

Illustrating Stories of the American West

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Introduction

This unit is the result from taking the Delaware Teachers Institute seminar “The American West as Place, Process, and Story” with University of Delaware’s Barry Joyce, Associate Professor of History. Not only will it fit into our art curriculum, but it will also increase the students’ knowledge of the American West and add an appreciation of tales that are a part of it. This unit will allow students to make cross-curricular connections between social studies, literature, geography, reading, writing, and art. After studying the American West with its rich history, art, and stories, my students will then select and research a folk tale, legend, myth, story, tall tale or Native American story from the west and capture a moment from their selections on paper in a color illustration. They will analyze and evaluate their own work and that of their peers in critiques. The unit will culminate with an art show for the community featuring the student illustrations.

As one of three art teachers at Newark High School in Newark, Delaware, I plan to teach this unit in two of my classes. My Art Fundamentals class is our foundations course with an enrollment of over 30 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students. The other class is my small upper level Advanced Drawing class that is composed of juniors and seniors who have more advanced skills. Newark High School is a Title 1 school with a population that is over 50% minority, 43% low income and 7% special education. Newark has an A/B rotating block schedule. My classes are hour and a half blocks that meet every other day and they reflect the school’s diverse population.

Content Objectives

Students will learn what makes the American West such a unique geographic part of the country with its own distinct and unique physical and cultural characteristics. They will gain a greater understanding of the diverse groups of people who migrated west and some of the tribes of Western Native Americans.

They will become familiar with Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran’s sweeping romantic landscapes, Frederic Remington and Charles Marion Russell’s sculptures and dramatic paintings that often tell stories, and the Native American portraits of George Catlin. Also introduced will be the iconic western paintings of Georgia O’Keeffe from a later time period and the contemporary “camouflage” paintings of Beverly Doolittle that feature Naïve Americans and scenes from the west. They will be exposed to information about specific western artists and famous illustrators in general. The grand scale

sculptures such as the unfinished Crazy Horse Monument, Mount Rushmore, and other monuments will not be neglected; students will be exposed to their fascinating origins and meanings.

After studying some of the styles of famous illustrators, the students should be able to compare and contrast the styles and evaluate the techniques that the artists used. They should be able to incorporate some of these techniques into the designs and renditions of their own illustrations. *From Sea to Shining Sea- a Treasury of American Folklore and Folk Songs* is illustrated with art from 15 Caldecott Medal and Honor Book artists and the students will observe and compare them. Included in that book are the Pacific Northwest story *Raven Brings Fresh Water* (1) and the Cherokee tale *Grandmother Spider Steals the Sun* in which the readers will discover why Possum has a furless tale and Buzzard has a featherless head and how Grandmother Spider succeeded where they failed. (2) Also included will be *Coyote Helps Decorate the Night*, a Hopi story about the creation of stars, (3) and *The Gods Made Man*, a Navajo creation myth. (4) All four of these stories have been illustrated by Caldecott winners Leo and Diane Dillon. Caldecott winner David Wiesner illustrated the two railroad stories *Death of an Iron Horse*, a tale about the 1867 derailment and destruction of a Union Pacific freight train by Cheyennes (5) and *The Iron Moonhunter*, a story about the Chinese immigrants (*Tong Yun*) who built a ghost train out of spare parts to honor their countrymen who died so far from home while building the railroad. (6) The last story that students will examine from this book will be *Iktome and the Duck*, a Sioux tale illustrated by Caldecott winner Trina Schart Hyman that is about how the trickster Iktome, the spider man, tricked all the ducks in a pond but one. (7) After reading each story and analyzing the illustrations, students will decide if the illustration styles appropriately fit the stories. After discussion, the students will also understand the honor of winning a Caldecott award. This book will be one of the resources available for student use in the classroom so that they can refer to the illustrations and stories at any time.

For homework, students will each select a favorite children's book and explain on paper the qualities that have endeared these books to them. That will transition into a lesson on children's illustrators. After being exposed to them, they will also be able to identify the work of Chris Van Allsburg of *Jumanji* and *The Polar Express* fame, Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel), David Macaulay with his diagrams and constructions of structures such as cathedrals and castles, Jerry Pinkney who, among other things, is known for his African American themes and N C Wyeth. I am including N. C. Wyeth because his studio is in our "backyard" and is within visiting distance. His studio and house are part of the Brandywine River Museum in Pennsylvania and his famous *Treasure Island* illustrations are permanently on display there.

