

GOING WEST: THE ARTISTS WHO PAINTED THE WAY

Special Area: Art (Grade 5)

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Length of Unit: Five lessons

I. ABSTRACT

“Go West, young man!” Those words changed the world in the 19th century. As the frontier pushed westward, American artists went with it and recorded the sights and scenes. For many Americans, this was their only connection to the expanding world. Literary and visual interpretations brought the vistas, characters, and myths to life. The art world saw the emergence of landscape painting as an art form all its own. Do these paintings and writings accurately represent the reality or legend of the American West? Students will study the artists and paintings of the era, interpret their stories, and create their own landscapes of wide-open spaces.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives

1. Identify and describe qualities of size, line, shape, color, and texture of observed visual forms. [Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes, Visual Arts, I.A.1]
2. Determine ways in which artists communicate ideas, feelings, and experiences by comparing the work of different artists. [MLO for VA, I.B.1]
3. Compare and contrast the technical, stylistic, and expressive qualities of artworks from the same time and place. [MLO for VA, II.C.2]
4. Select ideas and images from imagination and observation to express or interpret through art. [MLO for VA, III.B.1]
5. Describe aesthetic qualities observed in nature and human-made objects using oral and written language. [MLO for VA, IV.A.1]

B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*

1. Become familiar with the Hudson River School of landscape painting, including Thomas Cole...[and] Albert Bierstadt. [p. 119]
2. Become familiar with genre paintings including George Caleb Bingham. [p. 119]

C. Skill Objectives

1. Examine and describe works by various artists.
2. Analyze the composition of landscapes.
3. Explore ways to create depth on a two-dimensional surface.
4. Compare American Realism with other styles.
5. Interpret narrative qualities of paintings.
6. Compare written accounts of the American West with visual representations.
7. Organize landscape elements into a composition.
8. Produce a painting of a landscape scene.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. For Teachers

1. *The Natural Palette: The Hudson River Artists and The Land*, Tucson, AZ: Crizmac, 1997. ISBN 0-945-666-60-8 (kit contains video, prints, and teacher’s guide)
2. Hughes, Robert. *American Visions: the Epic History of Art in America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

3. Hirsch, Jr. E.D. *What Your Fifth Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1993, ISBN 0-385-31464-7.
- B. For Students (Topics introduced in previous units or grade levels that provide students with necessary prior knowledge.)
 1. Westward Expansion (American History and Geography – 2,5)
 2. Landscape Painting (Visual Arts, 2-3)
 3. Development of linear perspective (Visual Arts – 5)
 4. Elements of Art & Principles of Design (Visual Arts K-5)

IV. RESOURCES

- A. *The Natural Palette: The Hudson River Artists and The Land*, Tucson, AZ: Crizmac, 1997. ISBN 0-945-666-60-8 (kit contains video, prints, and teacher’s guide)
- B. Hirsch, Jr. E.D. *What Your Fifth Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1993, ISBN 0-385-31464-7.
- C. Prints of visuals available from Shorewood Fine Art Reproductions, P.O. Box 1469, Greenwich, CT 06836-1469, telephone: 800-494-3824.
- D. Slides of visuals available from Davis Art Slides, 50 Portland St., Worcester, MA 01608-2013, telephone: 800-533-2847.

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: Landscapes of the Hudson River School

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Identify and describe qualities of size, line, shape, color, and texture of observed visual forms. [MLO for VA, I.A.1]
 - b. Compare and contrast the technical, stylistic, and expressive qualities of artworks from the same time and place. [MLO for VA, II.C.2]
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Become familiar with the Hudson River School of landscape painting, including
 - 1) Thomas Cole, *The Oxbow (The Connecticut River Near Northampton)* (also know as *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm*)
 - 2) Albert Bierstadt, *Rocky Mountains, Lander’s Peak*
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Examine and describe works by Hudson River School artists.
 - b. Explain the influence of European painting styles on American painters.
 - 1) Romanticism
 - 2) Realism & European Genre painting
 - 3) Naturalism
 - c. Analyze the composition of landscapes.
 - d. Compare American Realism with other styles.
- B. *Materials*
 1. Visuals
 - a. Thomas Cole, *The Oxbow (The Connecticut River Near Northampton)* (also know as *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm*)
 - b. Albert Bierstadt, *Rocky Mountains, Lander’s Peak* 1863, oil on canvas
 - c. Thomas Moran, *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone*, 1872, oil on canvas
 - d. Asher Brown Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849 oil on canvas

