Primary Source Learning Activity

Section I

1. **Title of Lesson:** Importance of Visual Allegories

2. **Overview:** This lesson plan introduces students to allegory in the visual arts through the works of American painter, Thomas Cole. Students will be challenged to understand how allegories are applied in the visual arts through a number of small, student-centered activities involving critical analysis, comparing/contrasting, and abstract thinking. Students will also be given the opportunity to express what they have learned about the definition of ‘allegory’ through a creative research writing prompt. By exposing students to a variety of medium relating to the term ‘allegory’, the word will take on a more relatable definition that students can use more comfortably in their writing and vocabulary.

3. **Learning Goals:**

   Students will be able to:

   - Define ‘allegory’ and discuss its use and importance in the visual arts
   - More easily identify allegorical themes in works of art
   - Explain what makes an image allegorical
   - Recognize the works of Thomas Cole and discuss his philosophies on American scenery
   - Collaboratively work with others to generate ideas and arguments
   - Understand how several vocabulary words learned in school are applied in may different subjects
   - More comfortably use ‘allegory’ in their regular vocabulary
   - Understand the importance and use of visual allegories in modern day society

4. **Time Required/Duration of Activity:** Two to three, 40 minute class periods

5. **Recommended Grade(s):** Grades 10-12

6. **Subject:** Art, History, English

7. **Credits:** Rosanna Paterra

8. **LDC Teaching Task:**
   **LDC Template Task #20: (Informational or Explanatory/Analysis)**
   Why are visual allegories so important in our modern day society? After researching modern TV and magazine images on advertisement, write an essay in which you analyze how the media uses visual allegories and why that tool is so important in selling products. Provide evidence to clarify your analysis.
Section II

9. **PA Common Core Standards:**
   - CC.1.2.11–12.D: Evaluate how an author's point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
   - CC.1.2.11–12.L: Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.
   - CC.1.3.11–12.A: Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the themes; provide an objective summary of the text.
   - CC.1.3.11–12.F: Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.
   - CC.1.4.11–12.C: Develop and analyze the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic; include graphics and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

10. **Materials Used:**
    - Power Point, sketch paper, Projector

11. **Resources Used:**


Section III

12. Instructional Procedures:

Guiding Investigative Question: What is a visual allegory and why is it important in our modern day society?

Mini Task 1 – Prompt: What are the arts? After reading the definition of allegory, (in groups) write a list of objects, symbols, and/or figures that represent a specific category of art. Support your discussion with evidence from visual research on that specific art form.

1. Students will be able to:
   • Define the term allegory.
   • Define the different categories of the ‘arts’.
   • Make the connection between allegories and the visual arts.
   • Categorize the representative objects of each art form through research.
   • Carry on an educated discussion about allegories in the arts based on supported evidence.

2. Procedural Descriptions of Analysis: Students will be asked ‘what are the arts?’ The class will read and discuss the definition of ‘allegory’ and how it relates to art. Students will be split into groups and given one branch of the arts. Each group will research their branch through different visual works of art and will compile a list of figures and objects that are used to represent it. The groups will then discuss their findings with the rest of the class.

3. Writing Assignment: After the class discussion, each group will be given a different group’s findings and collaboratively write a one paragraph persuasive essay on why those visual allegories represent that category of the arts. This will prompt students to actively listen and contribute during the discussion so they can make a case for another group’s work. This writing assignment will ensure that students understand what an allegory is, why it connects to the arts, and how to find allegories in the visual arts.

Mini Task #2 - Prompt: How does the artist, Thomas Cole, use allegory to convey meaning in his paintings? After analyzing Cole’s paintings, write an essay in which you compare the paintings in order to explain his use of allegory to convey meaning. Support your discussion with evidence from the sources.

1. Students will be able to:
   • Compare and contrast the paintings of Thomas Cole based on visual allegories.
   • Analyze the use of Cole’s use of visual allegories and how they contribute to the meaning of the pieces.
   • Confidently approach comparing and contrasting other works of art based on the analysis of Cole’s work.
   • Make educated assumptions about the use and meaning of visual allegories in works of art.
2. Procedural Descriptions of Analysis: Now that the students understand the definition of allegory and how it relates to the visual arts, the class will look into the works of Thomas Cole and analyze his use of visual allegories. The goal is to show students how certain objects and figures used as visual allegories give meaning to the works. The teacher will prompt the discussion by asking the following questions:
   - How do these pieces relate to each other?
   - Are there any figures/objects that appear in both pieces?
   - If so, analyze their position or placement in each painting. How could that contribute to the overall meaning?
   - Is there a message you think Cole is trying to send?

These questions can also be geared towards a comparison between Doublemint Gum advertisements from the 1930’s.

