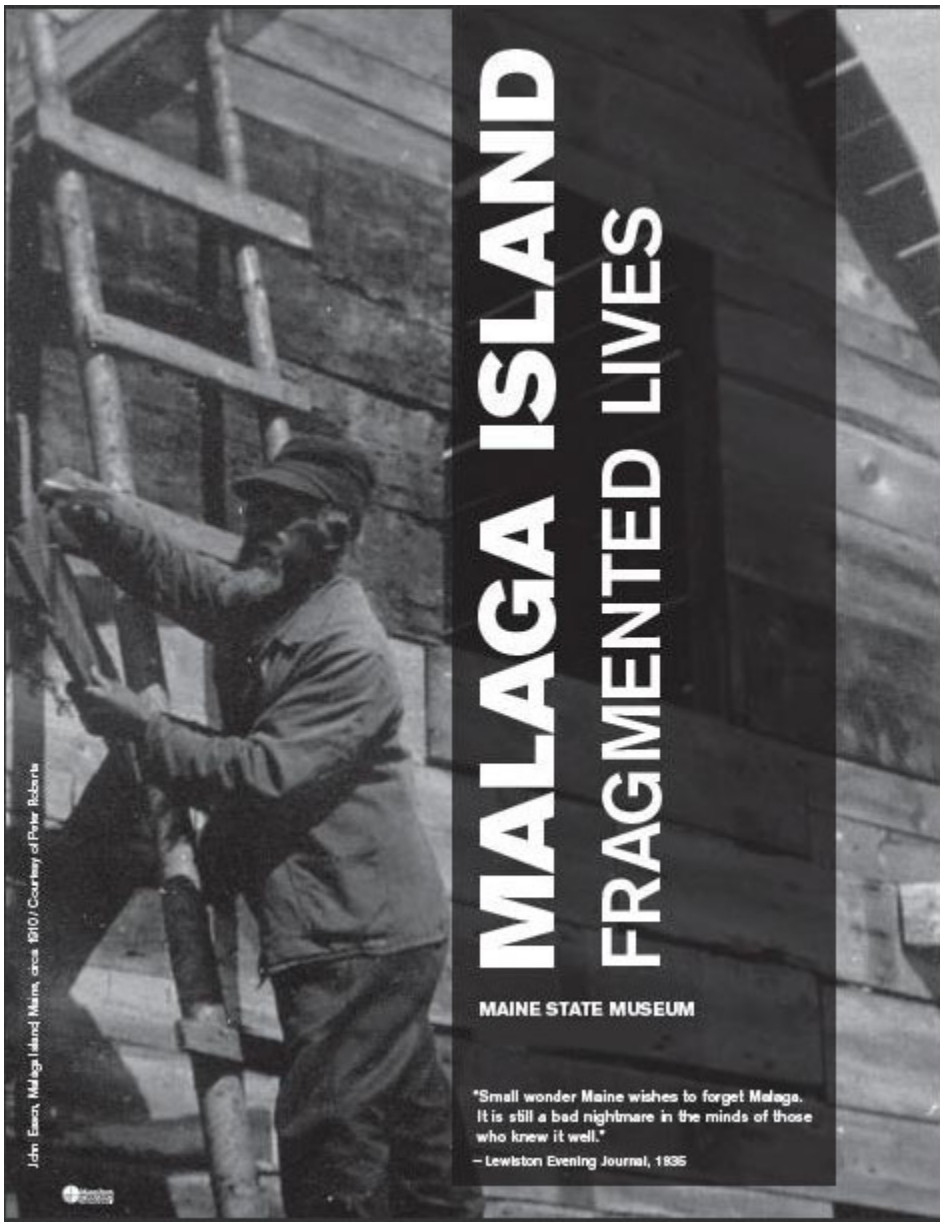
MAINE STATE MUSEUM

Time to see for yourself



MALAGA ISLAND
FRAGMENTED LIVES

A curriculum for middle school students

-developed from the research for the *Malaga Island, Fragmented Lives* exhibit, on view at the Maine State Museum
May 19, 2012 through May 26, 2013

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CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Purpose:
Collectively, the lesson plans encourage a comparison of fiction and non-fiction materials about the historic events that occurred on Malaga Island, Maine, encourage skill-building in critical thinking and source evaluation, explore Malaga's place in a complex ecosystem, and strengthen understanding of the scientific process. All curricular materials are designed to assist students in achieving Maine Learning Requirements and Common Core Standards at the middle school level. Refer to the Bridging Document for details.

