Power to the People: Bill of Rights Art

U.S. Government

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Grade Level	11th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	110 minutes
Course	U.S. Government		

Essential Question

What role do artists have in bringing about social and political change?

Summary

This lesson focuses on multi-modal literacy as a follow-up to lessons over the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Students should already have a basic understanding of the Bill of Rights. The lesson introduces students to protest art as seen in the work of Juane Quick-to-see Smith, an internationally known contemporary Native American artist.

Snapshot

Engage

Students will look at recent street art and through a Commit and Toss strategy, students will discuss the use of art to shape political beliefs and raise awareness.

Explore

Students will explore the work of a Native American artist to gain understanding of protest art and the elements and principles of art in general.

Explain

Students will review the Bill of Rights. They will use their knowledge of the Bill of Rights to analyze freedoms being expressed in the art of Juane Quick-To-See and other protest art pieces.

Extend

Students will discuss the freedoms from the Bill of Rights that are important to them. The amendment chosen will guide the students in creating their own visual art.

Evaluate

Students will use a rubric to evaluate their peers' work to assess for understanding and ability to convey their message.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

USG.2.2: Identify the central ideas and importance of the concept of inalienable rights, including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the social contract, and the grievances stated in the Declaration of Independence and reflected in the Constitution of the United States.
USG.3.7: Evaluate the importance of the rule of law on the purposes and functions of government; explain how the rule of law provides for the protection of individual liberties, including due process and equality under the law.
USG.3.9: Analyze the rights and liberties guaranteed to all citizens in the Bill of Rights and how they are protected at the state level through the doctrine of incorporation using the 14th Amendment.

Attachments

- Doc 1-Street Art.docx
- Doc 1-Street Art.pdf
- Doc 2-Protest Art.docx
- Doc 2-Protest Art.pdf
- Doc 3-Principles of Art.docx
- Doc 3-Principles of Art.pdf
- Doc 4-Quick-to-See Smith's Art for Analysis.docx
- Doc 4-Quick-to-See Smith's Art for Analysis.pdf
- Doc 5-Bill of Rights Summary.docx
- Doc 5-Bill of Rights Summary.pdf
- Doc 6-Bill of Rights Art Examples.docx
- Doc 6-Bill of Rights Art Examples.pdf
- Doc 7-Art Rubric.docx
- Doc 7-Art Rubric.pdf

Materials

- Doc 1-Street Art
- Doc 2-Protest Art (student handout)
- Doc 3-Principles of Art (student handout)
- Doc 4-Quick-to-See Smith 's Art for Analysis
- Doc 5-Bill of Rights summary (student handout)
- Doc 6-Bill of Rights Art Examples
- Doc 7-Art Rubric

Engage

On a projector or overhead, show "Doc 1-Street Art." This art was a visual protest posted in 2004 by the street artist Meek. In the early 2000s, street artists like Meek and Banksy began using graffiti to raise awareness about social issues and protest political agendas.

Ask students the following questions: What is the artist asking of the viewer? Do you think viewing street art would influence your political beliefs or raise your awareness of social issues?

Let students have a moment or two in silence to contemplate what the artist is asking of the viewer.

Teacher's Note

You may need to write the questions on the board so students can read them a few times to gain a better understanding of what is being asked of them. The street art by Meek looks like a homeless person asking for real change. You may need to prompt students further, asking: What types of change would a homeless person want? What types of change would an ordinary person want?

Students will participate in a Commit and Toss activity to share their thoughts.

- Give students a few minutes to write a quick response on paper. This should be about 1-3 sentences and should only take about 2 minutes. Ask them to leave their name off the paper because they will offer their thoughts anonymously.
- Once students have written their thoughts on the paper, ask them to crumple the paper into a ball.
- The paper balls can be tossed into a basket, box, or a pile on the floor.
- Gently toss the papers back out to students. Ask them to open their paper balls to read them. Students should make sure they did not receive their own paper.
- Ask students to get into groups of four or five, depending on the size of your class.
- Give students time to share the responses on their pieces of paper with their group.
- Come back together as a class and ask a few students to share some of the best responses discussed in their small groups.

