# ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN

Visual Arts and Writing Infused Lesson

Lesson One: Contour Lines

Author: Beverly Harding Buehler Grade Level: Fourth

Enduring Understanding

Contour lines show the inner and outer edges of a form. A contour line drawing can suggest the

character of the object being drawn.

Lesson Description (Use for family communication and displaying student art)

Students identify and compare contour lines in two works of art, then explore how these lines reveal

information about the people they depict. Students make contour drawings of their shoes and then

repeat the drawing process without looking at their paper. Last, students write a descriptive narrative

from the perspective of their shoe with attention to details conveying the character of the shoe.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target: Describes the characters as shown in the art, based on observations.

Criteria: Uses vivid verbs and specific nouns.

Target: Identifies and creates contour lines.

Criteria: Records the inner and outer edges of a complex form from observation.

Target: Creates a blind contour line drawing.

Criteria: Records the inner and outer edges of a complex form without looking at his/her drawing.

Target: Uses descriptive language.

Criteria: Writes an imagined narrative of the life of a shoe, from the perspective of the shoe using

precise words (specific nouns/vivid verbs).

Vocabulary

Arts Infused:

Characterization

Descriptive words/lines

Narrative

Writing:

Adjectives

Narrative

Nouns

Verbs

Arts:

Blind contour drawing

Contour line drawing

Materials

Museum Artworks or Performance

Seattle, WA

Seattle Art Museum

Tacoma, WA

Tacoma Art Museum

Materials

White drawing paper: 9x12”, two per

student; Drawing pencils: 2H, 4B, 4H,

HB, and 2B; Vinyl erasers; black

Sharpies: ultra fine tip; Arts Impact

sketchbooks; Class Assessment

Worksheet

Link to Art Connections, Level 4

“Contour Lines” pages 28-31

Connections

Teachers College Writers Workshop

continued

Learning Standards

WA Arts State Grade Level Expectations

For the full description of each WA State Arts Grade

Level Expectation, see:

http://www.k12.wa.us/Arts/Standards

1.1.1 Elements: Contour line

1.1.2 Elements: Organic and geometric shapes

1.2.1 Skills and techniques: Drawing from

observation

2.1.1 Creative process

2.3.1 Responding Process

4.2.1 Connections between Visual Art and Writing

Early Learning Guidelines (Pre-K – Grade 3)

(Age 4-5) 5. Communicating: Speaking and

listening: Tell a short make-believe story, with adult

help.

(Age 4-5) 5. Communicating: Reading: Tell you what

is going to happen next in a story. Make up an

ending.

(Age 4-5) 6. Learning about my world: Arts: Use a

variety of materials to represent people and things.

continued

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Art Connections images:

Henri Matisse, French, Les Glaieuls

(study for The Flowers), 19th century

Mark Uqayuittuq, Inuit, Friendly Spirits,

1981

Seattle Art Museum images:

Style of Adriaen Janzoon von Ostade,

Two Peasants, Dutch, 17th century,

52.31

Unknown Persian artist, Miniature: Line

Drawing of Artist at Work, circa 1600,

62.205

Common Core State Standards in ELA

(Language)

For a full description of CCSS Standards by grade

level see:

http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/ELAstandards/

W.4.3. Text Types and Purposes: Write narratives to

develop real or imagined experiences or events

using effective technique and descriptive details.

W.4.5. Production and Distribution of Writing: With

guidance and support from adults and peers, focus

on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by

revising and editing.

L.4.1. Conventions of Grammar: Adjectives, nouns,

verbs

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Pre-Teach

Review the concept of vivid verbs and specific nouns in texts. Have students

practice identifying vivid verbs and specific nouns in texts.

Lesson Steps Outline

1. Show Two Peasants style of Adriaen Jansoon von Ostade and Miniature: Line

Drawing of Artist at Work by Unknown Artist from the Seattle Art Museum

collection. Introduce the concept of a contour line.

Criteria-based teacher process assessment: Student participates in identifying

and tracing contour lines in drawings.

2. Facilitate comparing of two different contour line drawings, looking for clues

to the characters depicted.

Criteria-based peer assessment and teacher checklist: Student uses vivid

verbs and specific nouns (to describe characters).