Students will also explore tall tales, folk tales, myths and legends from the American West along with Native American stories and develop an understanding of the purposes that they serve. They should be able to analyze some of the major differences and

similarities and categorize given examples. Mary Pope Osborne in her introduction to *American Tall Tales* wrote, “Tall talk, or exaggerated storytelling, began in the 1800s as a way for Americans to come to terms with the vast and inhospitable lands that they had come to inhabit-...” and she continued with, “The heroes and heroines of the tales were like the land itself- gigantic, extravagant, restless, and flamboyant.” (8)

D. L. Ashliman in *Folk and Fairy Tales* described myths as “One of the simple forms of literature, myths are traditionally narratives depicting and explaining universal concerns and fundamental issues, such as the creation of the world, the reasons why humans speak different languages, the origins of social class, and the like.” (9) Students will read and develop an understanding of a variety of myths. In *American Indian Myths and Legends*, the authors have arranged the stories that they have collected into three categories. They are “*Rabbit Boy Kicked Blood Clot Around: Tales of Human Creation*,” “*Something Whistling in the Night: Ghosts and the Spirit World*,” and “*Only the Rocks and Mountains Last Forever: Visions of the End*.” (10) The authors have also noted from which tribe each story originated. Students will read a small selection from the 166 myths and legends in the three sections, concentrating on those from tribes in the American West. Most of these stories are very short. Some may not be as appropriate, depending on the students’ ages and maturity levels. That issue will be tackled head on with a discussion on maturity and sophistication and the handling of more mature subject matter. To increase their understanding, the first story will be read out loud together in class and then the students will discuss in which of the three categories they think it belongs. The meaning of the story will be discussed. Other stories will then be read in class and some will be given as homework.

Students will understand the difference between myths and legends. Ashliman in *Folk and Fairy Tales* wrote, “...a legend is an account that claims to be true, in contrast to FAIRY TALES and ordinary FOLKTALES, which are completely fictitious. However, many traditional legends depict events such as encounters with dragons, fairies,... all within the realm of belief for past generations but now relegated to the world of SUPERSTITION and FANTASY.” (11)

Students will be exposed to stories from different sources. Evan Pritchard in *Native American Stories of the Sacred* has included explanations for each story. Students will read selected stories from his book along with the explanations for greater understanding. Among his offerings are creation myths, coyote and trickster tales, “why” stories and stories that deal with the sun, heroes, and the origin of fire. (12) Students should enjoy the universality of some of these stories, including the plentiful coyote stories. Ashliman, in *Folk and Fairy Tales*, wrote this about trickster tales, “From ancient times (Aesop himself is reported to have been a clever trickster) and in virtually all known cultures, storytellers have delighted their audiences with accounts of individuals (typically underlings) duping their victims...Tricksters often set up their victims by feigning foolishness...” (13) Pritchard wrote, “These “stories of the sacred,” ... are wisdom tales

for children and adults that contain elegantly simple illustrations of time-tested teachings that refer to that which is sacred. Most of these insights are so universal and eternal that they have been noticed and preserved in stories worldwide.” (14)

After studying symbols and their uses in different cultures, students will be able to use them in their artwork to add meaning. They will better understand the impact of effectively used symbols on a viewer. John Gast’s *Westward Ho* will be one of the paintings analyzed for use of symbolism. Another objective is to jump start student thinking with daily posted essential questions for that day’s material. The essential questions for the day that features *Westward Ho* could be, “What do you think west or going west symbolize to people?,” “Why did people want to go west?” and “Who do you think is the woman pictured and why do you think the artist made her so darn big?”

After gaining an understanding of the American West and tall tales, legends, myths and other stories, students will learn about fashion design basics and figure drawing, colored pencil techniques, illustration, and drawing western landscape elements. Using what they have learned, students will choose a moment from an American Western folktale, tall tale, or story or a Native American myth or legend and create a dynamic original illustration in predominantly colored pencil. They will effectively use the elements of art and the principles of design in their illustrations. Creation is at the apex of the Bloom’s Taxonomy pyramid. They will be able to effectively evaluate and analyze their own art and that of their peers in class critiques. The unit will culminate in an art display of the students’ illustrations, meeting the goal of sharing student learning with the parents and community. An opening reception will be held in the evening.

Teaching Strategies

In order to maximize student learning and sustain interest, a variety of teaching strategies will be used in the teaching of this unit. A stimulating opening introduction to this unit will be Barry Joyce’s opening seminar activity in which he used a projected map from a computer of the United States to start a discussion on the location of the American West. It should make my students think as much as it made our DTI seminar members rethink our beliefs when he used it with us. Since I plan to teach this unit in two classes of varying size and ability levels, I plan to adapt most of these activities slightly to fit each group. I would have each of my Advanced Drawing students hazard a map guess, but in my larger Art Fundamentals class, I would select three or four volunteers to offer guesses. A large hands-on art class offers special challenges dealing with space, time and materials (or lack of). If the classroom has a Smart board by the time the unit is taught, then the students can actually draw their perceived boundaries on the board one at a time.

