

National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum®

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Pre- and Post Visit Lesson Plans

Courtesy of the Kansas City Museum and Union Station, Kansas City, Missouri
Tour Management of Smith Kramer Fine Art Services, Kansas City, Missouri

Pre- and Post-Visit Lesson Plans
for
Pueblo to Pueblo: the Legacy of Southwest Indian Pottery

Pre-Visit Lesson Plan—Craft vs. Art: What are the Differences?

Overview

Many of the potters in *Pueblo to Pueblo: The Legacy of Southwest American Indian Pottery* blur the boundaries between the definitions of art and the traditional craft of pottery. They use familiar techniques, most notably the coiling method traditionally used by Pueblo potters, but many of them have found new techniques and started new traditions among potters in their Pueblo. In this lesson plan, students will be introduced to some of the current trends in contemporary pottery and learn how to describe the difference between traditional crafts and fine art. Overall, students will:

- discuss trends and aesthetics in contemporary pottery;
- verbally describe the differences between traditional crafts and fine art; and
- write about their initial response to some of the artifacts in the exhibition.

Materials

- a pot or other craft item from home that was made by hand (this can include something that was recently made, or possibly an heirloom created by an older adult)
- in-class color reproductions of traditional fine work, such as sculpture
- on-line access to the Minneapolis Institute of Art's ArtConnected website at www.artsconnected.org
- on-line access to Ancient Nations Gallery at www.ancientnations.com
- *Pueblo to Pueblo: The Legacy of Southwest American Indian Pottery* PowerPoint available online at <http://www.nationalcowboymuseum.org/education/lesson-plans/default.aspx>.
- glossary located at the end of this guide

Part I: Traditional Crafts

Directions

Step One: Have the students discuss traditional crafts by relating their definition of craft. Have them answer the following questions:

- What is craft?
- What activities fall within the definition of craft?
- What are the characteristics of craft?
- How would you describe the qualities of objects identified as craft?
- Who traditionally makes crafts?

Step Two: Have the students discuss the craft of pottery. Have them answer the following questions:

- What is a pot?
- What activities fall within the definition of pottery?
- What are the characteristics of pottery?
- What kinds of materials are traditionally used in craft?
- Who traditionally makes pottery?
- In what cultures do you find pottery?

Step Three: Have the students discuss the craft items brought from home. Have them answer the following questions:

- What type of craft is the object?
- What kind of meaning does the object have in your family?
- How would you describe your personal feelings about the object?

Step Four: Ask students who in their class makes crafts or pottery. Have them answer the following questions:

- How did you learn the craft?
- Is this a new tradition in your family or was it handed down?
- Who else in your family creates crafts?

Step Five: Explain to the students that crafts generally mean objects that are made with technical skill and manual dexterity, such as woodworking, sewing, pottery, or basket making, to name a few. Traditional crafts usually are handed down from one generation to the next, and most are historically associated with female customs and norms in society.

Step Six: Divide the class into working groups. Have them research the different Pueblos of the southwest, focusing on the pottery made in this region. Have the students write a brief essay about who traditionally made the pottery in each Pueblo and the materials they used.

Part II: *Art*

Directions:

Step One: Have the students think about the term *art*. Have them answer the following questions:

- What is your definition of art?
- What are some examples of different kinds of art?
- Who traditionally makes art?

Step Two: Use in-class color reproductions of art objects as examples.

Step Three: Have the students consider the differences, or boundaries, between art and craft.

- Can an object be both art and craft?
- Describe an object that is both art and craft.

Step Four: Show the *Pueblo to Pueblo: The Legacy of Southwest American Indian Pottery* PowerPoint. Discuss each image using the script that accompanies the PowerPoint.

Step Five: Have the students respond to the images. Have them answer the following questions:

- Are these objects art or craft? Please explain your answer.
- Do you think the individuals who made these objects think of themselves as artists or craftsman? Why does it matter?
- Do you think it's disrespectful or creative to alter techniques that are passed down for generations and make them your own?
- Which object do you like? Please explain your answer.
- Which object do you dislike? Please explain your answer.

Post-Visit Lesson Plan—Objects and Cultural Identity

Overview of Exhibition

Pottery making in the American Southwest is a tradition that first emerged about two thousand years ago. It is a functional art form that passed from generation to generation over the span of centuries by people living in permanent villages, called pueblos. The pottery of each pueblo was unique and distinguished by a variety of characteristics such as the individual clay source and shape of the vessels as well as the designs, of lack thereof, painted onto the surface. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, these traditions were well established and as a continued number of people began to migrate towards the Southwest, pottery production was quickly transformed from a functional art form for use primarily within Pueblo communities to a highly marketable cultural expression.

