



Transcending Boundaries: The Kiowa Six

The Legacy and Contributions of Six Kiowa Artists



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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	Time Frame	125 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	2-3 class periods
Course	Oklahoma History, U.S. History		

Essential Question

How does art reflect culture? Did acculturation and assimilation help or hinder the work of the Kiowa Six? What is the legacy of the Kiowa Six?

Summary

In this lesson, students will investigate the paintings, history, and artistic talents of a group of Kiowa artists collectively known as the Kiowa Six. Students also will consider whether the systemic policy of assimilation and acculturation helped or hindered the artists' career success. Finally, students will articulate the Kiowa Six's cultural contributions and suggest possible ways to recognize their legacy.

Snapshot

Engage

Students use the It's OPTIC-al strategy to make observations about a painting.

Explore

Students complete a Gallery Walk to compare paintings from each of the Kiowa Six artists, then summarize their findings.

Explain

Students learn more about the artists of the paintings and how they are collectively known as the Kiowa Six. After watching a video, students expand their previous summary of the paintings' similarities to include important facts about the Kiowa Six and their cultural contributions.

Extend

Students read about the history of the Kiowa tribe, its customs, and how acculturation and assimilation affected the tribe and the artistry of the Kiowa Six. Students decide whether assimilation helped or hindered the artists' work.

Evaluate

Students write a letter to the governor to explain the Kiowa Six artists' contributions to Oklahoma and suggest a way to recognize their legacy.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Oklahoma History (9th through 12th grade))

OKH.5.8: Describe the contributions of Oklahomans including African-American jazz musicians, the political and social commentaries of Will Rogers and Woody Guthrie's, Wiley Post's aviation milestones, and the artwork of the Kiowa Six.

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Oklahoma History (9th through 12th grade))

USH.1.3C: Examine the rationale behind federal policies toward American Indians including the establishment of reservations, attempts at assimilation, the end of the Indian Wars at Wounded Knee, and the impact of the Dawes Act on tribal sovereignty and land ownership.

Attachments

- [Art-Analysis-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Art-Analysis-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Art-Analysis-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.docx](#)
- [Art-Analysis-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.pdf](#)
- [Claim-Evidence-Reasoning-CER-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Claim-Evidence-Reasoning-CER-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Claim-Evidence-Reasoning-CER-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.docx](#)
- [Claim-Evidence-Reasoning-CER-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.pdf](#)
- [It-s-OPTIC-al-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.docx](#)
- [It-s-OPTIC-al-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [It-s-OPTIC-al-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.docx](#)
- [It-s-OPTIC-al-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.pdf](#)
- [Kiowa-Six-Paintings-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Kiowa-Six-Paintings-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Kiowa-Six-Paintings-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.docx](#)
- [Kiowa-Six-Paintings-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.pdf](#)
- [Kiowa-Six-Reading-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Kiowa-Six-Reading-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Kiowa-Six-Reading-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.docx](#)
- [Kiowa-Six-Reading-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.pdf](#)
- [Lesson-Slides-Transcending-Boundaries-The-Kiowa-Six.pptx](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Kiowa Six Paintings (attached; one painting per group of 3-4 students, plus one set of paintings to display in the classroom)
- It's OPTIC-al handout (attached; one per student)
- Art Analysis handout (attached; one per student)
- Kiowa Six Reading (attached; one per student)
- Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER) handout (attached; one per student)
- Chart tablet paper
- Highlighters
- Pens or pencils

25 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

The attached **Kiowa Six Paintings** document includes one painting from each of the Kiowa Six artists. To prepare for the Engage and Explore activities, print color copies of the paintings as described below.

For the Engage activity, make enough copies of the paintings to provide each group of 3–4 students with one of the six paintings. If you have a large class, you may assign the same painting to more than one group.

For the Explore activity, attach each of the six paintings to a sheet of chart tablet paper. Hang the chart paper at six different locations around the room.

Introduce the lesson using the attached **Lesson Slides**. Display **slide 3** to show students the lesson objectives. Go to **slide 4** to share the essential questions.

Begin the lesson by asking students to think about the first essential question:

How does art reflect culture?

Call on any volunteers to share their ideas. Then, inform students they get to explore this question further by making observations about artwork.