At Newark High School each block’s activities are often opened with a “Stinger” (so named because Newark is the home of the Yellow Jackets). This is a short introductory activity that greets students when they arrive and is completed while the teacher takes attendance. This strategy maximizes student engagement time. I keep a pile of scrap

paper for written responses on the TV stand and attach posters with Velcro to the TV. I have a poster for each class that has been laminated so that I can write with dry markers on each ahead of time and they can be erased easily. An example of a Stinger would be the display of the unfinished Crazy Horse Monument with the question, "What is this?" After the students' responses are collected, then a slide would be shown of the indoor table model of the finished monument with the actual unfinished monument cliff shown in the distance outside of the window. This would serve as a starting point for discussion about this and other monuments. Exit tickets are another strategy that will be used to monitor student learning.

In Advanced Drawing I plan to follow up with the CRISS "Think Pair Share" (15) strategy and have pairs of students list in a set amount of time all the things that they can name that deal uniquely with the American West. Then we would fill a chart with their responses to hang in the room. Since my Art Fundamentals class has approximately three times the number of students, the students would work in groups by tables instead. This would be followed by an overview of the American West delivered through power points, visuals and stories. Some of the introductions from Ken Burn's *The West* series will be shown in class.

Students will be reading a variety of short stories so miscellaneous teaching strategies will be employed to maintain freshness and student interest. Bryd Baylor in *And it is Still That Way, Legends Told by Arizona School Children*, wrote that "Indians say that no one is supposed to fall asleep while a storyteller is speaking. In the old days even the littlest children had to pay attention to every word or the storyteller would stop. So it used to be that whenever he would pause every person would quickly make some sign that he was listening. The Papagos always repeated the last word they had heard. The Hopis answered with a soft Hopi sound, barely louder than a breath." (16) Many of the stories that will be read are quite short and even the students with the shortest attention spans should have no problems staying focused. Before the first longer story is read, the class members can offer suggestions and vote on a class signal that is a sign or verbal cue that that will show that they have been listening. This is will be similar to the practice of Native Americans.

Some of the stories will be read aloud by the teacher during class. Some will be read aloud by student volunteers, also during class. Others will be read silently using Cornell notes or annolightling the important parts with a highlighter. What is deemed important may differ depending on the story and what the instructor wants students to learn from each particular story.

Selections such as *Camels for Arizona* and *Slim Woman and the Navajos* from Dorothy Daniels Andersons' *Arizona Legends and Lore- Tales of Southwestern Pioneers* are examples of longer stories. In that book she wrote, "Nothing expresses true history more vigorously than the tales of the people who lived it." (17) The students can consider this and break it down. They can explore how something "true" can best be expressed as a

tale. To enable exposure to the content of more stories, each student will not read each one of these stories but instead students will work in pairs or small groups and read a story and then write a short summary together of only their assigned story. Then each group will present their synopsis to the entire class.

Native Americans wrote stories for different reasons and Karen Bush Gibson wrote in *Native American History for Kids*, “Other stories tell a message. Instead of lecturing a person who is conceited about her long beautiful hair, a storyteller might tell the story of the possum with the thick, furry tail. Possum’s friends became so tired of hearing Possum talk about his tail that they tricked him into putting a special medicine on it... leaving the tail bare and ugly. The lesson is to beware of being too vain...” and her suggestion of writing a story with at least one animal character and a moral (18) could be adapted into a short homework assignment, integrating an additional writing component into the unit.

The Simpsons’ pop culture variation of American West “truths” will be shown in the Connie Appleseed episode originally shown on television. One of these “truths” explored will be the process of species extinction as vividly captured by Homer shooting of the last of the buffalo in that episode. (19) A discussion would follow, leading to an examination of the purposes of folk tales and tall tales, truthfulness, and oral traditions. Then more of the legends and myths of Native Americans would be examined, with emphasis on the strong connection between nature and the origins of man. The storytelling traditions and even the illustrative styles of American Western folk and tall tales would be compared to those of the myths and legends of the Native Americans.

An introductory lead-in activity to make students aware of what people wore during the time period studied could be a hand-out match-up of fashion illustrations through the ages. Another activity, done in pairs or small groups, could be filling in the names for certain western articles of clothing from a word bank on a handout that I would create. For example, students would decide if the word “chaps” should match up with the leg coverings shown on a drawing of a cowboy. The need for accuracy and research in the field of illustration would be explored.

Included among the stories in the resource *From Sea to Shining Sea* are some songs such as the Chippewa *Dream Song*. Amy Cohn, the compiler of the material in this book, wrote of this song, “The Chippewa believed that a dream-or a vision-could reveal something about the dreamer and his life.” (20) In both of my classes in which I am teaching this unit, I have multiple students who are in one of our choirs, bands or orchestras. For extra credit, students can volunteer to play or sing one of these tunes for the class, making student-performed music part of the unit. Folk songs can also be played in the background as students work on their illustrations.