Lesson Plan Sequence
This curriculum has been designed to support cross-disciplinary teaching (language arts, social studies, science) and to allow teachers to adapt to various time constraints that they experience in each school district. Towards that end, all teachers are encouraged to begin with Lesson 1; the lessons that follow can be used in a sequence, isolated and used selectively, or used collaboratively by multiple teachers.

Lesson 1:	Introduction to Malaga Island: Primary Sources & Fragmented Lives
Lesson 2:	Visual Literacy and Images of Malaga Island
Lesson 3:	Media Literacy, Citizenry, and Conflicting Accounts of Malaga Island
Lesson 4:	Going Beyond "Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy": Revisiting Malaga Island with Civil Action
Lesson 5:	Archaeology and Environment on Malaga Island: Understanding Scientific Process

Summary
Malaga Island is located at the mouth of the New Meadows River in Phippsburg. Bear Island lies 100 yards to the west and the small fishing village of Sebasco is about 300 yards to the east. Like much of the Maine coast, 42-acre Malaga Island is rocky and rugged. The shell beach on the north end was the location of several settlements, beginning with Native Americans who inhabited the island within the last 1,000 years. Little is known about how these first inhabitants lived; considerably more is known about Malaga's later residents – the mixed-heritage community that occupied the island's north end from the 1860s to 1912.

The probable origins of Malaga Island's historic community trace back to one African American man, Benjamin Darling. He purchased Horse Island (now known as Harbor Island and located near Malaga Island) in 1794. Darling's descendants and their families soon settled on numerous islands throughout the New Meadows River. Although records are not clear, Henry Griffin and Fatima Darling Griffin,

with their family, were most likely the first to live on Malaga Island, setting up house on the east side in the early 1860s.

In the early 1900s, the Malaga Island community found itself caught in a time of great change for Maine. A poor economy, the decline of the fishing and ship building industries, a boom in real estate prices, and thriving social reform efforts all affected Malaga. At the same time, the island residents became victims of the eugenics movement, a popular theory that the poor, immoral, or criminal were born that way due to heredity. The eugenics movement was widely accepted as fact throughout the early 1900s and included many advocates such as heads of state, teachers, religious missionaries, journalists, and scientists. The press publicized a common belief that the only way to help Malaga Island's residents, and improve tourism and property values on the Maine coast, was to dismantle the community.

Christian missionaries from Malden, Massachusetts, Captain George and Lucy Lane, began to visit Malaga Island during the summer of 1906. The Lanes focused their missionary efforts on educating the children of Malaga Island. They actively raised funds to build a permanent school on the island and help pay for food and clothing.

Although efforts were well underway to improve living conditions on Malaga Island, the notoriety of the island community in statewide and regional newspapers gave Phippsburg a bad reputation, just as the tourism industry was beginning to grow in Maine. Newspapers put forth commonly held beliefs that the individuals living on Malaga Island were degenerate and needed assistance in order to survive. The stories of Malaga Island, and the actions of both the town of Phippsburg and State of Maine to evict the community, were reported throughout the New England region and in nationwide publications such as Harper's Magazine.

