

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# SHIFTING THE HORIZON

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>ESSENTIAL QUESTION</b> | How do artists use the horizon line to create a sense of space when creating an image of a landscape?   |
| <b>GRADES</b>             | K–4   |
| <b>TIME</b>               | One or more class periods   |
| <b>ART CONCEPTS</b>       | Line, horizon line, point of view, perspective, depth, landscape, foreground, middle ground, background, layering   |
| <b>MATERIALS</b>          | 140 lb watercolor paper, pencils, erasers, tempera paint, paint brushes, water, cups, paper towels; optional: colored pencils instead of paint  |
| <b>TALKING ABOUT ART</b>  | Compare and contrast the printed images of <i>White Mountain Scenery</i> , <i>Franconia Notch</i> , <i>New Hampshire</i> by Asher Brown Durand and <i>Niagara Falls</i> by Louisa Minot |

On a piece of paper draw a line down the center creating two vertical columns. At the top of one column write the letters WM for White Mountain and at the top of the other column write the letters NF for Niagara Falls. Working in pairs, catalogue your observations about White Mountain on the WM side of the paper and have your partner catalogue their observations of Niagara Falls on the NF side of the paper. Next identify the elements in each column that are very different from one another, in other words how the paintings contrast one another. Not only are the environments of the landscape very different from one another, but the point of view, where the painter or viewer is positioned in the painting, and the horizon line, a line where the land and sky meet, are very different. Think of a time when you have noticed the horizon line- when is it easiest to see? When might it be hard for us to see?

### MAKING ART

Explore how to create the illusion of space within a composition by sketching and painting your own series of landscapes inspired by the artists of the Hudson River School. How will you transform this two-dimensional space using the horizon line?

1. Fan-fold a sturdy sheet of painting or drawing paper (depending on the media you wish to use) into thirds to create the form of a double-sided accordion.

2. Draw a continuous line from the left side of the paper to the right side, dipping your line down and raising it up to different levels. Do the same on the other side of the paper as well.



## MAKING ART

3. Demonstrate how to add color to the background first using colored pencils or paints. If you're using paint, wet the paper first, and then add dark and light tones to the sky and blend. The areas where the horizon line dips lower will show more sky and areas where the horizon line climbs higher will show less sky. Look at each panel as an opportunity to try a different kind of sky. What would a morning sky look like? Sunset sky? Night sky? How does the light change at those different times of day? How does that affect the colors that we choose to use for the sky?

4. After adding color to the background of the sky, add color to the middle ground where the horizon line is located. Browns could be used to paint in mountains or rocky cliffs, greens could be used for grassy hills and blues could be used to create waterfalls or rivers. Encourage students to paint all the way to the bottom of the page.



5. Lastly add details in the foreground such as trees, rocks, bushes, flowers, even animals.



## REFLECTION

Display the screens in the classroom and have a gallery walk. Reflect on the art-making experience by responding to the following questions orally or in written form:

What kinds of environments did you paint in your landscapes?  
(Show examples from your own artwork.)

Identify the foreground, middle ground, and background of your landscape.

How did you use color to define space in your landscape?

Describe in what way(s) your painting is similar and different from the Durand and Minot paintings?

**CURRICULUM  
CONNECTION**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.K-4.1

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners. Language. K-2.6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversation. Language. 3.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships.

CCSS.MATH-MEASUREMENT AND DATA.K.2

Directly compare two objects with measurable attribute in common, to see which object has “more of”/”less of” the attribute, and describe the difference.

CCSS.MATH-NUMBER AND OPERATIONS.3.1

Understand a fraction  $a/b$  as the quantity formed by a part of size  $1/b$ .

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# NATURE IN LOS ANGELES LANDSCAPES

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>ESSENTIAL QUESTION</b> | What part of the Los Angeles natural landscape do you most identify with?   |
| <b>GRADES</b>             | 3-8   |
| <b>TIME</b>               | One class period and a preview  |
| <b>ART CONCEPTS</b>       | Geography, landmarks, place, and identity   |
| <b>MATERIALS</b>          | Pencils, colored pencils, and drawing paper, and individual mementos provided by the students (a memento from the ocean/beaches, deserts, or mountains of Los Angeles, or an item that one would need when visiting one of those places).   |
| <b>TALKING ABOUT ART</b>  | <p>View the painting by Asher Brown Durand, <i>White Mountain Scenery, Franconia Notch, New Hampshire</i>, 1857, and make observations about the painting using the open-ended phrase, “I see...” Inventory the responses on the board, moving towards more and more detailed responses through close looking. Make sure to use all your senses in your descriptions.</p> <p>Named for American presidents, the range includes peaks named Mount Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Monroe, and Madison along with Mount Chocorua, named for a legendary Native American chief. Can you think of any areas of Los Angeles that memorialize important people or peoples?</p> <p>One can imagine the immense pride such an image would generate in contemporary Americans, as well as the sense of calm and serenity this painting might have bestowed upon its busy, city-dwelling owner. How do you feel when looking at Durand’s landscape? How are the natural landscapes of Los Angeles different from those depicted by Durand?</p> <p>Many of Durand’s contemporaries traveled further abroad in search of exotic locations, but Durand defended his local landscape as a worthy subject of art, telling young artists to embrace the familiar. Can you think of a Los Angeles view that generates the same feelings of pride and familiarity for you?</p> <p>Angelenos and visitors to Los Angeles are often inspired by the diverse geography of the city and its surroundings. Remember a favorite moment when you experienced the natural world in Los Angeles.</p> |

