

Social Studies Exemplary Text Student Handout

In one of his letters to a young painter, Cézanne had advised him to look at nature in terms of spheres, cones and cylinders. He presumably meant that he should always keep these basic solid shapes in mind when organizing his pictures. But Picasso and his friends decided to take this advice literally. I suppose that they reasoned somewhat like this: 'We have long given up claiming that we represent things as they appear to our eyes. That was a will-o'-the-wisp which it is useless to pursue. We do not want to fix on the canvas the imaginary impression of a fleeting moment. Let us follow Cézanne's example, and build up the picture of our motifs as solidly and enduringly as we can. Why not be consistent and accept the fact that our real aim is rather to construct something, rather than to copy something? If we think of an object, let us say a violin, it does not appear before the eye of our mind the way it would appear before our bodily eyes. We can, and in fact do, think of its various aspects at the same time. Some of them stand out so clearly that we feel we can touch them and handle them; others are somehow blurred. And this strange medley of images represents more of the "real" violin than any single snapshot or meticulous painting could ever contain.' This, I suppose, was the reasoning which led to such paintings as Picasso's still life of a violin, figure 374. In some respects, it represents a return to what we have called Egyptian principles, in which an object was drawn from the angle from which its characteristic form came out most clearly.

[Figure 374]

Pablo Picasso, *Violin and Grapes*, 1912 Oil on canvas, 50.6 x 61 cm, 20 x 24 in; The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Mrs. David M. Levy Bequest

Gombrich, E. H. (1995). Chapter 27. *The Story of Art, 16th Edition*. London: Phaidon.

This is an example of exemplary text found in *Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix B Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

Social Studies Exemplary Text Teacher Resource

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[Figure 374]
Pablo Picasso, Violin and Grapes, 1912
Oil on canvas, 50.6 x 61 cm, 20 x 24 in;
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EFL 5
Word Count 285

Teacher introduces the text with minimal commentary and students read it independently. Teacher then reads passage aloud. Give a brief definition to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in text). Teacher guides the students through a series of text-dependent questions. Complete the performance task as a cumulative evaluation of the close-reading.

Text-Dependent Questions

1. What three shapes did Cezanne advise the young painter to look at nature in terms of?
2. Who decided to take this advice literally?
3. Which Picasso painting is mentioned as an example?
4. What principles does this represent a return to?
5. In your own words, how would you say these principles focus on the distinction between the real and the imaginary?

Performance Tasks for Informational Texts

Explain in your own words why the advice of Paul Cezanne had such a profound effect upon art in the first half of the twentieth century. [RI.9-10.2]

In comparing the works of Cezanne and Picasso, who would you argue was the more "experimental" artist and why? Incorporate evidence from the text in your argument. [RI.9-10.1]

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