As early as the 1890s, efforts were underway in Phippsburg to rid itself of the Malaga Island community. Legal disputes continued until Maine's state government became involved. Governor Frederick Plaisted visited Malaga Island in 1911, along with his Executive Council, to see the island for himself. During his visit, Plaisted remarked, "the best plan would be to burn down the shacks with all their filth. Certainly the conditions are not creditable to our state, and we ought not to have such things near our front door, and I do not think that a like condition can be found in Maine, although there are some pretty bad localities elsewhere." (Brunswick Times Record, July 21, 1911)

In 1911, the State of Maine ruled that Malaga Island was owned by the Perry family of Phippsburg, who, in turn, filed papers to have the islanders evicted. On December 9, 1911, a doctor and member of

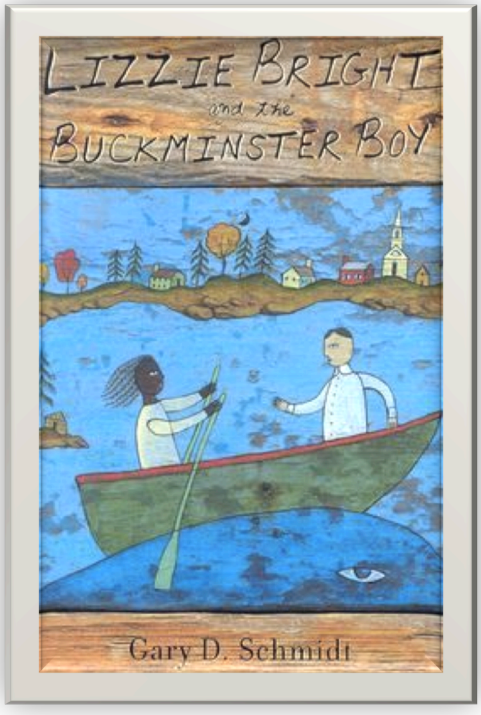
Governor Plaisted's Executive Council signed papers committing eight Malaga Island residents to the Maine School for the Feeble Minded.

Early in 1912, the State of Maine purchased Malaga Island from the Perry family for $400. Residents were told they must vacate the island by July 1, 1912. No alternative homes were provided or suggested, but when the state representative arrived on Malaga Island on July 1st, he found all the houses were gone – dismantled and removed by the residents themselves. To complete the eviction, the state exhumed the cemetery remains on Malaga Island, combining seventeen individuals into five caskets, and moved them to the cemetery at the Maine School for the Feeble Minded.

For decades, generations of descendants felt the need to hide their Malaga Island ancestry. The term "Malagite" became a racial slur commonly used on Maine's coast. Descendants experienced prejudice and slander through the years since 1912, causing many to deny any connection to the notorious island. As time passed, attitudes shifted among both the Phippsburg community and descendants. Now scattered across the nation, current generations are discovering their family history and connecting with one another through social media.

Malaga Island offers a rare example of an ethnically-diverse, historic, coastal community where the homesteads of specific families are known; this has allowed U. of Southern Maine archaeologists to excavate house sites and add their understanding of island life to our study of the tragic events that transpired there. Documentarians from the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies gathered family memories from Malaga descendants, further enriching this story. The Malaga Island: Fragment Lives exhibit marked 100 years after islanders' lives became sensationalized in local/regional news and government reports, and residents were evicted.

The research conducted for developing this exhibit offers middle school teachers and students an ideal opportunity to pursue the intersection of social studies, language arts, and science in Maine. These curricular materials were designed to use in conjunction with the Maine State Museum's "Malaga Island: Fragmented Lives" exhibit; however, they are also designed to stand on their own, using primary sources (provided here or available online) or the historical fiction novel "Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy."



In 2011, the Maine State Museum received permission from Phippsburg resident Peter Roberts to use his extensive collection of historic

photographs of Malaga Island residents. Following years of archaeological excavation by the University of Southern Maine, in 2011 the Maine Coast Heritage Trust donated its Malaga Island collection to the Maine State Museum for preservation and exhibition. In addition, research for the exhibit uncovered documents from the Maine State Archives and the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Collectively, these comprise the primary sources or "evidence" available for student inquiry.

