

National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute
“The Immigrant Experience in California through Literature and Theatre”
San Jose State University Summer 2022
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UNIT: Artwork and Expression, a Cultural Exploration

Grade Level: 6-12

Rationale: Most students at this school are below level in ELA skills as judged by state Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking assessments. This assignment seeks to provide a high interest entry point into these areas using street art, specifically murals in the Mission District to practice these skills, and to build cultural community and consciousness among students and staff.

Time Frame: 5-6 days (depending on levels of comprehension and interest)

Goals: This is an interdisciplinary Unit focused on Identity and Expression in artwork, specifically the Mission District murals in San Francisco. Students will read, write, research, and present a mural piece of their choosing. They will then synthesize these skills into executing a creative piece, or mural of their own, expressing their cultural identity.

Essential Questions:

- How does artwork express political, historical, and personal ideas?
- How do artists make deliberate choices in their work for a certain end?
- In what ways does our position in history affect our cultural experiences?
- How do our cultural identities develop?

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand artists make deliberate choices in their artwork.
- Students will analyze and interpret a piece of artwork.
- Students will research their artwork and create a class presentation teaching their classmates about the artwork piece.
- Students will create an original art piece about their own cultural identity.

Day One:

- Activating Strategy:

Students will quick-write about their neighborhood for five minutes, detailing what it looks like, who lives there, how they feel about it, and any other information they would like to provide.

-Students will view a short news story on the murals in the Mission District <https://abc7.com/sf-mission-district-murals-best-in-san-francisco-balmy-alley-clarion/7429617/>

-Students will access the Google slides of Balmy Alley and participate in a group discussion about the “Once Upon a Time in the Mission” mural, answering questions such as:

-What do you see?

-How is the mural laid out? How is space used in this piece?

-What colors dominate? What is a possible reason the artist/s used that color palate?

-What can you tell about the artist/s based on the depiction?

-What do you think they are trying to say? Why?

-Students will complete an exit ticket responding to the question:

-How does “Once Upon a Time in the Mission” reflect a historical or cultural view? What views does it demonstrate?

Day Two:

-Students will select a mural from the Balmy Alley slides, or another mural from the Mission district to examine further.

-Students will conduct research and take notes on mural art in the Mission using at least two of the resources linked below and the Cornell Note Taker 4 Graphic Organizer:

[Precita Eyes Muralists](#) (S.F. arts organization)

[Guide to San Francisco's Mission District Murals](#) (SFTtravel.com)

[Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts](#) (SFTtravel.com)

[San Francisco's Mission District Murals Explorer's Guide](#) (CaliforniaCrossings.com)

[The Ultimate Guide to the Mission Murals](#) (TimeOut)

[Mission Murals Free Walking Tour](#) (Frugaltourist.com)

-Students will view at least one of the following videos and take notes as well:

[Mission Mural Tour](#)

[San Francisco Mission District: Murals of Balmy Alley](#)

[Balmy Alley Murals Tour in San Francisco's Mission District](#)

[San Francisco Mission District Murals: 24th Street and Balmy Alley](#)

[San Francisco 24th Street 4K Walking Tour - Mission District](#)

[San Francisco Mission Murals](#)

[San Francisco Mission District Street Art of Murals](#)

Days Three and Four:

-Students will create a multimedia presentation of their choice to share with the class in which they discuss the mural they selected. Students can focus on the artist in society, artistic choices, and/or the historical, political, and/or cultural context of the piece.

-Students will type a reflection detailing the process they undertook, learning acquired, and an evaluation of their project.

Days Five and Six:

-Students will design their own “mural” on 11 x 17 paper representing a personal cultural statement.

-Students will provide a written statement explaining their artistic piece.

-Pieces will be displayed in common hallways and areas.