3. Demonstrate and guide contour line drawing.

Criteria based, peer and self-assessment, and teacher checklist: Student

records the inner and outer edges of a complex form from observation.

4. Facilitate students doing a second drawing: a blind contour line drawing of

their shoe. Guide reflection.

Criteria-based self-assessment and teacher checklist: Student records the

inner and outer edges of a complex form without looking at his/her drawing.

ICON KEY:

" = Notes specific Writers Workshop Curriculum strategies addressed

= Indicates note or reminder for teacher

= Embedded assessment points in the lesson

COLOR CODING for ARTS AND LITERACY INFUSED PROCESSES:

GENERATE IDEAS CONSTRUCT MEANING SELF-REFLECT

Gather Information

• From WHAT you know

• From WHO you know

• Brainstorm

• Create drafts

• Organize ideas

• Make a choice

• Check in with self

• Check in with others

• Refine work

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5. Facilitate students writing a short narrative of the life of a shoe, from the

perspective of the shoe. Guide reflection and refinement.

Criteria-based self and peer assessment, and teacher checklist: Student writes

an imagined narrative of the life of a shoe, from the perspective of the shoe

using precise words (specific nouns/vivid verbs).

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LESSON STEPS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Show Two Peasants style of Adriaen Jansoon von Ostade and Miniature: Line Drawing of

Artist at Work by Unknown Artist from the Seattle Art Museum collection. Introduce the

concept of a contour line.

" mini-lesson, contour line drawing, sharing professional work

• One of the ways artists can help us see the character of an object, with all its wrinkles and

imperfections, is to accurately draw the inside and outside edges of the forms s/he is seeing.

We call this contour line drawing.

• Can you find a place on any of these works of art where the artist followed a contour line from

the outside to the inside of the form?

• Generate ideas by gathering information.

Criteria-based teacher process assessment: Student participates in identifying and tracing contour

lines in drawings.

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2. Facilitate comparing of two different contour line drawings, looking for clues to the

characters depicted.

" sharing professional work, compare and contrast, peer conferring

• Since contour lines are such truth-telling lines, we can learn quite a bit about the characters of

the people or objects depicted by them. Let’s compare these contour drawings of people by

finding similarities and differences.

Introduce contour line drawings from the Seattle Art Museum on page 3 of this lesson as well as the

contour line drawing of Inuit dancers on page 29 of Art Connections, Level 4.

• What do the contour lines reveal about the people they are depicting?

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• Compare and contrast two contour line drawings, looking for clues to the characters

they represent.

• Construct meaning as you think about what you see.

• Jot down vivid verbs (e.g. crouching, dragging, etc.) and specific nouns (e.g. peddler, youth,

etc.) in your journal that describe the characters as shown in the art, based on your

observations. Then, share them with your elbow buddy.

Criteria-based peer assessment and teacher checklist: Student uses vivid verbs and specific nouns

(to describe characters).

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3. Demonstrate and guide contour line drawing.

" mini lesson, contour line drawing, drafting, peer conferring, refining

• We are going to do contour line drawings of something that often reveals a fair bit about

someone’s character, our shoes. Oftentimes, an artist doing a contour line drawing won’t pick

up his/her pencil for the whole drawing.

• Here are two tricks that help you do a great contour line drawing:

a. Look at the thing you are drawing MUCH more than at your paper.

b. Focus your vision on the top of your object, and put your pencil at the top of your

paper. Then move your eyes slowly down the object while your drawing hand moves at

the same speed.

• Take off one of your shoes and put it in an interesting position on your desk. Remember a

contour line is a truth-telling line. Only draw what you see.

• Construct meaning as you sketch.

• If you notice that you have lost your concentration at some point, go back to the place on your

drawing where you can see that you were still concentrating, and just start drawing again from

that point. Don’t bother to erase. Extra lines add a feeling of life to a drawing.

• Exchange your contour line drawing with an elbow buddy. Reflect by checking in with others.

Where do you think your buddy was concentrating the most? Why do you think so?

• Where do you see his/her contour line describing the inner and outer edges of the form well?

Can you find any place on your buddy’s drawing where it looks like s/he might have lost

concentration, and made something up?

• Make a choice and refine your work.

Criteria based peer and self-assessment, and teacher checklist: Student records the inner and outer

edges of a complex form from observation.

