BEYOND WALLS

Classroom to the Streets



Graffiti to Street Art & Create Your Own Mural

Unit Guide for Teachers

About this Unit Guide

This document is meant to act as a unit guide for teachers and instructors. This document contains in depth background information on unit topics, questions and pointers to help guide class discussions, links to videos and PowerPoints to show in class, and lesson worksheets, among other things.

This unit guide contains individual lesson plans that can be taught either in the context of, or independently from, the unit guide.

You can find all related documents to this unit, the individual lesson plans, and the virtual student worksheets on the Beyond Walls webpage.

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Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

Visual Arts

Creating

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. (5-6.V.Cr.01)
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. (5-6.V.Cr.02)
- Refine and complete artistic work. (5-6.V.Cr.03.a-b)

Presenting

- Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation. (5-6.V.P.04)
- Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.(5-6.V.P.05)
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. (5-6.V.P.06)

Connecting

- Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. (5-6.M.Co.11)

English Language Arts

Text Types and Purposes

- Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.6.1.a-e)

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.6.4)

Comprehension and Collaboration

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (SL.6.1)
- Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study. (SL.6.2)

Knowledge of Language

- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (L.6.3)

Extensions for Visual Arts, ELA, and Science and Technology curriculum frameworks are listed below



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Unit Objectives

Students will be able to...
1. Discuss the history of graffiti and its evolution into Street Art.
2. Analyze a work of art to understand its meaning.
3. Create a design for a mural that demonstrates an understanding of creative problem solving.

Unit Vocabulary

1. Graffiti
2. Street Art
3. Postgraffism
4. Mural
5. Installation

Unit Materials



Computer with internet access
Printer
Paper
Pencil
Colored pencils, markers, or crayons

Optional Additional materials:

Tracing paper
Ruler

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Unit Procedures

Intoduction

To start this unit, gauge the classroom on their understanding of graffiti and street art. To do this, ask students if they know what graffiti is. Next, ask if they know what street art is. The goal is to have students understand that the main difference between the two is permission – if the art was sanctioned by someone or not.

It is important to note for this unit, and the subsequent lesson plans, that the teacher/instructor is not trying to say that graffiti (being the "illegal" one) is bad or not. Rather, by discussing graffiti students will understand its evolution into what is today called street art.

Lesson: From Graffiti to Street Art



"Elderly Man Surrounded by Graffitis - Surreal Version" by Kojotisko is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Early examples of graffiti date back to prehistoric and ancient times, such as the cave paintings at Lascaux and ancient Roman citizens writing their names and protest poems on building walls. However, graffiti as we know it today dates to the late 1960's when individuals began writing their names, or 'tags', on buildings across cities such as Philadelphia and New York. Graffiti arose from the Black and Latino neighborhoods of these cities alongside hip-hop music and street subcultures. The invention of the aerosol spray can paint in 1949 aided in the development of graffiti. As graffiti grew in popularity, 'taggers' started moving to other major targets, such as subway cars and trains, as a way to have the writer's name be seen by a wider audience.

By the 1980's the city of New York started viewing graffiti as an act of vandalism and a massive amount of resources were poured into solving the city's so called "graffiti problem."

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At this point, take a moment and inform students of the definition of vandalism, which is "the action involving deliberate destruction of or damage to public or private property." Show students an example of graffiti (in the powerpoint) and ask them if they think graffiti is vandalism. Have students explain their answers.

