

Art of the American Soldier: Stories from the Soldiers

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About this Lesson

This lesson encourages students to deepen their appreciation of war art through watching and listening to veteran war experiences. Students are then asked to point out details in the artwork they had not previously noticed before listening to the veteran war stories.

Grade(s) Level

4-8 (please use “Probing for Land Mines in Bosnia” as the Soldier’s Duty painting for this age group)

9-12 (use either painting offered for the Soldier’s Duty section)

Classroom Time

45 minute class period

Handouts

Three separate handouts for each of the three sections: Life, Duty, and Sacrifice

Constitution Connections

Preamble

“...provide for the common defence...”

Amendment I

Freedom of expression

Background

During the *Art of the American Soldier* exhibition, visitors to the National Constitution Center explored how soldier-artists portrayed moments of soldier life, duty, and sacrifice in military conflicts from the origins of the Army art program in World War I through its current incarnation in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Center, in conjunction with the Drexel University School of Education, presented artwork from the exhibition to non-artist veterans in order to record their reactions to the paintings and capture their first-hand accounts of war.

Objectives

Students will:

- Examine paintings as examples of primary source documentation of warfare
- Listen to the first-hand accounts of veteran war experiences
- Recognize how the artistic form of story telling can allow a different perspective and enhance one’s interpretation of artwork.

Activity

1. Distribute the four pieces of artwork to your students. Encourage them to discuss the paintings in a group setting, focusing on how the artists understood the experiences which they chose to paint.
2. Tell your students that the Center was able to interview veterans about their experiences during the war after showing them the same artwork the students encountered in the classroom discussion.
3. Give your students the first handout, “Telling the Story of War: A Soldier’s Life,” with the image of the painting and accompanying questions.
4. Play the recording of the veteran’s interview for the students using the link provided on the handout and on the Educator webpage.
5. Ask your students to fill out the handout after they have heard the recording.
6. If time allows, repeat these steps for the remaining handouts.

Assessment Options

You may choose to collect the handout from students.

You may choose to have your students draw a scene depicting their daily lives, and have them audio record what they were attempting to capture in their drawing.

Resources

Use these links to access the veteran videos relating to the paintings below.

“Movies” by Paul Sample:

<http://constitutioncenter.org/education/educators/learning-resources/online-resources/art-of-the-american-soldier-movies-video>

“Probing for Land Mines in Bosnia” by Carl E. “Gene” Snyder:

<http://constitutioncenter.org/education/educators/learning-resources/online-resources/art-of-the-american-soldier-probing-for-land-mines-in-bosnia-video>

“The Beach” by Tom Lea:

<http://constitutioncenter.org/education/educators/learning-resources/online-resources/art-of-the-american-soldier-beach-video>

“Fracture Ward” by Peter Blume:

<http://constitutioncenter.org/education/educators/learning-resources/online-resources/art-of-the-american-soldier-fracture-ward-video>

Name: _____

Date: _____

Telling the Story of War: A Soldier's Life

Look. "Movies" by Paul Sample, 1943, World War II. Oil on Canvas.



Listen.

Listen and watch this video interview with Vietnam War veterans, Vincent DiLodovico, Frank Nassetta, and Robert Brown, sharing their war experiences after viewing this painting.

Write.

After you hear the audio recording, answer the questions in the space provided below.

Some details I notice in this art piece that I didn't notice before are:

Some specific things in this painting that I have a different understanding of after listening to the artist are:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Telling the Story of War: A Soldier's Duty (Grades 4-8)

Look. "Probing for Land Mines in Bosnia" by Carl E. "Gene" Snyder, 1996. Oil on Canvas.



Listen.

Watch and listen to this video interview with Current Operations veteran Timothy Hoke sharing his war experiences after viewing this painting.

Write.

After you hear the audio recording, answer the questions in the space provided below.

Some details I notice in this art piece that I didn't notice before are:

Some specific things in this painting that I have a different understanding of after listening to the artist are:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Telling the Story of War: A Soldier's Duty (Grades 9-12)

Look. "The Beach" by Tom Lea, 1944, World War II. Oil on Canvas.



Listen.

Watch and listen to this video interview with World War II veteran Arthur Seltzer sharing his war experiences after viewing this painting.

Write.

After you hear the audio recording, answer the questions in the space provided below.

Some details I notice in this art piece that I didn't notice before are:

Some specific things in this painting that I have a different understanding of after listening to the artist are:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Telling the Story of War: A Soldier's Sacrifice

Look. "Fracture Ward" by Peter Blume, 1944, World War II. Oil on Canvas.



Listen.

Watch and listen to this video interview with World War II veteran Craig Schoeller sharing his war experiences after viewing this painting.

Write.

After you hear the audio recording, answer the questions in the space provided below.

Some details I notice in this art piece that I didn't notice before are:

Some specific things in this painting that I have a different understanding of after listening to the artist are: