

Lesson: Visit to the Huntington Library

Rationale for lesson:

Because most of my students' exposure to museums is limited, I wanted to create a lesson that would incorporate our visit to the Huntington Library into my curriculum. The lesson is designed to provide students with an enriching and sensory experience that would require students to actively interact with their environment. As an independent study teacher, I teach all content areas and this lesson would be cross curricular, allowing me to integrate both language arts objectives with Art objectives. Since students will be focusing in both the Chinese and Japanese gardens, students will be asked to extend their study of and apply aspects of Chinese philosophy in their observation and interpretation of the gardens. My objective is to create a learning experience that is experiential and inspirational and that would require students to apply observation to detail and analysis, think and create. This lesson is designed for my Writing Seminar class and Intro to Art class.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will engage in observation and analysis of natural space/landscape in order to identify aspects of Chinese philosophy in the arrangement of natural elements in gardens and their symbolism
- Students will apply observational skills and inference of natural landscape and produce both a descriptive writing piece and drawing or painting inspired by their observations of both Chinese and Japanese gardens
- Students will apply art techniques discussed in art class such as texture, color, lines, shape, form and movement in their creation of landscape painting or drawing
- Students will apply knowledge of figurative language and descriptive writing such as imagery, vivid details to produce a description of place writing piece
- Students will appreciate beauty and arrangement of the gardens

Materials:

A day visit to the Huntington Library

Teacher made handouts: Chinese philosophy worksheet (handout A), sensory worksheet (handout B), figurative language/imagery handout

Art supplies: drawing paper, color pencils, crayons, paint, brushes and other supplies

Lesson:

Focus Question: What aspects of Chinese philosophy do you observe in the elements and arrangement of gardens? What might the elements of the garden and their arrangement suggest about the Chinese and Japanese people's relationship to nature and their values and beliefs about life? What evidence do you observe of the principles of Chinese philosophy in the gardens?

- Teacher explains to students purpose of visit to the Huntington Library with a brief overview of the gardens. Our focus: Chinese and Japanese gardens.
- Teacher passes out handout A and tells students that they will observe both the Chinese and Japanese gardens, look for aspects of Chinese philosophy in the arrangements of and the elements of the garden. Students will be encouraged to take notes on the arrangement of elements and gardens, layout, focal points, and identify aspects of Chinese philosophy in the construction of space in nature.
- Teacher then passes out handout B and informs students that they will choose one garden to focus on and will then take notes in handout, filling in as many details of their observation/experience of the garden. They will use these notes to write a descriptive essay of the place. Teacher encourages students to write as many sensory and descriptive words and details to create excellent imagery and figurative language in their descriptions of place. They may begin writing a first draft of their essay there. They will revisit notes and first draft to revise/edit in class to produce final essay.
- Teacher passes out paper and pencils to each student and tells students they will choose one of the gardens and recreate a landscape drawing or sketch which they will later revisit in class to create a landscape painting or drawing with colors and other art materials in class.
- The class begins day journey to the Huntington Library

Assessment:

Students will be assessed for completion and thoughtfulness of first handout, their notes on second handout, the vivid language/imagery of a description of place descriptive essay and artistic quality and technique of landscape painting or drawing