Prints by artists from the west will also be displayed in the room so that students can hopefully add them to their visual memory. The word wall posted in the classroom will

reflect the addition of American West unit vocabulary words. These will include geographical terms such as butte, canyon and mesa, art and crafts terms such as appliqué, beadwork, coiling in ceramics, ledger art, weaving and petroglyph, and general words such as rituals, symbols, sacred, origin, artifacts, migration, archaeologist, anthropologist, code, pueblo, and reservation.

Students would also study illustrators and devices and techniques used by them so that they can effectively apply what they learn to their own illustrations. The information on illustrators and artists would be delivered via power point presentations. One lesson would revolve around drawing techniques used to show texture and value of distinctive geological features of the West. For example, students would watch a teacher demonstration on how to simulate the texture of a cactus and rocks with graphite pencils and then with colored pencils. To give further insight into the cactus, the *Tohono O'odham Legend of the Saguaro* that deals with a little girl's transformation into a saguaro, ensuring a source of food for both humans and birds for the future, (21) would be read and examined. This is a delightful story that not only contains messages for the O'odham children and their families, but it has universal meanings for people everywhere. Different colored pencil techniques using layered colors, Prismacolor blenders, cross hatching, hatching, stippling, and erasing would be used to achieve value. Then they will experiment on their own during class until they achieved success using them.

Students will review the stories that they have read or heard and do further research to find a story from which they can select a moment worthy of illustration. Their preliminary sketches would help them develop strong compositions. Students would have opportunities to brainstorm with their fellow students and with me. As the students work on their illustrations, I will help them individually and occasional mini class critiques would be done to check on progress and share ideas. After the illustrations are finished, students would fill out a reflective thinking sheet about their art. The art would be accompanied by a synopsis of the story by the student or, if the story is short, the entire tale. They would critique the art together as a class and the art would be graded using a rubric. The art would be exhibited in a display in the Newark Free Library and an evening reception for parents and friends would be held.

Classroom Activities

Lesson Plan 1: Gallery Tour: Adaptation of the Token Response Activity

This activity is an adaptation from a lesson plan/game by two former Kutztown art professors Eldon Katter and Mary Erickson. Their *Token Response Art Criticism and Aesthetics Game* uses 8 tokens for each student and can be used in a museum or gallery setting or in a classroom that has art set up for viewing. (22) The students place each token next to the art or under paper by the art that they feel best matches what the token represents. I have found that students are influenced by others' choices so it is best to

have a piece of construction or some type of opaque paper in front of each so that they can slip their tokens underneath. The tokens are different colors and the pink heart represents preference, the rectangle represents a dollar for economic consideration, a clock shape stands for time expenditure, the house represents preference of another person and appropriateness of setting, the light bulb stands for originality, the hand is for best craftsmanship, a ribbon is for judgment as in winning a blue ribbon and the diamond is the dislike symbol. (22)

For this lesson any and all of the following essential questions could apply. “What is art?” “What makes one work of art better than another?” “What place do the elements of art and principals of design have in a critique?” “If an artist spends a lot of time creating a piece of art, is it automatically good?” “Does scale affect the impact that art has on the viewer?” “If I picked a piece of art that nobody else selected, does that mean that I am wrong?” “Is it okay to dislike a particular piece of art?” “Is there one correct response to a work of art?”

This activity is a good way to make students analyze and reflect upon their responses to pieces of art. The selected art will include a landscape each by Albert Bierdstadt and Thomas Moran, a sculpture by Frederic Remington, a painting by Charles Russell, a Native American portrait by George Catlin, an iconic Georgia O’Keeffe skull or landscape painting, a camouflage painting by Bev Doolittle, Crazy Horse Monument, Mount Rushmore, James Frazier’s sculpture *End of the Trail* and John Gast’s *Westward Ho*. Also included would be an example of a Navajo sand painting and a woven Navajo rug. Reproductions of these images would be set up around the room and students would be given tokens cut from construction paper. Some would be adapted to fit just this lesson. For example, a question mark would signify the piece of art that students think has created the most controversy. When discussed and supplied with background information, they would discover that the Crazy Horse Monument would probably best fit that category. An elephant shape could denote their guess for the largest work of art. Most would probably pick one of the two monuments. Students may even question why a sand painting or rug would be included as art and that could stimulated discussion around the essential question, “What is art?”

After the students have made their selections, student volunteers will be selected to count the tokens by each image and enter them using the bundles of five system on the chart that would already be gridded on the board. The tallies in sets of five are more visual than just writing numbers up there. The name of each artwork will be in one column and the token/category would be the other column. The class will then discuss the findings, starting with the categories that had overwhelming responses or none at all. I will help direct them to make certain discoveries. Among the discussions would be the students’ choices of what they dislike along with the reasons. The reasons for Frazier’s defeated Native American on horseback in *End of the Trail* being disliked by Native Americans would be discussed.

A 3-2-1 exit ticket would be given at the end of this activity. Students would list three things that they learned during this activity, two things about which they would like to learn more, and one thing that they disliked. Students would be assessed with classroom participation points for doing the activity and contributing to the discussion that followed. A possible 6 points would be earned for the exit ticket (one for each item).

Lesson Plan 2: Introduction of and Experimentation with Prismacolors

The objective of this lesson is for students to see and then experiment with different techniques using colored pencils until they are confident and comfortable with their use. Appropriate essential questions for the students for this lesson would be, “How do I show value and texture using colored pencils?” and “How can a professional look be obtained using colored pencils?”

I will demonstrate to the class different techniques as they gather around me. First they will be shown the difference of quality between a Prang red, a Crayola red and then a Prismacolor red. Of the three, Prang is the car wreck and Prismacolors is the Mercedes Benz. Since the students will be using Prismacolors, the rest of the demonstrations will be only with them. However, students can still achieve success if only less expensive colored pencils are available for their use. Then I will experiment with coloring on different surfaces of paper. Students can select from a variety of surfaces for their final illustrations but will not be able to make an informed choice until they have experimented for themselves. Next shown will be the effect of the order of colors in the overlaying of colors on paper. For example, if yellow is applied first and then red, the effect will differ from yellow being applied on top of red. The effect of different amounts of pencil pressure will be explored. Color blending techniques will be shown along with the use of a Prismacolor blender. Shading techniques demonstrated will include hatching, crosshatching, blending, stippling, and feathering.

After I demonstrate how to effectively create value using colored pencils to shade an eye, show texture in a cactus, blend a Albert Bierstadt sky, and create layers of rock as in a Thomas Moran painting, students will experiment. The instructions will be given verbally plus the list of experimentations will be written on the board. On one piece of paper, they will try the same or similar color in Prang, Crayola and Prismacolors and then rank them in order of quality by number with number 1 having the best quality and number 3 the poorest quality.

Students will then experiment with the order of the overlaying of colors. They will try blending and showing value using just colored pencils and with Prismacolor blenders. When they feel more comfortable, then they can then move on to the next step. Looking at the provided handouts with examples of landscape features from western scenery (skies, rocks, types of cacti, and deserts), or at the prints of famous paintings by western artists hanging in the room, students will then try in a small area (approximately 2” x 2”

for each) the following: sky, a cactus, a rock and an eye. They may embellish and add to these.

For the last exercise, each student will receive a small piece each of mat board, white sulphite drawing paper, and printmaking paper. This last activity will involve experimentation with colors on each surface to determine preference for their final illustration. The experiments can be realistic, abstract or non-objective.

Students will hand in their experimentations for credit. They will be checked off using a simple rubric that will have the 10 categories that will include the 7 short activities that the students did.

Lesson Plan 3: Discovering the Meaning of Symbols- Two-Day Activity

For the Stinger or introductory activity for first day of this lesson, there would be an image of a simple heart on the Stinger poster with the question, "What does this represent?" The responses will be collected. Then students will be broken up into small groups and given 6 minutes to create a list of symbols that are visual. No words can be included on the lists. The students will be instructed that the symbols should be images that others would readily recognize. At the end of the time each group will be given a different colored marker and a group representative will draw his or her group's symbols on the board. Discussion will revolve around the selections. We will look to see if any groups included the stylized heart symbol. Meanings of the simple heart shape can include love, liking someone, Valentine's Day, spirituality, blood, the human heart, the soul, emotion, and male and female body parts. The role that advertising plays using readily recognizable company logos like the Nike Swoosh would be examined also.

Pictographs would be discussed and images would be shown in a power point. Karen Bush Gibson in *Native American History for Kids* included a section on pictographs and wrote, "Before written languages, some Native American Nations recorded history with pictographs, which are symbols or pictures that describe an event. Plains tribes in particular often had calendars in which they recorded the most important event of the year..." and she included images such as three wavy lines representing a river and suggested an activity of recording 5 important events that occurred in the last month and creating pictographs to represent them. (23) This could be a creative homework assignment for each student that would serve as a follow-up for this part of the lesson.

After looking at examples of pictographs in the power point, there would be a transition to images of petroglyphs. David C. King in *First People, an Illustrated History of American Indians*, wrote, "Newspaper Rock, in eastern Utah, contains one of the largest collections of petroglyphs in North America. The carvings were made by many tribes over a long period of time. It is thought that the earliest ones may date back more than 2,000 years." (24)

Discussed also would be Ledger Art, described by Yvonne Wakim Dennis and Arlene Hirschfelder in *A Kid's Guide to Native American History* as art that recorded historic events and daily life in lined ledger books created by male Indians who were corralled into prisons. In that book they wrote, "Ledger art style refers to a style that emphasizes simple images of animals, people, or other objects spaced across the lined pages. The images seem "flattened out," as if someone laid a heavy book on them." (25) The images are very stylized.

The symbolism used with kachinas would be explored. Written in *Story of the Great American West* is "In Hopi lore evil withes... sully life's original purity. To restore harmony, man needs intercession of some 300 kachinas... They are invoked in major rituals, such as the August rain ceremony of the societies of the Snake (symbolizing Mother Earth) and the Antelope (representing fruitful reproduction)." (26) Susann Linn-Williams in *Folk Art* wrote, "The dolls were originally created in the form of dancers, and were intended to educate the children of the tribe about the Kachina spirits. However, the dolls have become a form of art in themselves and are now considered to be collector's items." (27) The slides that will be shown will include one of Crow Mother, along with an explanation of her importance. Also shown will be some of the designs adorning a variety of kachinas with explanations of their symbolic meanings.

For the second day of this lesson, the stinger would be a photo of Spider Rock in Canyon De Chelly with an arrow pointing to the white streaks or bands at the top. The question would be, "What do you think these white bands symbolize according to the legends of the Dine (Navajo)? If you do not know, make up a creative response worthy of an art student." After the students have turned in their papers, the answer would be given. According to the legend as presented in *Spider Woman and the Holy Ones*, "... our grandmother would tell us of mischievous and disobedient children that were taken to Spider Woman and woven up in her tight weaving... Spider Woman would boil and eat the bad little kids, that is why there are white banded streaks at the top of Spider rock, where the bones of the bad children still bleach the rocks to this day." (28) This legend serves as a warning to keep children from misbehaving. The meaning of symbolism would be discussed. The two strategies of annotating and Cornell notes will be used to help the students understand this story. Both would be explained and then each student would receive a copy of the story and a Cornell notes sheet with questions already typed on the left hand side that they should answer on the right side as they read the story. The questions would include, "What is the role of Spider Woman? What is the role of Spider Man? How many worlds are mentioned in this story? How many beams are used in the making of the loom? The answers to the latter two questions are four. Baylor in *And it is Still That Way, Legends Told by Arizona Indian Children* wrote, "Indians know that in nature, things go in fours. In Indian magic, things go in fours. You will notice that in these stories the number four has special power. In fact, many of these stories take four nights to tell." On the same page she wrote, "When Indian legends are told today, they never end with the feeling that they are something out of the past and finished. Instead,

the storyteller will probably say, 'It can happen like that now,' or 'We still know such things,' or 'And it is still that way.' " (29) The students will also highlight the symbolic references. Then, on the projected story on the screen, students could take turns highlighting their choices as they are discussed.

Included in the power point for this day's lesson will be examples of Navajo weavings and pottery with some of the history and evolution of the designs used. In *First People, an Illustrated History of American Indians*, David C. King described the impact of wool being used after the Spanish brought sheep over and wrote "The genius of the Navajo women is in the patterns they create, some of which have special meanings. For example, layers of thick lines represent clouds and zig-zag patterns represent lightening. Other patterns were introduced by white traders,... Persian designs." (30) King went on to give some insight about how Indian crafts have evolved to present times and wrote, "In addition, many acclaimed Indian artists have blended traditional motifs with their own innovations to create bold new styles. For example, starting in the 1920s, at San Ildefonso Pueblo, a number of husband and wife teams became famous for their pottery." (31)

Shown will be examples of the major Navajo weaving styles. Researcher Judy Breneman wrote that as time went on, designs evolved into regional styles and she listed these distinct styles as Wide Ruins, Ganado, Two Gray Hills, Crystal, Teec Nos Pos, Chinle, Shiprock, Western Reservation, and Burntwater. (32) She also described each.

The beautiful patterns on traditional coil vases and bowls of the Acoma potters will also be highlighted. Leon Nigrosh in *Claywork, Form and Idea in Ceramic Design*, wrote, "Not far from today's Albuquerque, New Mexico, sits Acoma, a pueblo continuously inhabited since 1150. For centuries Acoma potters have been making clay vessels... As a child Evelyn Ortiz learned to make pottery by helping her mother... and is now passing her knowledge along to her daughter." (33) The pots created by Ortiz are decorated with exquisite and delicate designs. Nigrosh also wrote, "Ortiz uses centuries-old Acoma decorative motifs: stylized clouds, geometric lines which indicate rain and other weather conditions and bird and animal forms... Each finished work has a spirit of its own." (34)

Anita Coy wrote in *National Geographic Investigates Ancient Pueblo – Archaeology Unlocks the Secrets of America's Past*, "The pottery of the Mimbres people, who lived in Southern Gila Wilderness for almost one thousand years (200-1150), is the most striking physical record of the Mogollon civilization... The figures on this Mimbres bowl may be a man and woman, or symbols of life and death." (35) The latter sentence is a caption that Coy included by a photo of figures on a Mimbres bowl. Discussed while these slides are viewed will be how clues influence archaeologists' findings on possible meanings of specific pieces of art. The possible connection between the Mimbres and the ancient Aztecs will be briefly explored.

