

Viewing and Representing: Connecting Visual and Language Arts

GRADES 1 TO 6

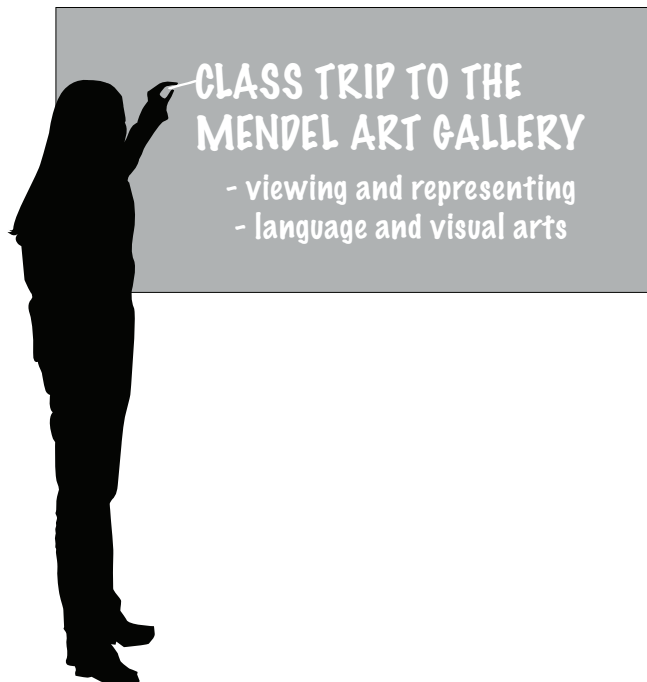




introduction

This school program develops art-viewing strategies for Grade 1 to 6 students and their teachers, and embraces the two recent additions to Saskatchewan Education's Language Arts curriculum, *Viewing and Representing*. Activities developed around the exhibitions at the Mendel Art Gallery include the following three components:

1. *Pre-visit Activities* relating to viewing art.
2. *An Interactive Visit* to the Mendel to apply viewing strategies to original art in a gallery setting.
3. *Follow-up Activities* for the classroom that can be reapplied anytime by teachers in the classroom. Note that the Saskatoon Public Library has kindly contributed a bibliography of picture books for teachers to use through the library.



what to do before your visit

– suggested activities

Logistical Preparations

1. We will need some extra adults to help to read some of the activity handouts for small groups. Please invite parents or guardians to join your group; we welcome their assistance with keeping the group together, handing out supplies, and participating in group activities.
2. For security reasons, students and chaperones must bring and wear readable name tags.
3. Review the Gallery do's (asking questions, making things, having fun, seeing neat stuff, stay with the group, raise your hand) and don'ts (no touching the art, no running); we will review these when they arrive, but the students are always so proud when they can tell us the rules rather than the other way around.
4. A Program Guide will call you two or more weeks prior to your visit to discuss particulars. We have generated a long list of activities that support the viewing and representing strands of the Language Arts curriculum. You can help us to select the most appropriate for your group.
5. Although the Mendel provides most of the supplies, your Program Guide may ask you to bring some items, such as a box to carry home artwork or student notebooks.
6. We recommend that you preview the exhibitions. Our exhibitions are rated ☺M: ☺open Minds required.



To better prepare your students, choose one or more of the following activities.

1. *What is Art?*

Mendel Art Gallery exhibitions deal with a broad approach to artmaking. Students will experience a multi-sensory approach to art. Engage students in a discussion about the nature of art using some of the following questions (we will challenge some of their responses during their interactive visit).

- *What does art look like?
- *What subjects can art be about? List them.
- *Of what materials can art be made? List them.
- *Does the degree to which the artwork represents the real world, in a realistic style, determine whether or not it is art? Why?
- *Where do you find art (art galleries, homes, businesses, shopping malls, parks, etc)?
- *How is art displayed?
- *What do you think art does?

2. The Saskatoon Public Library has generously provided a list of recommended children's picture books for you to use in the classroom (see attached). They have also included a few suggestions for activities.
3. Choose a written story or poem and ask students to recreate it as a storyboard using visual depictions of key scenes.
4. Ask students to generate a list of questions about the Mendel, and art, to review with the Program Guide during their visit. At the gallery, students will discover some of the answers in a self-directed manner, followed by a group discussion with our Guide. Faxing the list to the Guide before the visit is much appreciated (fax: 975.7670).