- e. Frederic Edwin Church, *Morning Looking East over the Hudson River Valley*
 - f. Thomas Hill, *Emerald Bay, Lake Tahoe*, 1864, oil on canvas
 - 2. Map of United States showing Hudson River Valley, Catskill Mts., and Adirondack Mts., Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Yellowstone
 - 3. List of Hudson River School painters. (Appendix A)
 - 4. Handout on discussing a painting. (Appendix B)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- 1. Landscape (review from grade 2) – painting of an outdoor scene.
 - 2. Foreground, middle ground, and background (review from grade 3) – foreground is closest to viewer, background is area furthest away, and middle ground is in between.
 - 3. Methods of creating depth (review from grade 3)
 - a. Overlapping – placing an object partially on top of another on the picture plane to create the illusion that it is closer (in front of the other object) to the viewer.
 - b. Size – larger objects appear closer to the viewer than smaller ones.
 - c. Color/value – objects lose intensity in hue and become lighter in value (on a grayscale) as they recede into the background.
 - d. Use of detail – objects in the background appear less distinct and have fewer details visible than closer objects.
 - e. Placement on picture plane – objects appearing higher on the picture plane seem to be further away.
 - 4. Linear perspective (introduced in Renaissance Unit, Gr. 5) – the system of creating illusion of depth where parallel lines converge at a vanishing point on the horizon.
 - 5. Panorama – unobstructed view of a scene in every direction
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
- 1. Display visuals. Allow students time to observe.
 - 2. Identify artists and paintings. (see Appendix A)
 - 3. Distribute Guidelines for Discussing a Painting. (Appendix B) Students will examine and discuss:
 - a. What qualities do these paintings have in common? (color, line, shape, texture)
 - b. How are the compositions the same? Different?
 - c. How is space used in these paintings?
 - d. How is the subject matter the same? Different?
 - e. Do the paintings have the same expressive qualities? Mood? Tone? What are they and how has the artist created them?
 - 4. Using map, point out setting locations of paintings.
 - 5. Watch video, *The Natural Palette*.
 - 6. Read background information on Hudson River School artists.
 - 7. Students will write short summary of what they have learned about Hudson River School.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
- 1. Class participation
 - 2. Reading / Writing to inform

Lesson Two: Embracing the Western Frontier: Genre Paintings of the West

- A. *Daily Objectives*
- 1. Concept Objective(s)

- a. Determine ways in which artists communicate ideas, feelings, and experiences by comparing the work of different artists. [MLO for VA, I.B.1]
 - b. Compare and contrast the technical, stylistic, and expressive qualities of artworks from the same time and place. [MLO for VA, II.C.2]
 - c. Describe aesthetic qualities observed in nature and human-made objects using oral and written language. [MLO for VA, IV.A.1]
2. Lesson Content
- a. Become familiar with genre paintings.
3. Skill Objective(s)
- a. Examine and describe works by various artists.
 - b. Interpret narrative qualities of paintings.
 - c. Compare genre and narrative paintings.
- B. *Materials*
1. Visuals
- a. George Caleb Bingham, *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*, c. 1845, oil on canvas
 - b. George Caleb Bingham, *Boatmen on the Missouri*, 1846, oil on canvas
 - c. Thomas Cole, *Daniel Boone and his Cabin on Great Osage Lake*, c. 1826, oil on canvas
 - d. Albert Bierstadt, *Emigrants Crossing into the Plains*, 1867, oil on canvas
 - e. Emanuel G. Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*, 1861, oil on canvas
 - f. William Sydney Mount, *California News*, 1850, oil on canvas.
2. Map of United States during Westward Expansion. See Hirsch, Jr. E.D. *What Your Fifth Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1993, ISBN 0-385-31464-7, p. 193
3. Graphic Organizer (Appendix C)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- 1. genre painting – style or subject matter dealing with scenes from everyday life in a realistic manner
 - 2. narrative painting – painting that tells a story
 - 3. Landscape – a painting of an outdoor scene
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
- 1. Display Leutze’s *Westward the Course the Empire Takes its Way*. Allow students a few minutes to observe and record what they see.
 - 2. Discuss the painting.
 - a. This version is a study for a mural in the U.S. House of Representatives.
 - b. Does this painting look like a picture of real life?
 - 1) Symbolism
 - 2) Portraits of William Clark and Daniel Boone in bottom portion
 - 3) Ornate scrollwork and scenes in frame
 - c. What is emotion/mood invoked by the painting?
 - 3. Display Bingham’s *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*. Again allow students a few minutes to observe and record what they see.
 - 4. Discuss and compare the two paintings.
 - a. Ordinary people
 - b. Everyday scene – “a snapshot of life”
 - c. Overall feeling or mood
 - 5. Display other paintings and discuss.

