves the educator's classroom. Monitor to make sure that each child has a voice in the creation of the plan and will be contributing something to the mural. When the plan is complete, ask students what was fun and what was challenging about working on that plan."

Lesson Materials:

- Mural examples
- Chart paper
- Pencils, colored pencils, markers, paint (depending on what medium educators prefer students to work with)

Differentiation and Modification Options [How can this lesson be modified to reach all students?]:

- Content: see resources below for different forms of content (videos, podcasts, etc.)
- Process: students can work individually on their assignments if they prefer; place students in differentiated groups based on ability and/or interest.
- Product: students may provide their assessment work in a format that best suits them (written paragraph, diorama, etc.).
- Learning Environment: lesson can be provided in an in-person, virtual, or hybrid format by incorporating online tools such as Jamboard.
- Extension resources: students may explore the resources provided below for extra content and evidence for their assessment work.
- English Language Learners (ELLs): Vocab words defined in detail during direct instruction; can use notes in assessments; extended time.
- IEPs and 504s: lesson can be modified in content, process, and product to reflect learning accommodations.

Further Resources:

- Educators: https://nm.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/art_socialjustice/ "Many artists create work that intersects with political activism and social justice causes. Throughout history, art has been used as an accessible tool for communication, raising awareness about social issues and affecting positive change. This video collection will introduce students to artists who create work that inspires dialogue about problems faced by communities around the world, and will provide inspiration for classroom projects with a social, public or political purpose."
- Agents of Possibility: Examining the Intersections of Art/Education, and Activism in Communities by: ALINA CAMPANA "This article examines the motivations, perspectives, development, and experiences of five artist/educator/activists who worked in community-based settings in Tucson, Arizona. Common characteristics, relevant issues, and implications for the field are presented and discussed."
- <https://theartofeducation.edu/2017/02/02/perfect-project-teach-students-art-activism/additional-ideas-for-using-art-as-activism-in-the-classroom>

Acknowledgements:

This guide is taken from Learning for Justice and their unit on Art and Activism.



Work in small groups. Share examples of murals brought from home with your group. Discuss the murals together and answer the question: What is a mural? Write your answer below. Share with the class. If students don't have an example, refer to the mural above.

Activate Activism: Planning Our Mural

After class discussion, expand and answer the following questions with your group picking one mural to focus on:

What makes murals a unique genre?

Why do activists use murals to convey their messages?

What message does the mural convey? How do you know?

What do you like/not like about the mural?

What does it mean to work communally? Work with your group to answer the question and come up with some examples of communal work.

Following a class discussion about what it means to work communally. Work with your group to answer the following questions:

1) What they think might be challenging about this work?

2) How might you address these challenges?

Activate Activism: Planning Our Mural

Keeping classroom guidelines in mind, come up with a list of guidelines for a creating a collaborative mural. List them below.

Guideline:	Why it's important:

Work as a class to discuss each group's guidelines to create a master guideline list. Write it down and have all students sign it.

Start planning your mural with your group. Start by brainstorming ideas, then start to sketch out your designs. Keep the class guidelines in mind when you start planning.

After planning your murals, discuss with the class what was challenging and what was fun about the planning.

Activate Activism: Planning Our Mural

Differentiation and Modification Options [How can this lesson be modified to reach all students?]:

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