In cryptology, symbols are often used in codes. Background via the power point would be given on the Navajos' important contributions to their unbreakable code used in WWII. Then the class would be broken into small groups and each group would be given the message (without the answer), "GAH-TAHN AH-HA-TINH. JO-KAYED-GOH NIH-DZID-TEIH SHIL-LOH... Answer: Take action. Request runner immediately." and the *Navajo Code Talkers' Dictionary*, both taken from Gibson's *Native American History for Kids*. (36) The first group to crack the code correctly would win some small prize. Then the Naval website with the entire "*Navajo Code Talkers' Dictionary Revised as of 15 June 1945 (Declassified under Department of Defense Directive 5200.9)*" (37) would be briefly visited online.

Since I have not taught this unit before, the amount of material on symbolism that I want to cover may be too ambitious. The amount of information covered can be adjusted, the power points could be covered at a faster pace or this two-day lesson could spill over into the next class day. As with most lessons, adjustments should be made to fit your classroom.

Resources

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- Ashliman, D. L., *Folk and Fairy Tales, a Handbook*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 2004. This volume contains some great explanations in the glossary about the different types of folk and fairy tales.
- Barnard, Edward S., editor, *Story of the Great American West*, The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., Pleasantville, New York, 1977.
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- Teller, Adam, and Grandma Thompson, *Spider Woman and the Holy Ones*, 2008.
<http://www.canyondechelly.net> ; <http://discovernavajo.com/spho.html>. Accessed December 27, 2012.

Reading List for Students

Selected stories from:

- Anderson, Dorothy Daniels, *Arizona Legends and Lore- Tales of the Southwestern Pioneers*, American Traveler Press/Golden West Publishers, Phoenix, AZ, 2010.
- Baylor, Byrd, collector, *And it is Still That Way, Legends Told by Arizona Indian Children*, Cinco Puntos Press, New York, 1976.
- Blair, Eric, *Paul Bunyan*, Picture Window Books, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2005.
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- Osborne, Mary Pope, *American Tall Tales*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1991.
- Pritchard, Evan T., annotator, *Native American Stories of the Sacred*, Skylight Paths Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont, 2005.
- Teller, Adam, and Grandma Thompson, *Spider Woman and the Holy Ones*,
<http://discovernavajo.com/spho.html> (accessed 12/29/12).

Materials for Classroom Use

A variety of art supplies, tools, and materials will be available in the classroom for student use. These will include pencils, charcoals, inks, permanent markers, erasers, eraser shields, pencil sharpeners, rulers, T squares, Prismacolors, Prismacolor blenders, matboard, white sulphite drawing paper, printmaking paper, drawing boards, and tape.

Also available will be source materials for ideas and drawings which will include sets of old encyclopedias that are used for the images, famous artist prints, the school library, and a classroom computer for student use.

The following books will be in the classroom for student use:

- Anderson, Dorothy Daniels, *Arizona Legends and Lore- Tales of the Southwestern Pioneers*, American Traveler Press/Golden West Publishers, Phoenix, AZ, 2010.
- Baylor, Byrd, *And it is Still That Way, Legends Told by Arizona Indian Children*, Cinco Puntos Press, New York, 1976.
- Blair, Eric, *Paul Bunyan*, Picture Window Books, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2005.
- Cohn, Amy L., compiler, *From Sea to Shining Sea-a Treasury of American Folklore and Folk Songs*, Scholastic Inc, New York, 1993.
- Erdoes, Richard, and Alfonso Ortiz, editors, *American Indian Myths and Legends*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1984.
- Ermoyan, Arpi, *Famous American Illustrators*, Quantum Books, London, 2002.
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- Gibson, Michel, *Symbolism*, Taschen, Germany, 1999.
- Krensky, Stephen, *Paul Bunyan*, Millbrook Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2007.
- Krensky, Stephen, *Pecos Bill*, Millbrook Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2007.
- Maclay, Elise, Betty Ballantine, editor, *The Art of Bev Doolittle*, Bantam Books, New York, 1990.
- Muller, Claudia, *The Costume Timeline- 5000 Years of Fashion History*, Thames and Hudson, New York, New York, 1993.
- O'Connell, Mark, and Raje Airey, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Signs and Symbols*, Hermes House, 2012.
- Osborne, Mary Pope, *American Tall Tales*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1991.
- Pritchard, Evan T., annotator, *Native American Stories of the Sacred*, Skylight Paths Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont, 2005.
- Robinson, Malcolm, *The American Vision- Landscape Paintings of the United States*, Portland House, New York, 1988.

Implementing District Standards

This unit will easily align with all 6 of the Delaware State Standards which in turn reflect the National Art Standards.