- a. These paintings all tell a story (historical, symbolic, or of everyday life). A genre painting is a type of narrative painting. They are telling a story about the people portrayed.
 - b. How are these paintings different from the landscapes of the Hudson River School? How are they the same? Complete Organizer. (Appendix C)
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
- 1. Class participation
 - 2. Completed graphic organizer

Lesson Three: Every Picture Tells a Story

- A. *Daily Objectives*
- 1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Identify and describe qualities of size, line, shape, color, and texture of observed visual forms. [Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes, Visual Arts, I.A.1]
 - b. Compare and contrast the technical, stylistic, and expressive qualities of artworks from the same time and place. [MLO for VA, II.C.2]
 - c. Describe aesthetic qualities observed in nature and human-made objects using oral and written language. [MLO for VA, IV.A.1]
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Become familiar with the Hudson River School of landscape painting.
 - b. Become familiar with genre and narrative paintings.
 - 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Examine and describe works by various artists.
 - b. Interpret narrative qualities of paintings.
- B. *Materials*
- 1. Visuals
 - a. George Caleb Bingham, *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*, c. 1845, oil on canvas
 - b. Thomas Cole, *Scene from "The Last of the Mohicans"*, 1827, oil on canvas
 - c. Albert Bierstadt, *The Oregon Trail*, 1869, oil on canvas
 - d. Virgil Williams, *On the Mariposa Trail*, 1863, oil on canvas
 - e. Albert Bierstadt, *Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*, 1863 oil on canvas.
 - 2. Handouts
 - a. Story Map (Appendix D)
 - b. Interpreting a Painting (Appendix E)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- 1. genre painting – style or subject matter dealing with scenes from everyday life in a realistic manner
 - 2. narrative painting – painting that tells a story
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
- 1. Review genre and narrative painting.
 - 2. Recall literary elements from Language Arts.
 - 3. Divide students into cooperative groups.
 - 4. Assign visuals to groups.
 - 5. Students should complete story map individually and then share with group.
 - 6. Groups should brainstorm ideas for story as told by the painting. Complete Interpreting a Painting sheet. (Appendix E)
 - 7. Use the writing process to create your group's story.

8. Share completed stories with class while displaying painting.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Completed story map for painting.
 2. Completed Interpreting a Painting sheet.
 3. Writing to Express Personal Ideas - Story

Lesson Four: Reality vs. Legend

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Determine ways in which artists communicate ideas, feelings, and experiences by comparing the work of different artists. [MLO for VA, I.B.1]
 - b. Compare and contrast the technical, stylistic, and expressive qualities of artworks from the same time and place. [MLO for VA, II.C.2]
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Become familiar with the Hudson River School of landscape painting.
 - b. Become familiar with genre paintings.
 - c. Explain “Go West, Young Man” [Horace Greeley’s advice], p. 116
 - d. See the relationship between “Manifest Destiny” and paintings of the American West
 - e. Examine representations of American Indians as “the noble savage”
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Examine and describe works by various artists.
 - b. Compare written accounts of the Hudson River Valley and American West with visual representations.