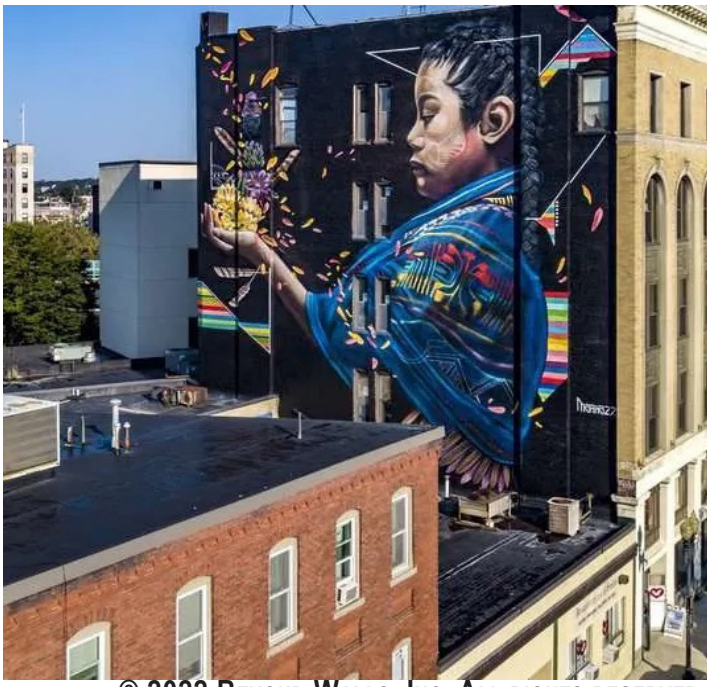


The defintion of graffiti is the act of writing, drawing, or painting on walls or surfaces of a structure. However, over time graffiti taggers started shifting away from text-based works to include imagery, thanks to the efforts of artists such as Jean-Michael Basquiat and Keith Haring. Around the same time, many artists also began experimenting with different techniques and materials, such as stencils and wheat paste posters, culminating in what is today referred to as street art.

"Anthony Clarke, 1985, Jean-Michel Basquiat" by y.caradec is licensed under CC BY 2.0

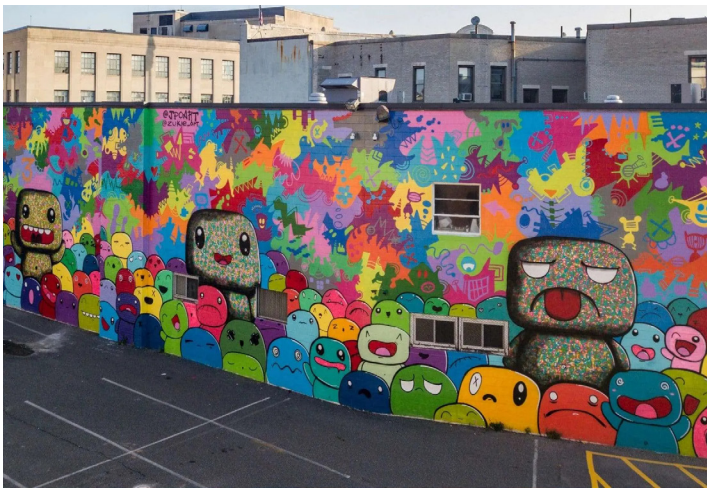
Start this next step by asking students if they have seen any of the murals around Downtown Lynn or other local areas (use powerpoint provided). See if students have any favorites.

Though the legality of street art is still widely debated in some spheres, the art form has evolved into a web of endless possibilities. Since the turn of the 21st century, the art form has expanded to include new subject matter, materials, and locations. Many artists now also work under contracts with business owners, changing the legal scape of their work. The label 'street art' rose to prominence as a way to fully encompass these new techniques and styles. Through this transition from graffiti to street art, the central focus has remained the same.



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At this point, cycle back through the PowerPoint and ask students what they think each image has in common. Steer the focus away from subject matter, medium, color, etc. and have the students think about location.



While there remains a legal difference between graffiti and street art, the similarities remain an important aspect: both art forms are created outdoors in urban, public spaces.

At this point, ask students who they think is meant to see street art. Show examples from the PowerPoint, especially local examples. Questions that might help guide this discussion include:

1. Is the mural surrounded by other buildings? Do you think that means a lot of people walk around the area?
2. What kind of people do you think walk through the area around the building with the mural? Students may talk about times they have walked around and seen a mural.
3. Based on how the students responded to the above questions, who do they think is meant to see street art?

Because street art is placed in such high traffic, urban areas, it is an art form that is generally understood to be made for the public. It is art that anyone can see, wherever and whenever!