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4. Facilitate students doing a second drawing: a blind contour line drawing of their shoe.

Guide reflection.

" drafting, reflecting, refining

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• Now, we’re going to do a second contour line drawing of our shoes (placed in a new position),

but we’re not going to look at our drawings until we are done.

• You’re constructing a different meaning as you sketch this time.

• This is called a blind contour line drawing, and it’s a way artists strengthen their looking skills.

You may be surprised to discover that your blind contour line drawing is more accurate in some

ways than the contour line you did while you were looking at your drawing.

• Reflect again. Compare your contour line drawings. Which is the most truthful to the form and

character of your shoe?

Criteria-based self-assessment and teacher checklist: Student records the inner and outer edges of a

complex form without looking at his/her drawing.

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5. Facilitate students writing a short narrative of the life of a shoe, from the perspective of

the shoe. Guide reflection and refinement.

" drafting, reflecting, refining

• In art and writing, we use adjectives, or describing words, to describe the way something looks

and feels. In your journal, write a short narrative of the life of your shoe, told from the

perspective of the shoe.

• Use your contour line drawing as inspiration for including very specific description and details in

your narrative. How is contour line drawing similar to including details in a piece of writing?

• This time you’re constructing meaning by writing. Brainstorm, organize your ideas, make a draft

and then make choices.

• This is another opportunity to reflect with a peer: share your narrative with your elbow buddy.

• Can s/he find a specific detail that you included in both your drawing and your narrative that

gives your shoe its character?

• Can your buddy suggest a way to make your description even more compelling? It’s not too late

to refine your work.

Criteria-based self and peer assessment, and teacher checklist: Student writes an imagined narrative

of the life of a shoe, from the perspective of the shoe using precise words (specific nouns/vivid verbs).

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ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Visual Arts and Writing Infusion

Fourth Grade Lesson One: Contour Lines

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Teachers may choose to use or adapt the following self-assessment tool.

Disciplines WRITING VISUAL ARTS WRITING

Concept Descriptive

Writing:

Characterization

Skill: Contour

Line

Skill:

Blind Contour

Line

Descriptive Writing:

Narrative

Criteria

Student Name

Uses vivid verbs and

specific nouns

Records the inner

and outer edges

of a complex

form from

observation

Records the inner

and outer edges of

a complex form

without looking at

his/her drawing

Writes an imagined narrative

of the life of a shoe, from the

perspective of the shoe using

precise words (specific

nouns/vivid verbs)

Total

4

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ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Visual Arts and Writing Infusion

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CLASS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines WRITING VISUAL ARTS WRITING

Concept Descriptive

Writing:

Characterization

Skill: Contour

Line

Skill:

Blind Contour

Line

Descriptive Writing:

Narrative

Criteria

Student Name

Uses vivid verbs and

specific nouns

Records the inner

and outer edges

of a complex

form from

observation

Records the inner

and outer edges of

a complex form

without looking at

his/her drawing

Writes an imagined

narrative of the life of a

shoe, from the

perspective of the shoe

using precise words

Total

4

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Total

Percentage

What was effective in the lesson? Why?

What do I want to consider for the next time I teach this lesson?

What were the strongest connections between visual arts and writing?

Teacher: Date:

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ARTS IMPACT FAMILY LETTER

ARTS AND WRITING LESSON: Contour Lines

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in an Arts and Writing lesson. We did contour line drawings of our

shoes, in which you draw the inner and outer edges of a form, and then we did a blind contour line

drawing in which we drew our shoes without looking at our drawings. Since contour lines are “truthtelling

lines,” they can reveal the character of an object or person. We wrote narratives of the life of a

shoe, told from the perspective of our own shoes.

• We gathered information from art about the characters of the people depicted and wrote vivid

verbs and specific nouns to describe them.

• We made contour and blind contour line drawings of our shoes.

• We wrote descriptive narratives of the life of our shoe, told from the shoe’s perspective.

Contour line drawing is a skill that one gets better at with practice. You could encourage your child to

do more contour line drawings of complex organic shapes in your home – a pile of clothes, a plant, a

pet (while it’s sleeping) – and practice doing contour line drawings from it.

Enduring Understanding

Contour lines show the inner and outer edges of a form.

A contour line drawing can suggest the character of the object being drawn.