5. *Directed Viewing-Thinking Activity* [DVTA]

The focus of a “DVTA” is making observations and predictions. Give students the basic information on an exhibition as outlined in your Mendel package, and ask students to make predictions about what they will see at the Mendel. While at the Gallery, students can confirm or reject their predictions by finding proof.

6. Write a song about art or the Mendel to sing to your Program Guide during your visit.
7. Review the Art Vocabulary sheet with your students (see attached).
8. Any of the proceeding Follow-up Classroom Activities can also be used to prepare students for their visit.

while at the Mendel Art Gallery..

You will experience a highly interactive program, which will include conversation, art-related games, demonstrations, short projects, and longer hands-on workshops. We will select works from the exhibitions that best connect to the *viewing and representing* theme. Your Program Guide will fax you a brief description of the exhibitions.





follow-up classroom activities

1. Saskatoon Public Library

The Saskatoon Public Library has generously provided a list of recommended children's picture books (see attached). Be adventurous in terms of recommended grades; students are quite sophisticated in their interests. You might take special notice of some books involving local artists: *Hello Sky* with images by local artist Wendy Weseen is about a family walk along the Meewasin Trail, and Miranda Jones did the illustrations for *Kate Can't Wait* and *The Floating Orchard*.

2. Make a Picture Book

Postmodern picture books challenge traditional formats. For example, postmodern books may:

- * draw attention to the fact that they are indeed books
- * be sarcastic in tone
- * give the reader a choice as to the depth of participation
- * be playful
- * have illustrations that are not referenced in the text
- * have many meanings
- * not have one linear narrative
- * layer ideas and images.

To experience this, students can make a postmodern picture book by drawing a frame around each page—the frame will contain a different story than the one that is being told within the frame. The two stories may have visual or textual connections, may run parallel, or have no obvious connection.

3. Reading, Writing and Art

Exercising art skills can improve students reading abilities. Studying lines, shapes, colours, unity/space and emphasis can help students to understand letters and comprehend words. For example, ask students to consciously incorporate lines in their artmaking that are horizontal, diagonal, vertical and curved. These lines also comprise the letters of the alphabet. Horizontal lines usually focus our eyes in a left to right or right to left movement, and diagonal lines point our eyes in the direction of the slant; studying this movement trains the eyes to be aware of the zigzag rhythms associated with reading. Shapes in art have positive and negative space, just like letters of the alphabet. Colours are often associated with certain objects, and may help students to identify and link objects to words in a text. Unity and space relate to the spatial connections of words and sentences; through art students can learn that the closer the symbols are placed together, the more they relate. Lastly, contrast in art creates emphasis—contrast in the size of shapes, lines, the spacing of shapes and the colours. This is similar to concepts such as capitalization and punctuation in writing.

(Allan G. Richards, *Arts and Academic Achievement in Reading: Functions and Implications*, Art Education, November 2003, pg 19–23).

4. Writing about Art

Ask students to write a “critique” about an artwork they remember best from their gallery visit (to tell the story of what they saw), or based on a reproduction of any artist’s work, or even a classmate’s work. The assignment could include: a general description of the work (media, title, date, tools used, etc.); a discussion about how the artwork was put together using the elements of art and principles of design; an interpretation of how it makes you feel or what it reminds you of; extra knowledge about the artist or subject; and a conclusion about what you think the artist is trying to tell us. Interviewing the artist can help. List all the things that the artwork does (see *Categorizing the Functions of Art*).



5. A Twist on Television Genres

Ask students to list different categories of television formats (e.g. talk show, news broadcast, sitcom, game show, soap opera, commercial, etc.). Divide students into groups. Ask each group to select one of the television categories and an artist/artwork/art movement to research. Encourage them to use various texts to find information—the Internet, illustrated print text, art reproductions, video, etc. Next, students will write and perform a piece around the information gathered about the art, recreating the typical elements of the television format they selected. For example: Picasso could be on a talk show; they could do a commercial selling a Group of Seven painting; after handing out research summaries to the class they could organize a game show around the answers; they could write a soap opera around an artist's life; and more.

6. Create a Video or Audio Work

Using video or audiotape, students will create a media work. They can either produce several works in small groups, or divide the class into teams to accomplish specific jobs (writers, prop builders, sound effects team, technical support, etc.). The topic is up to them or you.

7. Book Jackets

Ask students to design a book jacket to sell the same book to different groups of people. They will need to consider the tastes, lifestyles and interests of each specific group.