B. *Materials*

1. Visuals
 - a. Thomas Cole, *Falls of Kaaterskill*, 1826, oil on canvas.
 - b. Charles Bird King, *Young Omaha, War Eagle, Little Missouri, and Pawnees*, 1821, oil on canvas.
 - c. George Catlin, *The White Cloud, Head Chief of the Iowas*, c. 1845, oil on canvas.
 - d. Thomas Moran, *The Spirit of the Indian*, 1869, oil on canvas.
 - e. George Caleb Bingham, *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap*, 1851-52, oil on canvas.
 - f. Emanuel G. Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*, 1861, oil on canvas
2. Literary
 - a. Walt Whitman, *I Hear America Singing, Leaves of Grass*
 - b. Horace Greeley, “Go West, Young Man”, editorial from *New York Tribune*, July 1865
 - c. James Fenimore Cooper, excerpts from *Last of the Mohicans, The Pioneers*, and *The Deerslayer*.
 - d. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Song of Hiawatha*.
 - e. Chief Joseph, “I will fight no more forever”
3. Map of the United States during Westward Expansion

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Manifest Destiny (American History and Government, p. 116) – the political and philosophical belief that it was America’s mission to extend its boundaries westward to the Pacific Ocean.

2. Daniel Boone – (1734-1820) Pioneer and frontiersman known as a scout and Indian Fighter, famous for his skill at “wrassling” bears.
 3. Noble Savage – the image of the American Indian as proud, dignified, generous, and uncorrupted by Western civilization.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
4. Recall writers and artists mentioned in the video, *The Natural Palette*.
 5. Divide class into five cooperative groups. Read background material and literary excerpt for one of the authors.
 6. Display visuals.
 7. Ask groups to match literary excerpts to visuals and explain why.
 - a. Description of scene (Cooper, Cole)
 - b. Theme (Greeley, Manifest Destiny, Leutze)
 - c. Mood (Longfellow, Whitman, Moran)
 - d. Character (Chief Joseph, Longfellow, Cooper, King, Moran, Catlin)
 8. Students will write persuasive paragraph telling why these two should be paired.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
9. Class participation
 10. Reading to inform, Reading for literary experience
 11. Writing to Persuade

Lesson Five: Creating a Landscape

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Identify and describe qualities of size, line, shape, color, and texture of observed visual forms. [MLO, Visual Arts, I.A.1]
 - b. Select ideas and images from imagination and observation to express or interpret through art. [MLO for VA, III.B.1]
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Become familiar with the Hudson River School of landscape painting.
 - b. Become familiar with genre paintings.
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Examine and describe works by various artists.
 - b. Analyze the composition of landscapes.
 - c. Explore ways to create depth on a two-dimensional surface.
 - d. Organize landscape elements into a composition.
 - e. Produce a painting of a landscape scene.
- B. *Materials*
1. Any of the previously mentioned landscape paintings (in particular, Cole’s, *Oxbow*, Church, *Twilight in the Wilderness*)
 2. Calendar or magazine photos of panoramic landscapes
 3. 12 x 18 white sulphite drawing paper
 4. oil pastels (Oil pastels were chosen for this project over tempera or watercolor for their ability to blend and render detail.)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. landscape – painting of an outdoor scene
 2. mood – the overall feeling of a painting
 3. balance – can be symmetrical, asymmetrical, or radial. How weight is visually distributed in a painting.
 4. framing – use of objects in the painting to visually frame (outline) the scene.
 5. deep space – where the space in a painting appears to extend far into the background

- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Review landscape paintings from Hudson River School
 - a. Analyze the composition of one of the landscapes
 - 1) Use of color, line, shape, texture
 - 2) Use of fore-, middle, and background
 - 3) Use of space and methods used to create space
 - 4) Focal point
 - 5) Framing of scene
 - b. How does the artist create the mood?
 2. Students will choose a scene to interpret for their landscape.
 3. Choose color palette to create desired mood.
 4. Demonstrate proper use of oil pastels, blending techniques, etc.
 5. Students will sketch their scenes using oil pastels.
 - a. Blend colors to create atmospheric effects.
 - b. Add details.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Completed project
 2. Teacher should observe students throughout the lesson for:
 - a. following directions
 - b. concept attainment
 - c. proper technique and use of materials
 3. Class participation

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. Display student work and invite parents, staff, etc. to participate in a gallery walk where each student will present and talk about his/her work.
- B. Field Trip to a museum to see examples of 19th Century American Art.

