South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Oscar Howe
“The Nature of the Hunt”

Provided by the South Dakota Art Museum
Brookings, South Dakota
South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

**Unit of Study:** Oscar Howe, Native American painter

**Title of Lesson Plan:** The Nature of the Hunt

**Grade Level:** 3 – 5
South Dakota Content Standards

U.S. History:

3.US.2.1 Students are able to describe characteristics of a community.

5.US.1.1 Students are able to differentiate the lifestyles of various Native American tribes.
South Dakota Content Standards

**Reading:**

3.R.5.2  Students can choose reference materials to locate information.

3.R.5.3  Students can collect information from two reference materials.

4.R.5.2  Students can research a topic by gathering information from at least two sources.

5.R.4.1  Students can examine and compare texts from various cultures, time periods, and geographical locations.

5.R.5.1  Students can select information from two or more reference sources to meet a goal.
Assessment Strategies

- Class discussion
- Observation during research
- Evaluation of student writing using 6+1 Writing Traits as a guide
Learning Objectives

- Students will explain the significance of the buffalo to the Native American community.

- Students will describe techniques used to hunt buffalo.

- Students will explain how all parts of the buffalo were used by the tribe.

- Students will describe the painting “Buffalo Hunt” answering VTS questions.
Time Required

- Two class periods of 45 – 60 minutes each – one to conduct research and one class period for class discussion and student reflection.
Materials Required

- Access to the Internet and library resources for research on the elements of a traditional buffalo hunt.

- Paper

- Writing utensils

- Image of the Oscar Howe painting “Buffalo Hunt”

- For younger students, you may want to create a quick guide to help direct them in finding answers for specific questions (i.e. what is the difference between a “buffalo pound”, “buffalo jump”, and a “chase” method, list a couple of additional ways that they would kill buffalo, list how different portions of the buffalo would be used in a tribe, etc.)
Oscar Howe is one of the premiere Native American artists of our state. He set out to capture the essence of the Sioux heritage while breaking away from creating stereotypical Indian art. Using Howe’s “Buffalo Hunt”, students will examine the painting to determine what hunting technique was being used to capture the buffalo. Students will also employ various VTS techniques to evaluate Howe’s image of what a buffalo hunt was like.
Lesson Description

- Students will begin by researching the ways that the Native Americans hunted the buffalo (there is a website listed below “Plains Indians and the Bison” which is a good resource).

- Students will also research how the Native Americans used all the buffalo, not wasting any part of it.

- Reassemble the class and have them discuss what they learned from their research.
Lesson Description

- Show students the Oscar Howe painting “Buffalo Hunt”. Have students write a paragraph about their reaction to the painting answering the following questions:
  - What do you see as you look at this painting?
  - What do you hear?
  - Which type of hunting method is being used in this painting? (optional)
  - Do you think this is an accurate representation of what an acute hunt would look like? Why or why not?
Enrichment

- Students could go and visit a museum to see artifacts of how tribes used different parts of the buffalo in everyday life. There are some traveling exhibits that include Native American artifacts made from buffalo (for example, the President’s Park has one that can be accessed).
Bibliography/Resources

• Howe Painting Collection at the South Dakota Art Museum
  • Oscar Howe Painting: “Buffalo Hunt”

• “Buffalo ~ Bison.” Akta Lakota Museum. 9 June 2009

• Giannetta, J. “Plains Indians and the Bison.” Saskatchewan Schools. April 2009
  <http://www.saskschools.ca/~gregory/firstnations/bison.html>. (*Permission granted from Ms. Giannetta for students to use this source).
Oscar Howe Presentation to Students
Oscar Howe

http://www.oscarhowe.org
Oscar Howe

- Born May 13, 1915 at Joe Creek on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation of South Dakota

- Attended Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, SD

- In 1948, appointed designer for the Corn Palace panels (Mitchell, SD)
  - Continued annually until 1971

- Taught art at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, SD for 25 years

- Died October 7, 1983
Oscar Howe

- Major influence on the course of Indian art today

- Encouraged by his instructor, Dorothy Dunn, at the Santa Fe Indian School to paint scenes from everyday life, history, and legends of his heritage

- Drew inspiration from his heritage for artwork

- Translated stories he heard from his grandmother into drawings

- Artwork brings together European American and Native American cultures
Bibliography


*For more information contact the South Dakota Art Museum
Buffalo Hunt

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Other Examples of Oscar Howe’s Artwork
Sioux War Dancer

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Eagle Dancer

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Grass Dancer

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Dakota Medicine Man

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum