

Learning & Liberty: Painting Puzzle

General

Grade Level

Elementary School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Challenge

Type of Project (Individual/Group/Both)

Group

Duration

60-90 minutes

Challenge Question

You and your team have been asked to uncover the hidden meanings in the painting, *Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences*. But the trick is, you each have a different part of the painting to look at! How can your part of the painting help explain the painting? Working as a team, create a digital poster that explains the meaning of each part of the painting and the whole.

Rationale

In this challenge, students will work in groups of three or four to learn how to:

1. Make observations of persons, objects, and actions in an artwork,
2. Make inferences based on observations in the artwork,
3. Summarize a theme or idea using two or more concepts from the artwork.

This activity is designed to engage elementary students in the examination of the historical and

contemporary relationship between liberty (freedom) and enlightenment (education). It is a good introductory activity to a unit about education's role in society.

Notes to Teacher

There are many symbols of liberty or freedom in the painting: Liberty (based on the Roman goddess Libertas), the cap (represents a conical felt cap given to freed slaves in Ancient Rome), broken chains, a liberty pole and the wreath. It may also be helpful to calculate how long ago 1792 was and to provide a little background knowledge about the time period.

If students need more prompts to look at the painting, here are few to consider: What do you notice? Where does your eye go first? What ideas are expressed? What colors are used? How does it make you feel? What surprises you? What are you most interested in? drawn to?

If time allows, you could have students look at each group's digital posters and leave comments within the Showcase gallery.

Steps

1. Go to My Collection and find four parts of the painting, "Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences." Your teacher will assign each person in your group to look at one part of the painting.
2. On a piece of paper, answer these questions about each part of the painting:
What do you see?
What is happening?
What can you infer?
What do you want to know more about?
3. Share your discoveries with the other members of your group. As a group, how do you think the pieces of the painting fit together? What do you think are the big ideas or messages in the painting?
4. In Create, make a digital poster with your cropped images that explains a) each section of the painting, b) how that ties to the painting's big idea, and c) what you would like to know more about. Using what you have discovered, what would your group title the painting? Why?