Teacher's Note

Writing the responses anonymously encourages students to openly share their honest thoughts. However, Commit and Toss can prompt silly or irrelevant responses. In the large, class discussion, ask students only to share responsible or serious responses to the questions.

Explore

Give students "Doc 2-Protest Art" (located under Attachments), and have them read the handout silently. After 2 minutes, ask them if Meek's graffiti art from the Commit and Toss activity meets the standard of protest art. You may wish to post the Meek art photo on the projector again. Ask students to think about Meek's art as you share the main points of protest art. Does Meek's art meet these criteria?

- Protest art relies on people's understanding of the symbols used in the art (peace sign, raised fist, dove, etc.).
- Protest art requires a cause or an issue.
- Protest art uses an easily accessible medium (not always art galleries).
- Protest art is aimed at the largest possible audience to get the message out.

Teacher's Note

There is no "right" or "wrong" answer to the question regarding Meek's graffiti and whether or not it is protest art. This question is meant to get students to engage with the criteria for protest art and get them thinking about the relationship of art to our society and societal issues.

Next, give students "Doc 3-Principles of Art." Go over the definitions for emphasis, visual texture, and overlap. Inform them that this will be their guide for evaluating protest art and that it will also be useful in creating their own protest art.

Teacher's Note

Tell students that even though protest art is more about the message being expressed, the artists do use artistic elements and principles to help get the message across. It is important that students understand that protest art is judged by the ability of the artist to express their feelings about a social issue first and then, secondly, by how the elements and principles aid in that expression. Art is not judged whether the viewer "likes" it or not.

Explain to students that they will now analyze the protest art of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. For background information, click here (URL also in Resources section). You will want to read this information prior to the introduction of her artwork to students.

Ask students to keep in mind that you are discussing protest art. Then, ask students what they might expect to see in Quick-to-See Smith's artwork concerning Native Americans?

Points to share with the students about Quick-to-See Smith's bio include:

- She is Native-American, a member of the Flathead Nation.
- She dealt with discrimination, because of her ethnicity, and poverty.
- She lived on a reservation and, at times, in foster homes.
- She wanted to convey the hardships, the conflict between two cultures, and the lost culture of Native Americans in her artwork.

Sample Responses Include

Quick-to-See Smith might show how Native Americans are discriminated against, stereotypes about Native Americans, and students might see environmental issues represented because Native Americans have a relationship with the land and with animals.

"Doc 4-Quick-to-See Smith 's Art for Analysis" features three different pieces of Quick-to-See Smith's art. Pass out only one piece of artwork to each student. Ask students to form a group of four with students who received the same piece of art. Ask students to discuss the following questions: What social message was the artist sending with this art? Is the message positive or negative? How do you know?

Allow about 7-10 minutes for students to write down points about their discussion of the artwork. Show each piece of art, one by one, on the projector. Have groups share their impressions of the art and point out details to explain their rationale. After all three artworks have been discussed by the groups; ask the class if there is a central theme to Quick-to-See Smith's art.

Teacher's Note

The earlier biographical link about Jaune Quick-to-See Smith also contains analyses of each piece of artwork. While this will be helpful background information for the teacher, the students may share different ideas or viewpoints about what they perceive is expressed in her art.

Explain

The next part of this lesson moves to the Bill of Rights and applies the principles of protest art to our rights as citizens. Remind students that the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution in 1791 as written guarantees of the rights and freedoms of every citizen. If students do not remember or need a review, you may wish to pass out "Doc 5-Bill of Rights Summary," which is a summary of the Bill of Rights. Also, pass out "Doc 6-Bill of Rights Art Examples." Ask students to return to their student groups. Now, using the Bill of Rights summary and the Bill of Rights art examples, they are to determine which one of the first 10 Amendments the art is representing.

