



Creating Civically-Engaged Art

How can I use art to portray the qualities of a good leader and citizen?

Overview:

Students will look at various pieces of art through a “reading art” lens to derive meaning about leadership and citizenship. “Reading art” is similar to developing visual literacy or using Visual Thinking Strategies. “Reading art” encourages students to look at certain qualities of visual art that they can then transfer to their own art. Students will take “reading art” strategies and create a piece of art that shows what they think a good leader or citizen looks like. For K-2, this could be what it looks like in their immediate classrooms. For older elementary school students, it could be what it looks like in their own school or closer community. For middle and high school students, you can look at leadership and citizenship at a state, nation or world-wide level, depending on what you are studying in your classrooms. Students can work alone or in groups for the art project piece and use any visual art materials that you have. Partnerships between arts teachers and classrooms teachers are highly encouraged to maximize knowledge in artform and subject area.

Civic engagement encompasses the many ways that people may get involved in their communities to consider and address civic issues. Civic engagement can be a measure or a means of social change. In arts-based civic engagement, the creative process and resulting art work/experience can provide a key focus, catalyst, or space for civic participation, whether it is becoming better informed or actively contributing to the improvement of one’s neighborhood, community, and nation.

- Lesson 1: Develop “reading art” strategies to derive meaning from artwork.
- Lesson 2: Plan civically engaged art.
- Lesson 3: Create art that expresses qualities of leadership and citizenship.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to “read” art to derive meaning by thinking critically about artistic qualities including facial expressions, focal point, gestures, clothing, setting, objects, quantity, color.
- Students will be able to infer about an artist’s purpose in creating art.
- Students will be able to generate individual ideas about what leadership and citizenship looks like in their community.
- Students will be able to transfer ideas about leadership and citizenship into a piece of art using qualities of “reading art” mentioned above.

Essential Questions:

- How does art effect the way I think or act in my community?
- How can I “read” art to derive meaning about leadership and citizenship in my community?
- How can I create art that shows how I feel about citizenship and leadership?
- How can I create art that makes people think a certain way about citizenship or leadership?
- How can I create art that propels others into action about issues I care about?

Supplemental Materials:

- [Artwork for “reading art”](#)
- Folder for images for use in face-to-face lessons
- Planning Page for grades 3-12
- Body outline for grades K-2
- Art materials

Primary Social Studies Civics and History Standards Addressed:

K.4.1 Understand that civic participation takes place in multiple groups and in various forms.

1.4.1 Effective groups have responsible leaders and team members.

2.4.1 Advocate for ideas to improve communities.

3.4.1 Respect the views and rights of others.

4.4.1 Identify, investigate, and analyze multiple perspectives on civic issues.

5.4.1 Construct an understanding of the foundations of citizenship in the United States.

6.1.1 Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources to ask and research historical questions about the Western Hemisphere.

7.4.2 Nations in various regions of the Eastern Hemisphere interact with international organizations, govern, organize, and impact their societies in different ways.

8.4.1 Construct an understanding of the changing definition of citizenship and the expansion of rights of citizens in the United States.

HS 4.1 Research and formulate positions on local, state, and national issues or policies to participate in a civil society.

Primary Visual Arts Standards Addressed:

K.1.1 Identify how artists use visual art and design to communicate.

K.4.1 Recognize that artists and designers contribute and connect to their communities.

1.1.1 Investigate how visual art and design tell the many stories of people, places or things.

1.2.1 Question and respond to the stories told and the feelings expressed in works of visual art and design.

2.1.1 Identify how artists make choices using the language of visual art and design to communicate ideas.

2.4.1 Observe and discuss how visual art and design are evident in the everyday life of communities.

3.1.1 Investigate works of art and design to recognize how to create meaning with purpose and intent.

3.3.1 Plan and create works of visual art and design recognizing various purposes and intentions.

4.1.2 Respond to an artist's point of view being mindful of historical, contemporary and cultural context.

4.3.1 Investigate ideas of personal interest to plan and create works of visual art and design.

5.1.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how works of visual art and design are influenced by the culture of daily life.

5.3.1 Plan works of visual art and design where intended meaning is communicated to viewers.

6.1.3 Utilize key concepts, issues and themes to connect the visual arts to other disciplines.

6.4.1 Infer from works of visual art and design, using interdisciplinary knowledge, how diverse communities address issues relevant to their culture, place and times.

7.1.2 Recognize and interpret works of art through the lens of time, place and culture.

7.4.3 Communicate messages about societal problems through the creative process.

8.1.1 Interpret works of art using the language of visual art and design and conceptual art frameworks.

8.4.1 Interpret the ways individual makers become agents that express the interdependent relationship between art, culture and social contexts.

HS.1.1 Utilize the inquiry method of observation and the language of visual art and design to gather information and determine meaning.

HS.4.3 Utilize the practice of artmaking, and research historical and cultural contexts, to discern between different viewpoints, critique social problems and effect social change.



Tell students that today you will be looking at a variety of art and using a tool called "reading art." "Reading art" is just like reading words. It's a language to help you understand the ideas of the author, or in this case, the artist.

Teach the students the first part of the chant. The chant should be done in a sing song, roller coaster voice WITH the gestures. The sing-song, roller coaster voice as well as the gestures are very important in order for memorization!