Online Teacher Resources – Malaga Island:

Malaga Island Radio Documentary "A Story Best Left Untold" - www.malagaislandmaine.org

Malaga Island: Fragmented Lives exhibit - www.mainestatemuseum.org/exhibits/malaga_island_fragmented_lives/

Maine Coast Heritage Trust - www.mcht.org

Maine Memory Network "Institutional Care: From 'Feeble-Minded' to 'Disabled'" - www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/301/slideshow/307/display?use_mmn=&prev_object_id=567&prev_object=page&slide_num=1

Maine Memory Network – Malaga Islanders with missionary image - www.mainememory.net/search?keywords=malaga&submit=SEARCH

Maine Memory Network – "1870-1920 The End of the Ocean Highway" - http://www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/905/page/1316/display

Online Instructional Resources:

- Teaching Tolerance www.tolerance.org
- Facing History and Ourselves www.facinghistory.org
- Library of Congress' Teaching With Primary Sources Program www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/
- American Memory Project www.memory.loc.gov/learn/
- Primary Source Learning www.primarysourcelearning.org/
- Smithsonian Sources: Resources for Teaching American History www.smithsoniansource.org
- The National Archives www.archives.gov/education/

Books

Seeking History: Teaching With Primary Sources in Grades 4-6 (2000) Monica Edinger. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.

Making History: A Guide to Historical Research Through the National History Day Program (2006) National History Day (The Making History Set includes: A Guide to Historical Research, The How to Create a Historical Documentary, How to Create a Historical Paper, How to...)

Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle and High School History Classrooms (2011) Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano. New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Maine's Visible Black History: The First Chronicle of Its People (2006) H.H. Price and Gerald E. Talbot. Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House Publishers.

Choosing to Particapate (2009) Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, Inc. Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, Inc.

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Bridging Document
Malaga Island Curriculum to Maine Learning Results and CCSS

The Maine State Museum developed the Malaga Island: Fragmented Lives curriculum in collaboration with the Maine Department of Education. Consequently, the learning objectives of the Malaga Island curriculum meet both Maine Learning Results and the Common Core State Standards. The Department of Education clarifies that:

> "The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects ***do not replace*** the Maine Social Studies Learning Results, but, rather, complement them. CCSS support a shared responsibility for students' literacy development and emphasize that, while students learn to read and write in ELA, they apply and develop specific literacy skills through engagement in social studies content."
> (http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/ss/standards2.html).

Adopted by the Maine Legislature in March of 2011, the CCSS for ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects and Math provide a vision for what it means to be a literate person, prepare all students for college/career, and develop literacy skills in all subject areas. CCSS maintains that Social Studies students should be provided with authentic opportunities to apply and develop their literacy skills through engagement in social studies content.

According to Kristie Littlefield, one initiative of CCSS is to avoid shying away from challenging texts, texts with more complexity, and primary sources. This entails building skills of interpretation - who wrote this, where did it come from, what is the purpose/bias/perspective implicit or explicit, how do multiple sources align or conflict? According to Library of Congress' Teaching with Primary Sources:

> "Primary sources are integral to helping students achieve the CCSS. The standards require students to digest and apply information using discipline-specific skills, such as analysis, comparing sources, persuasive writing, and research. Students generate questions, take and organize notes, find, analyze, and cite sources. Additionally, learning new content vocabulary is essential, as is the ability to compare historical interpretations and form hypotheses."

Reading, Writing, Speaking/Listening, and Language are the four strands of College and Career Readiness. These strands integrate well with both social studies and science instruction. The chart below indicates how the Malaga Island lesson plans, respectively, support CCR anchors and the MLRs. CCSS for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12 parallel the CCSS ELA Standards. Both use the use College Career Ready Anchor Standards and include grade span standards particular to the discipline(s).