Organize students into working groups of no more than 3–4 students. Pass out the attached **It's OPTIC-al** handout to every student, then give each group one of the six paintings.

Display **slide 5** and review the directions for the [It's OPTIC-al](#) strategy. Allow about 15 minutes for student groups to discuss and complete observations of their assigned painting.

Once groups have completed their observations, use **slides 6–11** to review each painting one by one. As you move to each new slide, ask students from the group assigned to the painting on display to share their observations.

Variation or Differentiation

To provide additional guidance or to shorten the activity, choose just one of the six paintings to display. You may work through the It's OPTIC-al handout as a class, or you may give students time to work through the handout individually before discussing as a class.

20 minutes

Explore

Inform students they get to continue in their roles as art observers and analysts for this portion of the lesson. This time, however, they must look at what all six paintings have in common by participating in a [Gallery Walk](#) while using a variation of the [List-Group-Label](#) strategy.

Pass out the attached **Art Analysis** handout to every student, then display **slide 12** and explain the directions.

Assign a number of students to each of the six paintings hung around the room so that the class is evenly distributed throughout the "gallery." Remind students to bring pencils and their handouts with them as they go to their assigned painting.

Ask students to observe the painting carefully, noting details as they did in the Engage activity. Then, have students rotate clockwise to the next painting and compare it to the first, reflecting on commonalities or similarities between the two. Allow students to quietly observe and analyze on their own at this point, without discussing their observations with others.

Teacher's Note: Make It Brief

The Gallery Walk observations shouldn't consume too much time because students already observed the paintings during the It's OPTIC-al discussion in the Engage portion.

After students have visited three or four paintings while reflecting on their similarities, have them pause and look at box 1 on their handouts. In box 1, ask students to write a few words or phrases to describe the paintings' similarities in each of the following categories:

- Color
- Style or design
- Theme or subject matter

Give students a few minutes to write, then resume the rotation. Once students have visited all six paintings, give them another opportunity to add similarities to their handouts.

After students have finished observing and writing, have everyone return to their original groups from the Engage activity. Give groups a few minutes to discuss and compare their descriptive words and phrases from each of the three categories.

Then, ask students to look at box 2 on their handouts and collaboratively write a few sentences or a short paragraph about the similarities they observed. If you would like students to turn in their Art Analysis handouts at the end of the lesson, remind the class that each student must fill out their own handout with their group's paragraph.

Once students are done writing, ask groups to share their paragraphs with the class.

Group Paragraphs

Student groups' paragraphs should include their observations of color, style or design, and theme or subject matter.

- Regarding color, students' paragraphs might include references to earthy or earth-tone colors; greens, browns, oranges, or watercolors; and/or warm, soft, muted, or matte colors.
- Regarding style or design, students might observe (1) there is no background, (2) these are line drawings with intricate details in clothing or color, and/or (3) the artwork contains Native American designs or motifs.
- Regarding theme or subject matter, students might observe all the paintings are scenes or portraits of Native American people, depicting traditions, culture, or events.

20 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 13**. Inform students that each of the paintings they just analyzed was painted by one of the Kiowa Six artists. Explain that these artists' painting style and techniques were innovative and unique to the Western art world.

Go to **slide 14** and introduce the short video titled "[Explore the West - Kiowa Six](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQuEKWjiuTw)" from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. Play the video.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=QQuEKWjiuTw>

As students watch, ask them to jot down any important facts about the significance of the Kiowa Six and their artwork.

Once students have watched the video and jotted down important facts, have them meet with their original groups again.

Ask student groups to look at box 3 on their Art Analysis handouts and use their notes from the video to rewrite and expand their original paragraphs. Remind students to make sure they include details on the contributions of the Kiowa Six and the significance of their artwork.

Allow 10–15 minutes of writing time, then ask groups to share their expanded paragraphs with the class.

Expanded Paragraphs

Students should expand their paragraphs to include some of these facts from the video:

- The Kiowa Six artists painted Kiowa people and cultural traditions.
- Their work was supported by a nun at the mission school and Susie Peters, a field representative of the Kiowa Agency.
- An OU professor helped the Kiowa artists introduce their work to the Western art world.
- The Kiowa artists received some art instruction, but they were allowed and encouraged to paint what they knew.
- They achieved fame because, in addition to their natural artistic talents, their art style was unique and new to the Western art world.