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Lesson: Ruben Ubiera's Guerilla Mural

Ruben Gerardo Ubiera Gonzalez (born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic) is a neo-figurative artist, known for his strong use of the line, graffiti inspired technique/esthetic, urban murals, mixed-media pieces, all created with reclaimed-objects and found artifacts. He paints and draws in a style considered as Postgraffism, but he prefers to call it urban-pop, since he has lived most of his life in urban, populated areas and most of his inspiration is derived from the interactivity between man and their urban environment.

According to Ubiera, Postgraffism "is the evolution of graffiti art as a whole – a more thought out and elevated realm of urban derived creativity and visual experimentation" in which subject matter and technique work with, rather than against each other, to create a balanced end result. For Ubiera, this end result usually takes the form of a mural, a painting or other work of art created directly on a wall.



At this point, show students an image of Ubiera's mural "Guerilla." Have students fill out the Lesson Form (attached below and also on Beyond Walls website).

This section of the lesson can be exapnded to incorporate extra curriculum frameworks for Visual Arts, English Language Arts, and Science/Technology

Visual Arts
5-6.V.R.07- 09 and 5-6.V.Co.10

Shows students an example of graffiti art next to Ruben's guerilla and have them create a venn diagram to compare and contrast the two images.

Next, have students write down how the artist uses two elements of art in each image.

Lastly, based on responses to the above questions, have students discuss if they do or do not like the graffiti work and Ruben's work. They must explain their answers.

English Language Arts
W.6.2

Shows students an example of graffiti art next to Ruben's guerilla. Then, have students create a venn diagram to compare and contrast the two images.

Have students write a paragraph summarizing the similarities and differences using the venn diagram they created.

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Afterwards, have the class discuss their answers to the questions on the Lesson Form.

Next, have students watch the interview (video link below) featuring Ubiera and another street artist named Golden. Make sure students pay attention to Ubiera's interview.

https://vimeo.com/508668473

After watching the interview, have students discuss what they learned about Ubiera's mural. Use the following questions to direct the discussion:

1. What does the guerilla represent to Ubiera?
2. Why is the guerilla shown with objects such as a backpack, spray cans, and bolt cutters?

It is important for the teacher to note at this point that Ubiera sees his art as more than just a mural, but as installation, as he states in his interview. This means that the murals he creates are designed to fit and exist in only one specific spot. If the mural were to be moved to another spot, it would not be the same work of art.

Lesson: Create Your Own Mural Activity



According to Ubiera, what makes street art so unique is that "people [can be] so expressive with it. You can do whatever you want with it. It is very open. There is nobody that can teach you, you just go right up and do it."

For this activity, students are tasked with finding a wall on a building in their local city to place a mural. Students will not actually be painting the wall, but rather will create a demo or prototype of the mural they would create for their chosen wall.

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To get started, have students go to Google Maps. Make sure the layer is set to "Satellite" and that students are looking at either their current location, or the most local city/town. Next, have students click on the icon in the bottom right corner of the screen featuring a small yellow guy–students will drag the figure to any spot in the city in order to start the street view feature. Students will spend time exploring their local city using the street view feature.

Once students have their wall chosen, have them screenshot Google Maps and print out the image. Afterwards, students can either freehand, trace, or use tracing paper to recreate a blank version of their chosen wall. It is this blank version of their chosen wall that students will design and decorate their mural.

Extension for Science/Technology Curriculum Framework

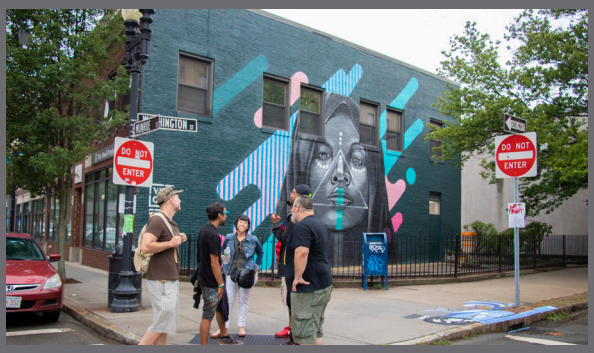
6.MS-ETS1-1, 6.MS-ETS1-5(MA), and 6.MS-ETS1-6(MA)

Rather than letting students choose their own wall, the teacher provides one wall to all students, allowing everyone to work within the same design problem. The chosen wall should include obstacles the student has to work around, including windows, pipes, vents, etc.