8. School Maps

Students will review a map of the school. They will carry it along and explore the real three-dimensional space it describes. Is anything surprising or confusing about the relationship between the map and the real space? Ask students to draw a map of the classroom. For an extra challenge, have them do it to scale.

or

What if there was another world or place underneath your school? Draw a map of the tunnels, and name the places. What kind of people would live there? Who do you think you might meet in the underground school? Show us what they look like? How would people living in this underground world move around? What kind of vehicle could they use?

9. Categorizing the Functions of Art

This activity enables students to generate a list of the functions of images (e.g. decorate, narrate, document, express, entertain, teach, stir emotions, comment on political or social issues, moralize, heal, experiment with new ideas or materials, etc.). Assemble a broad collection of student artwork, or a number of images from any source, to categorize the images by their function. When asked what art does, students may have answers like *art collects dust* and *costs lots of money*. Turn these into teaching moments, such as *artwork collects dust when it hangs on a wall—why do we hang art on walls?* Students will discover that some images may fall into several categories. For example, an image may illustrate a news article and comment on a local political event. This activity should promote lots of discussion. You could simplify the activity by writing a few functions on word cards and have students match images with the corresponding card.



10. Object Literacy

This activity begins with an everyday object and takes a critical look at both its function and the larger implications of what it says about society. Choose an object with the potential to generate a great deal of discussion, such as a skateboard, a “disposable” McDonald’s hamburger box, a “Swiffer” cleaning tool, a can of soda pop, a box of “Lean Cuisine,” a dish detergent bottle, etc. Propose a series of questions—begin by asking students to describe the shape, colour, texture, size and material the object is made from. Then proceed to the functions of the object and how its design supports those functions, who uses it, how it’s used, etc. Finally, elicit statements about what that object says about societal values. For example, the McDonald’s packaging may lead to comments on our throwaway society, landfill management, nutritional concerns, and lifestyle priorities.

You may further this activity by asking for written reports about what they learned, or by asking them to individually repeat this exercise with another object of their choosing and present their discoveries (e.g. orally, in pictures, in writing, developing a chart or diagram explaining the interconnectedness of the object to society, etc.).

(sk8boarding Online Teacher Resource, www.mendel.ca, sk8 Lesson 1).

11. Altered Books

Altering existing books is a popular activity connected to *scrapbooking*. Pre-existing books, preferably those with sewn binding (for strength), are recycled by making them into “art books.” You can paint it, reconstruct the cover, collage fabrics and photos onto pages, embellish it with beads and buttons, write your own text, or turn it into a three-dimensional sculpture. The only limit is your imagination.

art vocabulary

– suggested by Saskatchewan Learning

Abstract Art	A style of art that uses lines, shapes, colours and textures to depict an object without attention to depicting the object in a realistic manner.
Analogous Colour	Colours that are beside each other on the colour wheel.
Art Criticism	The process and result of critical thinking about art. It usually involves the description, analysis and interpretation of art, as well as some kind of judgement.
Assemblage	Sculpture consisting of many objects and materials which have been put together.
Art Forms	Classifications of artworks (painting, sculpture, drawing, installation, etc.).
Asymmetrical	Uneven and irregular.
Background	Part of the picture plane that seems to be farthest from the viewer.
Balance	Principle of design that deals with arranging the visual elements in a work of art for harmony of design and proportion.
Collage	A work of art made from pieces of pictures, paper, found materials, etc. juxtaposed and glued to a surface.
Complementary Colours	Colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel.
Composition	Arrangements of elements in a work of art.
Contour lines	Contour lines define edges, ridges or outlines of a shape or form.
Contrast	Degree of difference. For example, there is a high degree of contrast between black and white.



Constructed Environment	Human-made surroundings (buildings, bridges, roads, classrooms, etc.).
Cool Colours	Green, blue and purple. Colours often associated with cool places, things or feelings.
Culture	Behaviours, ideas, skills and customs of a group of people.
Emphasis	Principle of design that stresses one element or area to attract the viewer's attention first.
Elements of Art	Colour, texture, line, shape and form.
Focal Point	Area of an artwork which attracts the viewer's attention first. Contrast, location, isolation, convergence and the unusual are used to create focal points.
Foreground	Part of a picture which appears closest to the viewer and often is at the bottom of the picture.
Geometric Shapes	Circle, square, rectangle, triangle, etc.
Geometric Forms	Cube, cylinder, sphere, etc.
Harmony	Refers to ways similarities in a work are accentuated to create an uncomplicated, uniform appearance.
Hidden Line	The illusion of line. Hidden lines are created by repetition of colours, shapes, images, etc. For example, the pickets of a fence create a hidden line.
Hue	Colour.
Illusion	A deceptive or misleading image.
Image-making	Depicting people or objects in two and three dimensions.
Installation Art	A work of art which is made for and placed within a certain space. It can activate the viewer to become involved in the space or react to the environment.
Mass Media	Means of communicating to large numbers of people (radio, television, magazines, etc.).
Media	Artists' materials (paint, graphite, clay, etc.).