Display **slide 15** and review the first essential question again: *How does art reflect culture?*

Ask students to draw from their video notes and discussions with their peers as they consider how the work of the Kiowa Six artists reflected their culture.

35 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 16**, which defines acculturation and assimilation.

Explain to students that the story of the Kiowa Six is actually a blend of two opposing stories, like two sides of the same coin: (1) the story of six Kiowa artists' acculturation and assimilation into a predominantly Euro-American society, and (2) the story of six Kiowa artists' efforts to illuminate and preserve Kiowa traditions and heritage in their artwork.

Go to **slide 17** and pass out the attached **Kiowa Six Reading** to every student. As students read, have them use the [Why-Lighting](#) strategy to highlight and annotate one or two sentences in each section that represent its main idea. Allow about 20 minutes for students to work.

Once students have finished, have a whole-class discussion about the reading. Call on volunteers to share their highlighted main ideas as you discuss each section.

Differentiation

If students struggle with reading, consider using the [Jigsaw](#) strategy for students to read collaboratively.

In small groups, assign each student just one of the sections to read. Ask each student to highlight the main idea of their assigned section, then combine students into groups with representatives of the other sections. Have each student share their highlighted section and its main idea with the group, working together to understand the entire reading. This is called a Reading Jigsaw activity.

Ask students to consider the two worlds the Kiowa artists lived in—in one, they lived with their Kiowa families and embraced their Kiowa culture; in the other, they were expected to assimilate into the United States' predominantly European American society.

While students reflect, display **slide 18** and pass out the attached **Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER)** handout to every student. Ask students to think about the second essential question:

Did assimilation help or hinder the work of the Kiowa Six?

After students have had some time to consider the question, go to **slide 19** and share these two alternative claims:

- The Kiowa Six **benefited** from the process of assimilation to become world-famous artists.
- The Kiowa Six preserved their traditions and heritage in their artwork **despite** the system of assimilation.

Ask students to use the [Claim, Evidence, Reasoning \(CER\)](#) strategy to analyze these claims. To begin, have students decide which claim they agree with more and write it in the Claim section of the handout.

Students then should go back through the reading and choose sentences (textual evidence) that support their claim, writing these in the Evidence section of the handout. Finally, students should explain in the Reasoning section why they chose the claim they did and how the evidence supports it.

When students are done, arbitrarily divide the room in half and assign a claim to each side. Ask students to bring their completed handouts with them and, based on their chosen claim, head to one side of the room or the other. Then, have students share their textual evidence and reasoning with like-minded students.

Once students have discussed the handout with their peers, call on volunteers to act as "spokespersons" for each side and explain the textual evidence and reasoning their group discussed.

25 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 20** and pose the final essential question:

What is the legacy of the Kiowa Six?

Have students reflect on all they have learned about the Kiowa Six, including their contributions to Oklahoma and to the art world.

Go to **slide 21**. Ask students to write an email or letter to the governor that explains the legacy and contributions of the Kiowa Six and their artwork. In their emails or letters, students should suggest one way for the state of Oklahoma to honor these artists and recognize their legacy.

Remind students they can use the reading, their Art Analysis paragraphs, and their Claim, Evidence, Reasoning handouts as resources to help them with their writing.

Optional Technology Integration

In lieu of the email or letter, you could have students compose a tweet about the Kiowa Six. Students could write about the Kiowa Six's artistic style and techniques, or they could share information about the artists' cultural contributions. If you would like to have students actually post their tweets, you may want to review them before students post them online.

To assess students' learning, you may choose to collect one or all of the It's OPTIC-al; Art Analysis; and Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER) handouts.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Claim, Evidence, Reasoning. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/156>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery Walk/Carousel. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). It's OPTIC-al. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/99>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Jigsaw. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/179>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). List-Group-Label. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/55>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-Lighting. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128>
- Mopope, S. (1928). Apache Ben [Painting]. Google Arts and Culture. <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/apache-ben-stephen-mopope-1898-1974/rAFm8MuHScByhg>
- National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. (2016). Explore the West - Kiowa Six [Video]. YouTube. <https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/explore/the-kiowa-six/>