

Introduction to Picturing America

Allow approximately two 45 minute periods.

Objective: Introduce Picturing America Program and expose students to entire collection.

Outline:

Grant – National Endowment for the Humanities*
American Library Association

Collection – Pieces of art that portray typically American culture and history

Themes of the collection:

- Democracy,
- Leadership,
- Landscape,
- Courage,
- Creativity and Ingenuity,
- Freedom and Equality.

Warm up Activities: Play observation game using *Midnight Ride of Paul Revere* by Grant Wood

1. Display painting to whole group.
2. View painting for timed minute.
3. Cover painting with drape.
4. Send one student from the room for a timed minute.
5. Bring student back into room and have them stand so that they cannot see the painting but the class can.
6. Have student describe the painting from memory to the class.
7. Discuss students' levels of observations and skill of "active viewing".

Display each poster in collection asking students to share observations. Guide the discussion away from opinions and evaluative statements which may influence others interpretations.

Use Visual Thinking Strategies (Lukehart, 2010)

Leader asks students to take a few minutes to look closely at an image and then ask these and only these questions:

1. What is going on in this picture?
2. What do you see that makes you say that?
3. What else can you find?

The leader continually paraphrases student responses, while

- increasing the accuracy of the language without making participants feel corrected,
- validating individual views,
- connecting observations, and
- pointing out differences of opinion.

Participants must provide visual evidence to support their interpretations.

After short discussion, give students basic information provided on poster about each piece.