Phase 1: *Facial expressions (circle face with finger), focal point (hands to eyes and out), gesture (swing arm), clothing (touch shoulders of clothing)*

Using the qualities of phase 1, look through the art provided in the power point. Use art that is most relevant to your students and what you are teaching in class. You can also use art that you have viewed before or have wanted to view with your students. Talk through each quality of phase 1. Use small groups, whole class or other conversation structures you already use in class. If you are familiar with "I see, I think, I wonder" this is a great opportunity to use that structure.

- What do you notice about the *facial expressions*? What does that tell you? What is the artist trying to say?
- What do you notice about the *focal point* or where the people are looking in the art? What does that tell you? What is the artist trying to say?
- What are the *gestures* of the people in the piece of art? What does that tell you? What is the artist trying to say?
- What *clothes* are the people wearing? What does that tell you? What is the artists trying to say?

Phase 2: *Setting (draw a picture frame)*

Go back to the same art that you used for phase 1 and add "setting."

- What is the setting of the piece of art? What does that tell you? What do you think the artist is trying to say?

Phase 3: *Object (fist inside other hand), quantity (count on fingers), size (hands up and down), color (splatter paint like you are holding paint brush)*

Sometimes an artist uses objects, the quantity of objects, the size of the objects and the color of them to communicate something. Let's look at objects.

- What objects do you see? How many do you see? Are they big or small? What color are they?
- When you think about the objects in the artwork, what does that tell you? What is the artist trying to communicate?

Let's put it all together.

Ask these questions:

- How does this art make you feel about leadership or citizenship?
- What is this art saying about leadership or citizenship?
- Does it make you want to go out and do something? Why?
- Does it make you feel a certain way? Why?
- Does the art change your view about citizenship or leadership?

Sentence starters examples or make up your own:

- This art makes me think _____ about leadership because _____ (insert "reading art" qualities.)
- This piece of art makes me want to _____ because I see that the artist used _____ (insert "reading art" qualities.)
- Because of _____ in this artwork, now I think _____.
- Because of _____ in this artwork, now I want to do _____ in my community.
- This artwork changed the way I think about _____ because how the artist _____.
- Example: This art makes me think that leadership is important because all of the facial expressions are serious.

Move through 3-5 pieces of art in this session. With each new piece of art, have students say the chant out loud with the gestures so they begin to memorize it. You can also structure conversations so that small groups of students are looking at a piece of art together using the "reading art" strategies and then rotating the artwork around the room. Since all grades have different standards, this is a great opportunity to structure questions around your standards.



Last session, we learned strategies for “reading art.” Let’s review the chat! “Facial expressions, focal point, gestures, clothing, setting, objects, quantity, size, color.” Chant and do the gestures. We learned that artists think about all of these aspects when making art, especially if they want to portray certain meaning, make you feel a certain way or want you to act on an issue.

Now it’s your turn! You will create a piece of art about what you think a good leader or citizen looks like. Use this planning template to help you below.

Before passing out the planning page, have students discuss in small groups these questions:

- What are the qualities of a good leader?
- What are the actions of a good leader?
- What are the qualities of a good citizen?
- What are the action of a good citizen?

This is a great opportunity to insert questions around standards that you are trying to address. You can also edit the planning page to meet your standards as well.

Depending on the grade you are teaching, you can present these questions on the planning template in various formats that work with your students.

For younger grades, 3rd and younger, the planning page may not be appropriate. You might find another way to help students begin to think about the artwork they would make by including some of the elements of the planning page. This could look like brainstorming as a class what a good leader looks like in your class, the school or in Colorado Springs and then start to work through the “reading art” qualities. Or, included is a body template where they can draw and write qualities of a good leader or citizen.

By the end of this session, students should be ready to create a piece of art next class.



It's time to create your piece of civically engaged art! Let's remember the qualities of art through our "reading art" chant. "facial expressions, focal point, gestures, clothing, setting, objects, quantity, size, color." Use your planning page to create your civically engaged art piece.

Teachers, you know your students and how long this will take. You also know what materials you have. Plan accordingly.

The goal is for students to engage with the "reading art" technique to express their idea of what the qualities are of a good leader and citizen. If there are certain standards you are trying to meet as well, this is the time to emphasize those as well.

Ideas for sharing:

- Send to COPPR! We would love to see what you create and share it with the community! If there are any pieces that stand out to you, please send to dylan@culturaloffice.org
- Display in class or on bulletin boards in the hallways
- Share with other classes and get insight into how the art affects their thoughts, feelings and actions
- Share at conferences or parent nights
- Share with your community through social media

To find partnerships in arts-integration, supplement curriculum or expose students to the arts, check out arts education programs on PeakArtsEd, <https://www.PeakRadar.com/ArtsEd>



Supplemental Materials

Civically Engaged Art Planning Page

Describe the top 3 qualities of what you think a good leader or citizen are:

LEADER	CITIZEN
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Which one would you like to create a piece of art about? Leader or Citizen?

Think and discuss:

- Do you want your artwork to change someone's mind?
- Do you want your artwork to make the viewer feel a certain way?
- Do you want your artwork to make the viewer go do something?

Explain:-----

Using the "reading art" qualities below, begin to describe what each would look like in your artwork. You may also draw! You can go in any order.

Facial Expression	
Focal Point	

Gestures	
Clothing	
Setting	
Objects	
Quantity	
Size	
Color	

You are ready to create you piece of art!

Draw the qualities of a good leader or citizen using Facial expressions, focal point, gestures, clothing, setting, objects, quantity, size, color