Middleground	Area in a picture between the foreground and the background.
Mixed Media	Any artwork which uses more than one medium.
Natural Environment	Natural surroundings (trees, rocks, grass, etc.).
Negative Space	Space around an object or form.
Non-representational Artworks	Works that do not contain representations of real objects.
Organic Shapes and Forms	Shapes and forms that are free-flowing and non-geometric.
Paths of Movement	Hidden lines that draw a viewer's eye from one element or image to another.
Pattern	Lines, colours or shapes repeated in a planned way.
Point of View	The angle from which something is viewed.
Perspective	The illusion of depth; the relationship between objects as to position, distance, etc. Method used to create the illusion of space on a two-dimensional surface. It can be created by overlapping, placement, detail, colour intensity or value, converging lines and size variations.
Picture Plane	The surface of a drawing or painting.
Primary Colours	Red, yellow, blue.
Positive Space	Shapes or forms on a two-dimensional surface.
Proportion	Principle of design concerned with the relationship of one object to another with respect to size, amount, number and degree.
Principles of Design	Emphasis, balance, movement, repetition, variety, contrast and unity.
Repetition	Technique for creating unity and rhythm by using a single element or motif over and over again.
Representational Artworks	Works that contain representations of real objects. These works can be realistic or abstract.



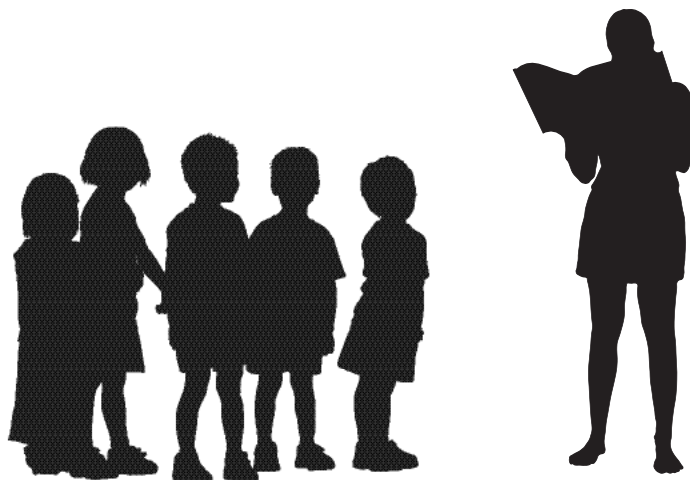
Rhythm	Principle of design that repeats elements to create the illusion of movement. Rhythm can be random, regular, alternating, progressive and flowing.
Secondary Colours	Colours made by combining two primary colours (orange, green and purple are secondary colours.)
Shade	Dark value of a colour made by adding black.
Shape	Element of art that is two-dimensional and encloses space. Shapes are usually geometric or organic and have length and width.
Space	Space in an artwork can be the area around, within or between images or elements. Space can be created on a two-dimensional surface by using such techniques as overlapping, object size, placement, colour intensity and value, detail and diagonal lines.
Style	Style is the artist's ways of presenting things. Use of materials, methods of working, design qualities, choice of subject matter, etc. reflect the individual, culture or time period.
Subject	A topic or idea represented in an art work.
Symbols	Objects that are intended to represent something other than themselves.
Symmetrical	The same on both sides when divided down the middle.
Tertiary Colours	Those colours that fall between primary and secondary colours on the colour wheel.
Tint	Light value of a colour made by adding white.
Visual Balance	Balance created by manipulation of the formal elements, placement of images, consideration of visual weight, etc.
Unity	Principle of design that gives the feeling that all parts are working together.
Value	The lightness or darkness of a colour.
Vanishing Point	In perspective drawing, a point or points on the horizon where receding parallel lines seem to meet.

Visual Information

Any information that is gathered through the sense of sight.

Warm Colours

Red, yellow and orange. They suggest warm places, things and feelings.





MendelArtGallery

Open 9 to 9 daily. Admission is free.
phone 306.975.7610 online www.mendel.ca
950 Spadina Crescent East, Saskatoon, SK