## **MAKING ART**

Using your memory and inspiration from your memento, capture your favorite place in Los Angeles where you have experienced a connection with nature. What are the characteristic features of that place? Write those features down. On the same piece of paper, create quick sketches of the individual features on the list.

Durand strove to capture what he witnessed by completing pencil sketches and color studies, choosing only the most beautiful and characteristic features, whether the trees, rocks, or other elements of the landscape. While he created the sketches outside in nature, his paintings were executed in his studio. Just as Durand assembled his landscapes in his studio, use your sketches to compose a remembered (or imaginary) view of an ocean-, desert- or mountain-view in the classroom incorporating yourself as a traveler in the image.

## **REFLECTION**

Display the completed artworks in the classroom. Invite the students to walk around and view each example. Have volunteers share the story of their artwork. Invite them to identify the location and why they chose it. Ask the students to explain the choices they made in putting it together. How does your artwork express your feelings about Los Angeles?

## **CURRICULUM CONNECTION**

### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.3-8**

3-8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners. 5.2. Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. 6-8.2. Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

### **CCSS.HISTORY SOCIAL SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS.3-8**

3.1 Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context. 4.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# POST-APOCALYPTIC VISIONS

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>ESSENTIAL QUESTION</b> | How can landscape painting address social and environmental changes, and the possible future human outcomes of these changes?   |
| <b>GRADES</b>             | 6-12  |
| <b>TIME</b>               | One class period  |
| <b>ART CONCEPTS</b>       | Landscape painting, composition, realism, shading, light, narrative-based art   |
| <b>CULTURAL CONCEPTS</b>  | Social issues, war, cycles of time, environmental change  |
| <b>MATERIALS</b>          | color markers, pencils, color pencils, collage materials (i.e. photos of buildings, streets, trees, mountains, and deserts), bristol paper or watercolor paper, glue sticks, scissors   |
| <b>TALKING ABOUT ART</b>  | <p>Thomas Cole created <i>The Course of Empire</i> series of paintings as a warning to the growing American nation of the cost of human greed, war and violence.</p> <p>What human-made elements can be seen in <i>The Course of Empire: Desolation</i>?</p> <p>What feelings does the painting evoke?</p> <p>How does the painting serve as a warning?</p>   |
| <b>MAKING ART</b>         | <p>Begin by writing a short story (at least one paragraph) describing a landscape after a human-caused apocalyptic event has wiped out all human inhabitants of Earth; examples could be: world war (full scale nuclear destruction) or an environmental disaster like the melting of the polar ice caps due to global warming and/or greenhouse gases or a massive chemical spill that destroys all food crops worldwide. What do cities look like? What sounds can be heard? Is anything still alive? If so, what? How did this happen, and how could it have been prevented?</p> <p>Then, using books, magazines, or images from the internet, choose photographs of famous landmarks, government buildings, and important bridges as well as natural elements like trees, mountains, deserts, and oceans and human-made elements like waste, plastic, machinery, and smog to illustrate what remains. Use scissors to cut out the photographs and scratch onto the images to make them appear aged and partially destroyed. Using pencils, color pencils and/or markers, further the aged and destroyed look by coloring on top of the images. Show evidence of what caused these changes – either war or environmental disaster.</p> |

**MAKING ART**

Lay out your images on a piece of paper to create a landscape composition, filling the paper as much as possible. Fill in the rest of the landscape with colored pencils. Then glue your images onto the paper. Now look back at your story – does it need a revision to include elements from your artwork that were not in your initial story? Add more descriptions to your story if necessary, then title your artwork using words selected from the story you wrote.

**REFLECTION**

Arrange a display of all the artworks and stories around the room. Ask students to walk around looking at the artworks and reading the accompanying stories. In the stories, what are the different reasons for the destruction of human civilization? In any of the artworks, are there indications that humans or some form of life could return sometime in the future? How does this exercise make you think about humanity's impact on nature? Do you think a work of art is more or less effective than an essay cautioning people against the behavior that might lead to such an apocalyptic event? Why?

**CURRICULUM  
CONNECTION**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.6-12

6-8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners. 6.2. Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

CCSS. ELA-LITERACY. WRITING STANDARDS.6-12

6-12.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS. ELA-LITERACY. LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES.6

6.7. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.