The Bill of Rights art examples represent three different forms of protest art:

(1) "The Son of Man" is by the surrealist René Magritte. Often surrealist artists conveyed a social or political message in their work. Students can interpret this painting as the subject possibly being denied his First Amendment rights, the right to free speech, since the man is hindered by the apple. Or perhaps, the painting represents the Fifth Amendment. If the man cannot speak due to the apple, he cannot perjure himself (self-incrimination).

(2) The second piece is protest art from Banksy that shows a little girl patting down a soldier. It could be interpreted as related to the Fourth Amendment, protesting against too much search and seizure.

(3) The third piece of protest art is a mural in Memphis, Tennessee. This piece could represent the First Amendment's right to assembly. The signs could also be interpreted as the right to free speech provided for in the First Amendment).

All art examples are open to interpretation so allow for a variety of responses if you believe they are reasonable.

Extend

Have students look again at the "Doc 5-Bill of Rights Summary." Have them choose one of the 10 Bill of Rights that they feel strongly about, either positively or negatively. Students may think that, as citizens, their "freedom of speech" is violated on a regular basis, or they may support owning guns or not support owning guns, which deals with the Second Amendment.

After some discussion, choose one of the students' ideas and ask, "What image would you use to symbolize that freedom?" Try to be fairly accepting of whatever ideas they come up with for the various freedoms or amendments. Ask questions of students to clarify their thoughts, always asking them to explain how their image best expresses the freedom they chose. You can extend the discussion to include some of the elements or principles of art from the handout ("Doc 3-Principles of Art") given to students earlier. Ask them what colors, textures, or shapes would also be representative of their ideas. Ask them how they could group ideas together through the artistic use of overlapping, like the artwork of Jaune Quick-to-See Smith.

Sample Responses Include

Students might say that a closed mouth might symbolize a violation of freedom of speech or that a no loitering sign might represent a violation of freedom to assemble. They might also offer black as a color to represent sadness over a certain freedom being taken away or yellow as a celebratory color to show happiness or joy. Students could overlap different symbols together such as a gun, a fist, a police badge, or a home to suggest that arming oneself is lawful and can provide protection of one's home, for example.

Have students refer back to "Doc 2-Protest Art" and review the four areas of emphasis. Tell them that they have accomplished the first task, but now they need to choose their own issue to protest or support. Have them choose an issue from the Bill of Rights and consider a visual representation for it. Again, referring back to "Doc 2-Protest Art" and "Doc 3-Principles of Art," encourage students to not only create something that has a visual protest message about a freedom but that also uses principles of art.

Distribute "Doc 7-Art Rubric" and allow students to review it. Inform them that their peers will evaluate their art. Their art should be creative but also clearly meet all the criteria on the rubric.

Teacher's Note

This part of the lesson can be completed in class, if time allows. However, it may be best for this portion of the lesson to be done as homework. This portion of the lesson can also be done using the website glogster.com. This site would assist in the development of a visual without the need for art supplies. It also would meet the protest art area of emphasis that focuses on allowing the greatest number of people to have access to the message being shared.

Evaluate

On the day the artwork is completed, distribute the Art Rubric that is provided in the attachments of this lesson. This rubric serves as a peer evaluation tool. Have students examine the work of their peers and offer feedback to the student artist. The last portion of the lesson required each student to represent the amendment he or she chose visually, but this portion deepens evaluation by asking the students to examine the work of their peers in relationship to both art and the Bill of Rights.

Teacher's Note

The teacher can decide how many peer works are going to be evaluated by each student. This should depend on how much time the class has to focus on this step of the lesson. The class could take an entire hour examining everyone's work and offering feedback via the rubric; but if time is restricted, the works could be evaluated in small groups of four. Each group member could review three different works of art by examining the artwork within their group.

Resources

- Commit and Toss instructional Strategy: K20 Center. (2014). Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505b3d0
- Glogster Interactive Multimedia Posters. Copyright 2007-2016, Glogster EDU. http://edu.glogster.com/
- Quick-to-See Smith background: Tremblay, G. (n.d.). Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Flathead contemporary artist. Retrieved from http://www.missoulaartmuseum.org/files/documents/collection/Montana%20Connections_Smith/TremblayEssay.pdf