CCSS and MLR Standards – Language Arts, Social Studies, Science	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
CCR Reading 1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from text both primary and secondary sources		✔	✔	✔	
CCR Reading 3: Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution (e.g., write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events).				✔	
CCR Reading 4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone	✔		✔	✔	
CCR Reading 7: Integrate visual information (charts, graphs, photographs, maps) with other information in print.		✔			✔
CCR Reading 8: Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgement.	✔	✔	✔		
CCR Reading 9: Compare/contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics e.g. Analyze relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.			✔	✔	
CCR Writing 1: Write argument to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.		✔	✔		
CCR Writing 7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.				✔	
CCR Writing 8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility of each source and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism			✔		
CCR Writing 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.			✔	✔	
CCR Language 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meanings of words and phrases.	✔			✔	
CCR History: Compare and contrast the reliability of information received from multiple sources (e.g. newspapers, radio or TV, biography, historical narrative) to assess an historical issue.			✔	✔	
CCR Civics and Government 5: Evaluate the role of the media and public opinion in US politics, including ways the government and media influence public opinion			✔		
MLR Social Studies *A1-3. Researching, Developing Positions, Making Decisions, and Taking Action on Current Social Studies Issues using Social Studies Knowledge and Skills*			✔	✔	
MLR Social Studies D2. . *Individual, Cultural, International, and Global Connections in Geography* Students understand geographic aspects of unity and diversity in the community, Maine, and regions of the United States and the World, including Maine Native American communities. • students will learn how geographic features such as river courses and coastlines unite communities and regions and support diversity • students will discover the impact of a geographic feature, such as a river, upon the daily life of a community • students will learn how the geographic position of Malaga Island shaped the island community's experience with the late 19th/early 20th c. tourist industry	✔			✔	

MLR *Social Studies E1. Historical Concepts, Themes and Patterns* - Students understand various major eras in the history of the community, Maine, and the United States. • students learn about how Maine experienced the development of the industrial United States, 1865-1914 • students analyze past human experience based upon various historical evidence, print and non-print			✔	✔	
MLR Economics C1. *Economic Knowledge, Concepts, Themes, and Patterns*- Students understand personal economics and the basis of the economies of the community, Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world. • students will learn how entrepreneurs and other producers of goods and services in Casco Bay helped satisfy the entertainment/leisure/educational wants and needs of consumers in a market economy by using natural, human, and capital resources. • Production and exchange of goods • Commercial and subsistence fishing	✔			✔	
MLR Civics B3. Individual, Cultural, International, and Global Connections in Civics and Government • Students understand political and civic aspects of unity and diversity in Maine, the United States, and various world cultures including Maine Native Americans. • Explain basic constitutional, political, and civic aspects of historical and/or current issues that involve unity and diversity in Maine, the United States, and other nations.			✔	✔	
MLR *Science A1. Unifying Themes - Systems* – Students explain interactions between parts that make up whole man-made and natural things • Students learn how riverine and marine ecosystems are interconnected • Students learn how fisheries regulation intends to protect an ecosystem	✔				
MLR Science B1. Skills and Traits of Scientific Inquiry – Students plan, conduct, analyze data from, and communicate results of investigations, including fair tests • Students pose investigable questions and seek answers from reliable sources of scientific information and from their own investigations; • Students use simple equipment, tools, and appropriate metric units of measurement to gather data and create a histogram; • Student use data to construct and support a reasonable explanation; • Communicate scientific procedures and explanations					✔
MLR *Science C2. Understandings About Science and Technology* – Students describe why people use science and technology and how scientists and engineers work					✔
MLR Science C3. Science, Technology, and Society – Students identify and describe the influences of science and technology on people and the environment. • Students describe how the archaeological excavation of house sites on Malaga Island has changed how the historic community					✔