This exhibition consists of approximately 70 Pueblo Indian pottery vessels and supporting materials dating from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century's, illustrating the remarkable variety of pottery created during that very dynamic time of transformation. Some of the vessels in the exhibition are conservative and adhere to the traditional style of a particular Pueblo, while others incorporate innovations specifically designed for the market. It is also during this time that certain individuals, such as Nampeyo from Hopi and Maria Martinez from San Ildefonso, became recognized for the quality of their work. The exhibition includes several examples of their work, as well. Through this exhibition, drawn exclusively from the rich collection of Union Station and The Kansas City Museum, visitors will be introduced to the various styles of Pueblo pottery as well as an understanding of the narrative behind its continued development.

When the Spanish first arrived in the area of the United States that is now Arizona and New Mexico, they encountered Native Americans who were living in villages with homes made of adobe and stonework. The Spaniards called them "pueblos," pueblo being the Spanish word for town. The pottery of each pueblo was unique and distinguished by a variety of characteristics such as the individual clay source and shape of the vessels. Designs reflected daily life, including food sources and indigenous wildlife.

In this pre-visit lesson plan, students will collect commercial imagery from magazines, newspapers, or the Internet to visually demonstrate how products can define or reflect cultural practices within a society.

Materials

various national magazines (automobile, fashion, home, entertainment, sports)

various local magazines

poster board

scissors

glue sticks

Directions

Step One:

- Discuss with the students the term culture. Explain that culture refers to a collective group of individuals' skills, arts, and way of life in a given period of time. For example: The culture of a group of people living in the Southwest in the 1500s would be different than a group living in the same region in 2011.
- Have students discuss the culture of people living today and think about what popular commercial items are common that define our everyday way of life. Have them think about communication, transportation, entertainment, and events.

Step Two:

- Have students browse through magazines for images of subjects or items that define our current culture.
- Have them think if these items are subjects are unique to their city or are shared by groups or individuals across the nation or the world.
- Have them cut out these images and create a collage on poster board.

Step Three:

- Have students think of images of items or subjects that are unique to their city. Have them describe places, people, commercial items, or geography that is unique to their city or the region.
- As an extra activity, have students browse the internet for sites specific to their city to learn more about businesses, organizations, events, people, places, or commercial items that are unique to their city.
- Have students browse through magazines or download images from the internet of subjects or items that define their city today.
- Have them cut out these images and create a collage on poster board.

Step Four:

- Have students compare the two collages and have them explain the differences and similarities between the displayed images.

Glossary

Arts and crafts

Arts and crafts generally mean objects made with technical skill and manual dexterity, such as pottery, woodworking, sewing, embroidery, to name a few. Traditionally, arts and crafts are considered a separate art form from fine arts.

Artist

An artist is a person who exhibits skill and produces works that are subject to aesthetic criteria. An artist is a person who makes art.

Clay

A fine-grained aggregate of hydrous silicate particles. It is usually formed by chemical weathering or hydrothermal activity and is defined by geologists by the size of the grain, as well as the content. Clay is plastic when wet, but firm when dry.

Coiling

The method basically has you rollout coils, score them, add slip, and gently pinch them together. Moisture control is critical in this method. You build your form slowly, a few layers at a time.

Fine art

Fine art generally means work created to convey meaning or to express beauty using traditional art forms such as painting, sculpture, drawing, metalsmithing, or photography, to name a few.

Functional or utilitarian

An object is functional when it is intended to be used for a specific purpose, such as a pot made to be used as a container to carry food or water.

Geometric

Design with patterns or shapes such as circles, squares, triangles, rectangles and arcs.

Organic

Design with shapes with a natural look and a flowing and curving appearance. Examples of organic shapes include the shapes of leaves, plants, and animals.

Pottery

Ware, such as vases, pots, bowls, or plates, shaped from moist clay and hardened by heat.

Pueblo

A member of any of about two dozen Native American peoples called 'Pueblos' by the Spanish because they live in pueblos (villages built of adobe and rock)

Tradition

Tradition is the handing down of information, beliefs, practices, or customs from one generation to the next.

Vessel

A vessel is a hollow container, such as a bowl, cup, or vase that is designed to hold something. Its parts generally include a foot or base, walls and opening, a rim or lip, and sometimes shoulders, neck, lid, or handle.