3. Writing Assignment: The teacher will reinforce the discussion by showing two images of advertisement that repeat visual allegories. Students will have to write a short essay listing the repeated allegories and how they contribute to understanding the meaning of the two pieces.

Mini Task 3 – Prompt: How can we understand the use of allegories in Thomas Cole’s work through his view of nature? After reading Thomas Cole’s Essay on American Scenery, write a brief summary that addresses the question and analyzes Cole’s essay, providing examples to clarify your analysis. What conclusions or implications can you draw?

1. Students will be able to:
   - Recognize the use of visual allegories in Thomas Cole’s work.
   - Understand how Cole’s view of nature is told through his use of visual allegories.
   - Understand that the meaning of artworks can be researched through written works of the artist.

2. Procedural Descriptions of Analysis: The students will write a brief summary that addresses the opening mini task question and analyzes Cole’s essay, providing examples to clarify their analyses.

Mini Task 4 - Activity Procedure

1. Students will be able to:
   - Define the term allegory and recognize how it is used in the visual arts.
   - Recognize the objects and figures commonly used when creating visual allegories.
   - Understand the importance of visual allegories and how they are used.
   - Understand the meaning of visual allegories in contemporary society and why they are used.
   - Compare and contrast allegories in visual works and explain their connection.
   - Build on previous knowledge through research and analysis.
   - Make educated hypotheses based on a well rounded understanding of visual allegories through research.
   - More easily make correlations between visual allegories and contemporary views of our society.
   - Write an essay using proper structure, vocabulary, and punctuation.

2. Procedural Descriptions of Analysis: The students will be writing an essay about why visual allegories are important in our society through the use of current print advertisements. Our culture uses so much imagery today to advertise everything and it is important for students to understand the reasons why companies use visual
allegories to increase sales. To preface the writing assignment, the class will observe two of Edward Penfield's advertisements for cars and analyze the allegories used in his work.

- Why are there women in the ads?
- What kinds of clothes are they wearing?
- Is there a correlation between cars and women?
- Think about today's advertisements using cars and women. What is the connection?
- Most car commercials use women in different ways to fit the kind of car. For example, sports car commercials use women in a more provocative way and mini van commercials use women in a more 'soccer mom' way.
- The conclusion of the discussion will show that Penfield's advertisements will sell this car mostly to men promising if they have a luxurious car, they will also get more luxurious women to be attracted to them.

3. Writing Assignment: The students will research one advertisement used in today's society and explain how it uses visual allegories to give it meaning and help sell a product. Using the information they have learned over the course of this lesson as well as outside research, the students will write an essay answering the question: why are visual allegories important in our society when it comes to print advertisements? Students will draw their conclusions based on analyzing the correlations between the visual allegories and the relationship between the views of modern society. They should provide at least 3 sources; one of those will be the actual image itself.

Section IV

13. Assessment:

Summative Assessment: I will use the LDC Rubric for Informational/Explanatory Writing

Formative Assessment: I developed the following rubric to assess my mini task #4
## Analysis of A Work of Art: Visual Allegories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significance</strong></td>
<td>Clearly evaluates the importance of visual allegories in advertising and why they help sell a product.</td>
<td>Moderately evaluates the importance of visual allegories in advertising and why they help sell a product.</td>
<td>Vaguely evaluates the importance of visual allegories in advertising, but has difficulty understanding their connection in advertising.</td>
<td>Has trouble understanding the relationship between visual allegories and advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historical Argument</strong></td>
<td>Clearly articulates how their chosen advertisement uses visual allegories; Strong evidence is used to support it.</td>
<td>Moderately articulates how their chosen advertisement uses visual allegories; Adequate evidence is used to support it.</td>
<td>Somewhat articulates how their chosen advertisement uses visual allegories; Vague evidence is mentioned.</td>
<td>Has trouble articulating a connection between their advertisement and the use of visual allegories; No real evidence is used to support it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Accurately describes several dominant elements or principles used in visual allegories and accurately relates how they are used by the artist to reinforce the theme, meaning, mood, or feeling of the artwork.</td>
<td>Accurately describes a couple of dominant elements and principles used in visual allegories and accurately relates how these are used by the artist to reinforce the theme, meaning, mood, or feeling of the artwork.</td>
<td>Describes some dominant elements and principles used in visual allegories, but has difficulty describing how these relate to the meaning or feeling of the artwork.</td>
<td>Has trouble picking out the dominant elements dealing with visual allegories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correlation</strong></td>
<td>Educated and clear conclusions are drawn based on the research connecting visual allegories and modern society.</td>
<td>Somewhat educated conclusions are drawn based on the research connecting visual allegories and modern society.</td>
<td>Vaguely describes a conclusion based on the research, but has difficulty explaining a clear connection.</td>
<td>Has trouble developing any conclusion because of a lack of research.</td>
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