Delaware State Art Standards:

Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes.

Using what they have learned over the course of this unit, my students will then apply that knowledge to select appropriate media and techniques to create their individual illustrations in colored pencil, ink and/or markers.

Standard 2: Using knowledge of structures and functions.

Students will effectively apply their knowledge of the principals of art and elements of design to the art that they will be creating. They will also use them when they critique art.

Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

Students will analyze and evaluate a variety of stories and types of art and research and select a story so that they can capture a moment in time from that story in their own illustration. They must develop and use ideas and effectively incorporate symbols in their illustration.

Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Students will understand that artwork and illustrations are products of specific people influenced by their cultures and times.

Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

Students will discuss, reflect upon and assess selected stories and art from the west. They will also critique their own illustrations and the drawings of their peers both during the creative process and upon completion.

Standard 6: Making connections between the visual arts and other disciplines.

This experience will allow students to make cross curricular connections between art, social studies, literature, reading and writing.

Curriculum Unit

Title: **Illustrating Stories of the American West**
Author: **Karen Yarnall**

KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.

Students will:

- increase their knowledge of the American West and the factors that affected immigration to it.
- understand that the area considered to be “west” kept moving farther west.
- understand the impact of western expansion on Native Americans who lived in the west and on the earlier settlers.
- develop an appreciation of the stories that are a part of the American West.
- understand the difference between myths, legends, folk tales and tall tales.
- be able to recognize and develop an appreciation for the work of artists of and from the American West.
- understand that western artists expressed themselves in a variety of media (illustrations, paintings, drawings, photos, weavings, sand paintings, petroglyphs, appliqués, beadwork, playing cards, ledger art, etc.)
- be able to effectively use the elements of art and principles of design in the creation of their own illustrations.
- understand the varied use of symbols in art and stories and be able to incorporate symbols into their own illustrations.
- better understand the roll of illustrators in art.
- become better analyzers and evaluators of art.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT

Why did people move west?

What is the role of nature in Native American legends and myths? Why do people tell stories?

What are the differences between myths, legends, tall tales and folk tales?

What is art? What makes one work of art better than another?

Does scale affect the impact that art has on the viewer?

What place do the elements of art and the principles of design have in a critique?

Is it okay to dislike a particular piece of art?

How can I show value and texture using colored pencils? How can a professional look be obtained using colored pencils in an illustration?

CONCEPT A

CONCEPT B

CONCEPT C

Students will increase their knowledge of the American West and develop an appreciation and the media of various enhanced understanding of the tales and art that permanent magic markers. are part of it. of art and principles of illustration from a story they have selected and critique their own work and

Students will learn the meanings of symbols and develop an understanding of not only how they have been effectively used in stories and art, but how they can use them in their own work.

Students will experiment with with different techniques and colored pencils, inks and Effectively using the elements design, students will create an from the American West that researched. Students will that of their peers.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A
QUESTIONS C**

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B

ESSENTIAL

Where is the American West?

What does water symbolize in the west?

How do I effectively show

value in a drawing?

Why did people move west?

finished with my drawing?

What is the role of nature in Native American illustration is good?

legends and myths? better than another?

What is the difference between a myth, legend, creating a work of art, is tall tale and folk tale?

Why do people tell stories? be obtained using colored

What does "west" symbolize?

Why did Native Americans make such excellent code "talkers" (senders/messengers)?

How can I use symbols in my own art?

How do I know when I am

How do I know if my

What makes one work of art

If an artist spends a lot of time

automatically good? How can a professional look pencils?

VOCABULARY A

VOCABULARY A

Stories: Folklore, legend, myth, narrative, tall crosshatching, tale, theme, transformation, trickster tale stippling

American West: Bureau of Indian Affairs, cultures, sanding block, Dawes Act, immigration, pueblo, rancheros, blender, Manifest Destiny, reservation, sacred, and binder stereotypes, territory, treaty, tribe

VOCABULARY A

Misc.: symbols, metaphors, codes, interpretation
Symbols represented in: appliqué, artifacts, beadwork, coil construction in ceramics, illustration, Kachinas, ledger art, petroglyphs, stories (for example: Coyote)

Shading techniques: blending, erasing, feathering, hatching,
Materials: eraser shield, Prismacolors, Prismacolor matting, mat board, pigment
Elements of art: color, form,

line, shape,

Geographical features: butte, mesa, Great Plains

Native American tribes: Anasazi, Apache, Dine

emphasis,

(Navajo), Hopi

proportion,

space, texture, value

Principles of design: balance,

rhythm, movement, pattern,

variety, unity

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES

Anderson, Dorothy Daniels, *Arizona Legends and Lore- Tales of the Southwestern Pioneers*, American Traveler Press/Golden West Publishers,

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12. Pritchard, Evan T., retold by, *Native American Stories of the Sacred- Annotated & Explained*, v, vi
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