

Climate Justice and Action Through Art



#SilaandtheLand
Activity
Grade Level: 1-6

About This Activity

Learners are provided an opportunity to create art, think critically about elements of art, and connect art to a local and global context. The activities can be done in multiple sessions but need to be done together.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this activity, learners will:

- Understand texture as an element of art that appeals to our sense of touch and can evoke feelings
- Explore an outdoor environment to create their own 3D art piece
- Learn about petroglyphs and create their own with a rock painting exercise
- Understand the current problems with pollution, and climate change by making connections to the unnatural materials in our land, and waters

Curriculum Connections

Ontario

Grade 1 Social Studies: People and Environments: The Local Community (B2.1, B2.2, B2.5, B2.6)
 Grade 1 The Arts: Visual Arts (D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4, D2.1)
 Grade 2 Social Studies: People and Environments: Global Communities (B1.3)
 Grade 2 The Arts: Visual Arts (D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4, D2.1)
 Grade 3 Social Studies: People and Environments: Living and Working In Ontario (B2.2)
 Grade 3 The Arts: Visual Arts (D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4,

D2.1)

Grade 4 Social Studies: Heritage and Identity: Early Societies To 1500 CE (A1.4, A2.4, A2.5, A3.2)

- People and Environments: Political and Physical Regions of Canada (B1.3)

Grade 4 The Arts: Visual Arts (D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4, D2.1)

Grade 5 Social Studies: People and Environments: The Role of Government and Responsible Citizenship (B2.1, B2.2, B2.4, B3.8, B3.9)

Grade 5 The Arts: Visual Arts (D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4, D2.1)

Grade 6 Social Studies: People and Environments: Canada's Interactions with the Global Community (B2.1)

Grade 6 The Arts: Visual Arts (D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4, D2.1)

Length of Activity

Outdoor Exercise: 1 - 2 hours

Rock Painting Exercise: 1 - 2 hours

Materials List

Exploring Textures Worksheet

Three items that are natural and made such as: wood, plastic, stone, or metal

Thinking About My Art Worksheet

Common art supplies (paint, paint brushes, etc.)

Step 1: Preparation

Introduce texture as an element of art by selecting three items which are natural and made such as: wood, plastic, stone, or metal.

- a. Seat learners in a sharing circle and allow them to pass around these three items. Each learner should have an opportunity to describe the object by its texture and how that texture makes them feel.
- b. Educators can provide learners with the definition of texture, and explain that it is one of the seven elements of art.
 - i. Highlight that texture deals with our sense of touch and can also evoke feelings such as pleasure, discomfort, or familiarity.

Step 2: Outdoor Exercise

Using the Exploring Textures Worksheet, allow learners to explore outside around school to identify various textures in the environment.

- a. Once completed, the educator can have the learners share their findings in a group discussion.

Step 3

Learners will now create their own 3D art using natural and/or made materials found in a water source environment (local park, pond, creek, etc.). Learners will become the artists, the educator will be the art curator, and the environment will become a gallery. Provide learners with the worksheet called, Thinking About My Art Worksheet so that they can fill in the questions as they create their own art pieces. This worksheet can be finished after this exercise as well.

- a. In pairs, or in small groups, allow learners to create art pieces for the gallery (environment) that incorporates texture into the story of the art. Learners can be as creative as they like! They can use things they found in the environment and glue them together to create a 3D structure or utilize pieces from the environment to create an image that pops right out of the page!
- b. After they have created their pieces, the class can now come together and pretend they are at an art show, viewing each of the created art pieces. The artists of each creation can describe their piece to the class including its

- c. texture, and how it makes them feel, or how they wanted others to feel for example.
- c. The objective here is to provide learners with an opportunity to draw connections between materials and textures that exist in our natural environment and to use those things to create art that tells a story or sends a message.
- d. Have learners remove all of their unnatural materials such as plastics and waste from their art pieces, and any they see in the surrounding area to be disposed of appropriately. They can fix their art pieces after this removal if they choose to.
 - ii. Educators may notice that the majority of these art pieces contain lots of unnatural materials when they were found in a natural environment. This will be great to use as a discussion point for topics of pollution and sustainability when educators go over what Sila learned from the Wind and the Eagle in the book titled, *Sila and the Land*.
- e. Have learners each select their own rock to be brought back to school as it will become their canvas.

Step 4: Rock Painting Exercise

Introduce learners to artwork called “petroglyphs”, which were originally carvings into rock by the Mi’kmaq people to depict their history, stories, and values.

- a. More information can be found here: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ns/kejimikujik/culture/paysage-landscape/petroglyphes-petroglyphs>

Step 5

Provide learners with paints and brushes to create their own petroglyph inspired art on the rock that they selected previously. Give learners time to reflect upon what they have learned about the materials they found in the environment, and their textures as they decided what they would like to express in their own art.

- a. As learners are painting, or after they are done it would be important to draw connections from the teachings of the Wind and the Eagle in *Sila and the Land*.
- b. Remind the class or ask them what the Wind taught Sila. Ask them:
 - i. The Wind taught Sila to always stand up for what is right, and to never back down to challenges that get in your way. Now, how many of you had to get rid of unnatural materials in their art pieces?
 - ii. Do we think it is right for all of that unnatural material to be in our natural environments? Why?
 - iii. If it is not right to do this, should we try to stand up against it like what the Wind was teaching us?
- c. This can lead the Educator to go over what the Eagle taught Sila which was to start making change for a better world; for you and the generations coming after you. Ask the learners:
 - i. If we can all agree that we stand up against all the unnatural materials in our waters, and our forests then do we think we should do something about that?
 - ii. How can we protect our environments from waste and unnatural materials that are damaging to the environment?
 - iii. The Eagle mentions climate change, and that us humans are damaging our land through our heedless actions, and our water through pollution. If we never do anything about pollution, and stopping climate change then how do you think your future family, neighbours, and community would feel about that?
- d. Encourage learners to continue this conversation at home.

new, natural pieces that belong in this space.

- a. Educators can briefly discuss what the Eagle mentions about our waters. As the learners look at the water in this outdoor environmental setting it is important for them to acknowledge that our water, and all the life in it has been harmed by pollution.
- b. Ask them to remember all the waste and unnatural materials that were in their original art pieces and express how that can show us how much pollution has harmed our lands and waters.
- c. Be sure to tell them that these new art rock pieces represent hope for our future and that they can be the change and stand up for what is right.

Step 6: Conclusion

Once the rock art pieces are completed, allow learners to return to the original outdoor space they visited previously in the lesson. Learners may choose to bring back their rock art pieces to replace their original art pieces that contained waste with these