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Members of the Hudson River School of Painting
- B. Guidelines for Discussing a Painting
- C. Narrative vs. Landscape Painting
- D. Story Map for a Painting
- E. Every Picture Tells a Story – Interpreting a Painting

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- B. The American West: The Legends & the Reality. *Art & Man*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Scholastic Magazines, Inc., October 1974.
- C. The American Wilderness. *Art & Man*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Scholastic Magazines, Inc., October 1970.
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- I. Sweeney, J. G. *Masterpieces of Western American Art*. New York: Crescent Books, 1991. ISBN 0-517-18493-1.
- J. *Western Expansion Through the Eyes of American Artists*. Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1997. (order online at www.lacma.org/educate/teach_sch/order.htm)

Appendix A

Members of the Hudson River School of Painting

Thomas Cole (1801-1848), considered to be the leader of the movement
Asher B. Durand (1796-1886)
Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900)
Jasper Cropsey (1823-1900)
Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902)
Thomas Moran (1837-1926)
Sanford Gifford
John Frederick Kensett (1816-1872)

Panoramist Painters

Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900)
Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902)
Thomas Moran (1837-1926)

American Genre Painters

George Caleb Bingham (1811-1879)
William Sydney Mount (1807-1868)

Painters of American Indians

George Catlin (1796-1872)
Charles Bird King (1785-1862)

Appendix B

Guidelines for Discussing a Painting

Classifying Art

There are three categories used to classify art:

1. *Imitationalism* - used for works that try to imitate the real world as we see it. (Lifelike, Representational, Realistic) They may be:
 - Landscapes
 - Still-lives
 - Portraits
2. *Emotionalism* - used for works of art that try to express strong emotion. The artist is expressing things we cannot see, but we can think, feel, or imagine.
3. *Formalism* - used for works of art concerned with the pattern and arrangement of lines, colors, shapes, and textures. The artist is primarily concerned with the design of the work. (Abstract, Nonobjective, Nonrepresentational)

Discussing Art

1. Describe the art form (painting, sculpture) and subject matter.
2. Describe the sensory and technical qualities - what you see and how the artist applied media:
 - Color
 - Texture
 - Line
 - Space
 - Shape
 - Focal Point
 - Value
3. How did the artist plan and put the composition together? Look for relationships between the elements and principles of design.
 - Balance
 - Emphasis
 - Rhythm
 - Movement
 - Pattern
 - Unity and Variety
 - Proportions
4. What is the painting about? What is it trying to express? What story does it tell? Is it trying to teach a lesson, express an emotion, or convey an ideal?
5. What mood does the painting suggest? How does the artist do that? Include analogies – e.g. the use of light and dark shadows is like a mist or fog. Use expressive language - adjectives!
6. Do you like the work of art? Why or why not? Do you think it is a good example of that kind of work (imitation, formal, expressive)? Give reasons for your opinions.

Appendix C

Visual Arts – Grade 5
Going West

Name _____

Narrative vs. Landscape Painting

Choose a landscape painting from the Hudson River School and one representing narrative or genre painting. Compare and contrast the two using the Venn diagram below.

Hudson River School painting

Artist _____

Title _____

Narrative or Genre painting

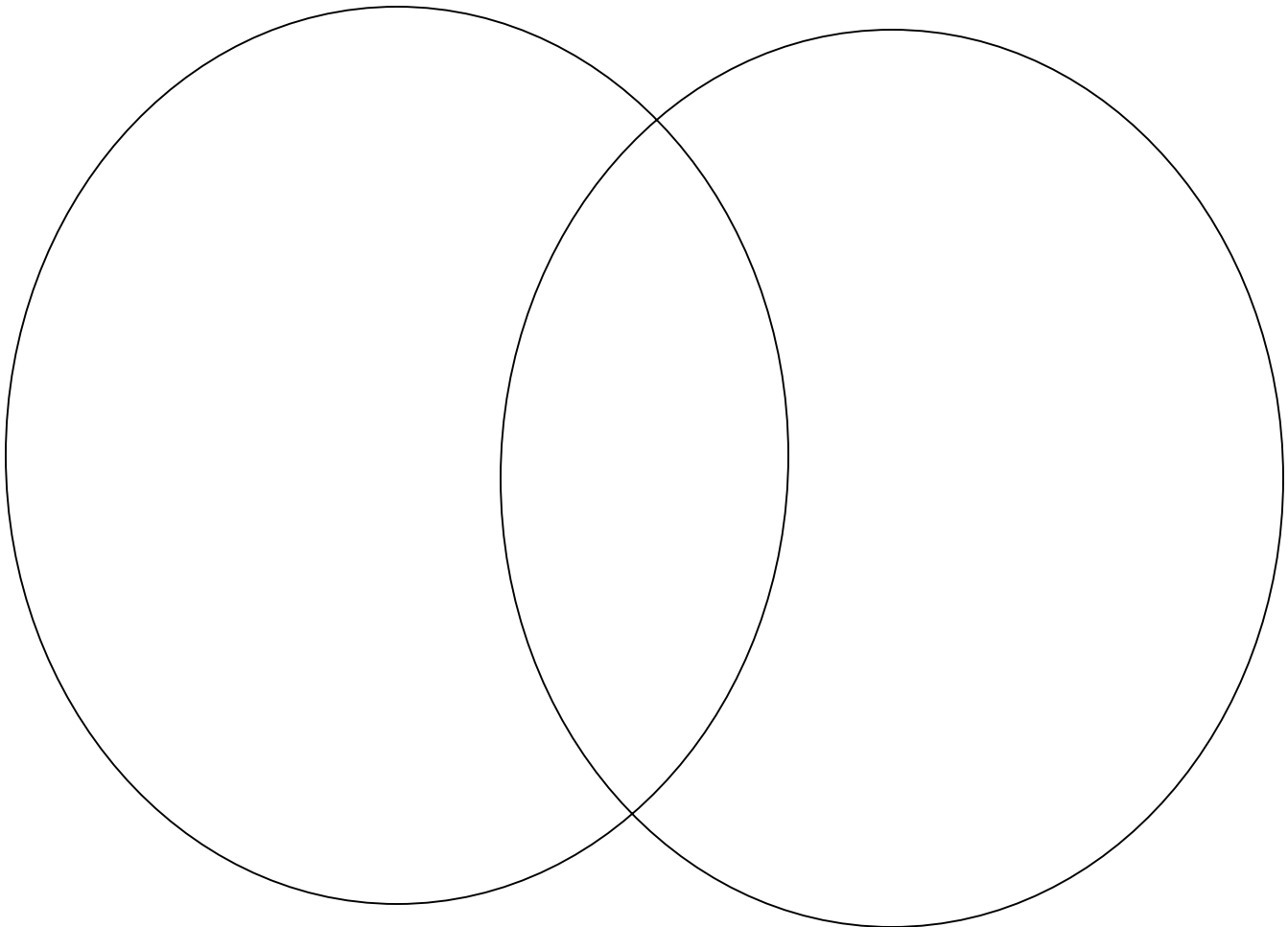
Artist _____

Title _____

Hudson River School

Narrative or Genre

both



Appendix D

Visual Arts – Grade 5
Going West

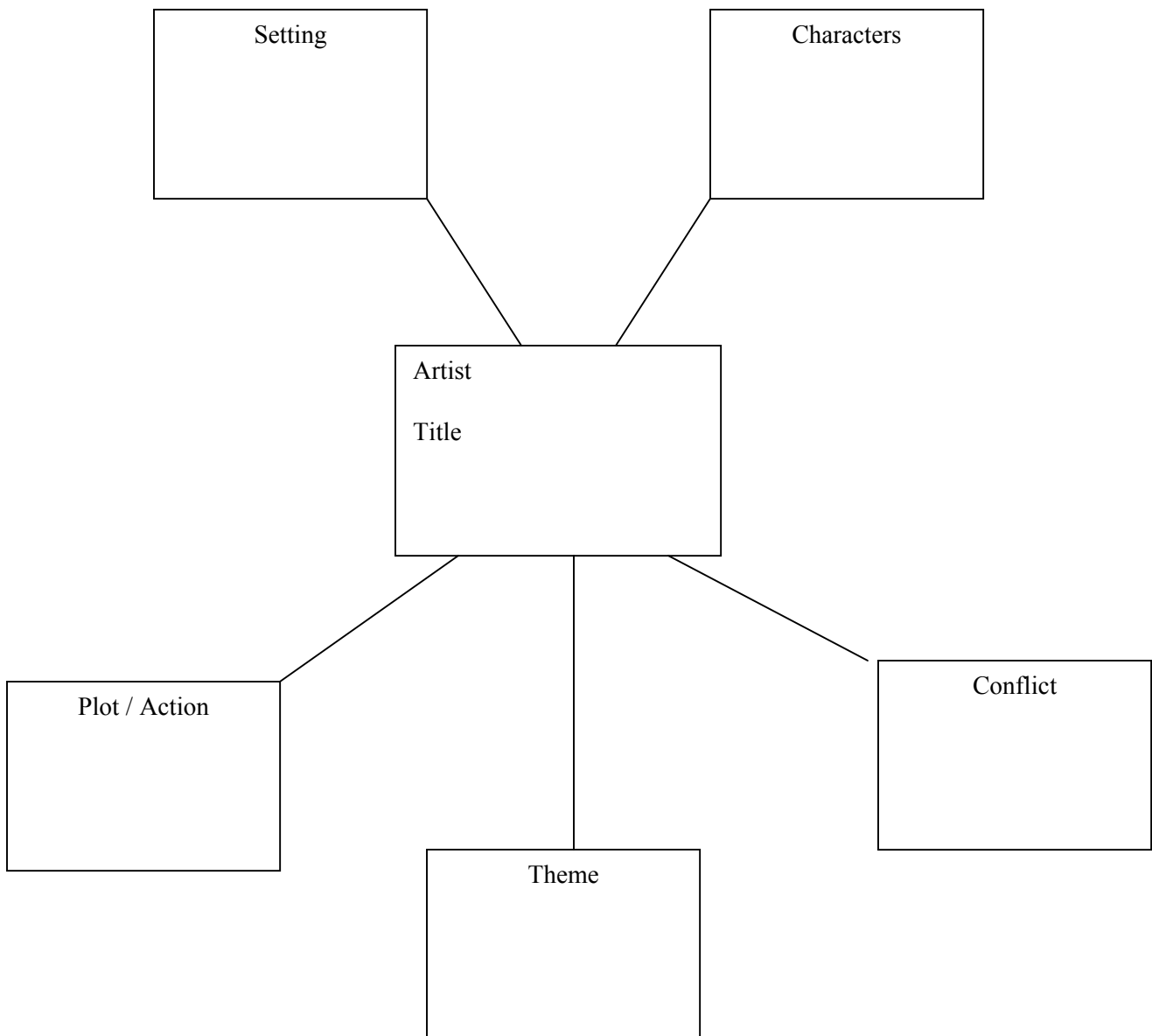
Name _____

Story Map for a Painting

Beginning:

Middle:

End:



Every Picture Tells a Story - Interpreting a Painting



1. Observe the painting supplied by your teacher. Write the artist and title below:

Artist _____
Title _____

2. Sketch the painting in the box above.
3. Look at the painting. Think of it in terms of literary elements:
 - Where is the setting?
 - When does it take place?
 - What is the subject?
 - Who or what appears in the painting?
 - What is happening?
4. Complete the Story Map on your own.
5. Share your map with your group. Discuss.
6. In your group, make up a story about the scene in the painting to share with the class. Remember your story must have a beginning, middle, and ending. Who are your characters? How did the characters get there? Why are they there? What happened before the scene in the painting? What will happen later? What is the main idea or problem portrayed? How will it be solved? Detail some of the main events. This is a group effort. Remember the rules for group work!

Please write your story on a separate sheet of paper. Remember to edit and proofread before handing in your final copy.