Next, instead of students tracing the printed photo of their wall, have students create a scaled drawing of both the wall and of their mural.

Things for students to be aware of when choosing a wall:

- Location–the wall should be in an area where a large amount of people will see it. Students need to pay attention to which building wall, the location of the building, and the location of the street they choose.



PowerPoint example shows a mural in a high traffic area. The photo shows people standing around the mural, while the map shows what is around it. In the map, point out (or have students point out) that there are restaurants, coffee shops, a museum, a bank, a post office, and an MBTA station.

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- **Wall Surface**–the more flat and empty the wall is, the easier it is to create a mural. Students need to pay attention to the surface area of the wall, as well as the number of windows, boxes, lights, cameras, etc. Students should work with the shape of their wall to create the best mural.

PowerPoint example shows a work by an artist named Dom Rimx. What is important to note here is that what looks like a 3D wooden log on the right side of the mural is actually a metal pipe on the outside of the building. Rimx incorporated the pipe into his mural, making it work with his subject while also avoiding damaging the building by trying to remove it.



- **Subject Matter**–students should create a mural that has meaning to them. Instead of just making a wall that looks pretty, the wall should represent the student



PowerPoint example shows a work by the Puerto Rican artist David Zayas. In his art, Zayas incorporates a rooster which. Zayas uses a rooster for two reasons: first, the rooster was a prominent symbol in his grandmother's home; second, in Puerto Rican culture it symbolizes a strong spirit and the idea of fighting to the death.

Students will present their mural to the class. During their presentation, students will explain why they chose that particular wall for their mural, and their chosen subject matter.

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Differentiation



This lesson plan accommodates each of the four learning styles: visual, auditory, reading and writing, and kinesthetic.

This lesson plan engages visual learners by having them engage with and analyze street art examples and by watching artist interview videos.

This lesson plan engages auditory learners by having them listen to the lecture on street art and by watching videos where artists discuss their artistic practices.

This lesson plan engages reading and writing learners by having them fill out a the Lesson Form that accompanies Ruben Ubiera's mural "Guerilla."

This lesson plan engages kinesthetic learners by providing a tactile experience in which students get to make their own demo for a mural.

Assessment

Assessment is conducted regularly throughout this lesson through group discussions.

For alternatives, the link below will take you to a document with a comprehensive list of assessment options. Though they are geared more towards Visual Arts, they can be altered or used for other curriculums, such as ELA and Science/Technology.

https://uploads.theartofeducation.edu/2016/03/Ultimate-Assessment-Guide.pdf

Exit slips are also a great strategy for assessment at the end of a lesson. For these slips, have students respond to the following questions:

1. Write one thing you learned today
2. Write one question you have about today's lesson
3. Did you enjoy the lesson activities?

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References

https://www.theartstory.org/movement/street-art/history-and-concepts/

https://graffitiecology.wordpress.com/graffiti-and-post-graffiti-2/

https://www.urbanpopsoul.com (Ruben Ubiera's website)

Contact Us

This lesson plan was created as a tool to help teachers inocroprate street art into their curriculum. If there is anything you liked or wish to see added, email us at admin@beyond-walls.org

Visit Us At

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Or at our website beyondwalls.org

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Lesson Form

Name:

Date:

1. What is the first thing you notice about Ruben's mural?

2. Create a list of objects you recognize in the mural. You must list at least three objects.

3. Why do you think those objects were included? What do you think they represent?

4. Based on what you learned, do you think Ubiera's mural is an example of graffiti or street art? Write a paragraph explaining your answer. You must use complete sentences.