South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Oscar Howe
“Lasting Memories”

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:** Lasting Memories

**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

- Use rubrics to evaluate student art projects
Learning Objectives

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

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

- Students will reflect on important events in their own lives, like what the first buffalo hunt would have been to a young Native American.

- Students will create artwork on a mock buffalo skin.
Time Required

- Two class periods of 45 – 60 minutes each – provide background information about the significance of the buffalo and how everything from the buffalo was used. The remainder of the time would be used for students to create their own hide painting of a story or event in their lives.
Materials Required

- Image of the Oscar Howe painting “Buffalo Hunt”
- Brown paper bag (large grocery size – 1 bag for 2 students)
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils, paints, etc.
- Scissors
- Examples of painting on buffalo hides (see resources section)
Oscar Howe is one of the premiere Native American artists of our state. Oscar Howe’s print, “Buffalo Hunt”, shows the significance of the buffalo and the hunt in Sioux culture. Students need to understand that tribes used every part of the buffalo that they killed. In some cases, tribal members would use buffalo hides as art canvasses as a way to tell their stories or honor the spirits.
Lesson Description

- Begin by showing students the Oscar Howe painting “Buffalo Hunt”. Have students discuss their reaction to the painting answering questions like:
  - What do you see as you look at this painting?
  - What do you hear?
  - How does this reflect what you know about buffalo in Native American culture?

- Use the answers to the sample questions to gauge what understanding level students have about Native Americans and the buffalo.

- Discuss how Native Americans would use buffalo hides as canvasses to paint stories.
Lesson Description continued

- Students need to think of a significant event in their lives (i.e. a new sibling, moving, memorable birthday party, winning a game, etc.). They will be using a paper buffalo hide to illustrate this significant event.

- Each student will receive 1 piece of a brown paper bag to create their buffalo hide (use sample hide paintings to show the irregular shape of the hide and the basic illustrations used to tell the story).

- Students will then decorate their paper buffalo hide with images (and not words) to tell their story.
Enrichment

- Students could act like anthropologists and try to tell the story of one of their classmate’s hide paintings.
Howe Painting Collection at the South Dakota Art Museum
  • Oscar Howe Painting: “Buffalo Hunt”

A wonderful resource is from the Smithsonian Institution, which provides a great deal of information about what hide paintings are to reading a story from a hide painting which might be helpful background information to provide to students to suit your particular objectives.

“The Tracking the Buffalo: Stories from a Buffalo Hide Painting.” Smithsonian Institute. 2000
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/kids/buffalo/abouthides_frmset.html>.
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
The Singer

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Dakota Medicine Man