is represented					
MLR *Language Arts A1. Reading - Interconnected Elements* – Students read and draw conclusions from texts, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, by applying their knowledge and strategies of comprehension, vocabulary, alphabetics, and fluency. • Students read age-appropriate essays provided and use the Vocabulary Worksheets	✔				✔
MLR *Language Arts A3. . Reading - Informational Texts* – Students read, paraphrase, and summarize information texts, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, for different purposes. • students read primary sources, including historic articles from turn-of-the-century Maine newspapers			✔		
MLR Language Arts B1 *Writing – Interconnected Elements* – Students use a writing process with an emphasis on the development of a central idea, for a variety of audiences and purposes. • students use the Graphic Organizer provided to write a letter to the Governor as though they were a Maine citizen in 1912 • students write a newspaper article using various sources		✔	✔	✔	
MLR Language Arts B2 *Writing Narrative* – Students write narratives that relate events, ideas, observations, or recollections. • students write their own version of a part of the Lizzie Bright novel • students write creatively from historic photographs • students will summarize interpretations of their archaeological data		✔	✔	✔	✔

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Lesson 2 Visual Literacy and Images of Malaga Island

Instructional Materials

"Look Closely" Malaga Island image (provided)
Lincoln on Battlefield at Antietam warm-up exercise (provided)
"Look Closely" Photo Analysis Graphic Organizer (provided)
"Sleuthing in a Museum" Student Reading (provided)

Teacher Resources

Visual Analysis of Photographs from Getty (provided)
"You Gotta See It to Believe It: Teaching Visual Literacy in the English Classroom. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy 53(3) November 2009 (pp. 216–226)

Background Discussion

The **Visual Literacy** approach maintains that students not only need to read traditional print texts critically, but that they also need to engage in analysis of visual imagery. A photograph is a visual document that serves as a primary resource for research into our past. Careful, critical analysis of photographs is an important component of visual literacy; in the process of building these skills, students build literacy in all areas. Photographs are very useful in helping students interpret and understand people, events, eras, and large ideas in a diverse array of contexts.

Visual literacy (noun) – the ability to recognize, understand, make meaning of, and communicate through visible actions or images usually images (pictures) or other visual media.

Essential Questions

- What can a photograph tell us about a time period, place, a people, or the intent of the photographer?
- How can evidence be used to support an argument?
- What is the difference between observation and interpretation?
- What is a museum curator and how do they conduct historical research?

Plan of Instruction

Overview

This lesson plan builds upon Lesson 1: An Introduction to Malaga Island such that students are familiar with the location of the island and an overview of its history. Using historic images provided, this exercise hones students' visual literacy skills and takes them deeper into the history of life in the early 20th century.

Visual Literacy Practice Exercise

Project or hand out copies of the Getty image of Lincoln on the Battlefield of Antietam. As a warm-up exercise, walk students through the steps of visual analysis described in the Visual Analysis of Photographs (Getty): Description, Reflection, Formal Analysis.

- For description ask your students: *list what people you see in the photograph; list the objects or things that you see; list elements of the natural environment; list actions occurring in the photograph.*
- For reflection ask them: *are there clues about when this photo was taken? What elements of your observation are used as evidence? What is the mood in this photo? Again, what is used as evidence to support your interpretation?*
- For formal analysis ask them: *How does the photographer use shapes and lines to direct the viewer to the central focus of the photo? What elements are repeated in the photo? How did the choice the photographer make in composing the scene help to convey a mood or message?*

Malaga Visual Literacy Exercise

1. Hand out the Photograph Analysis Graphic Organizer to either each student or to groups of students.
2. Please note: two images are provided as options. Option A (Eason Home photo is best used by those who are unable to attend the museum exhibit) or Option B (Island Schoolhouse can be used by any class). Project the historic image on the wall or hand out the historic Malaga Island photograph (of the Eason home. At this point, do not provide them with any background about this photograph. Let them know that their assignment is to analyze this photograph and conduct the steps of **observation/description**, **reflection/interpretation**, and **formal analysis**.
3. Have students proceed with analysis of the Eason Home or Island Schoolhouse photograph using the graphic organizer sheet provided. Circulate among the groups as they work to ensure that they understand the distinction between the two processes of observation and interpretation. Some suggested observation prompts include: "what's going on in this picture," "what more can we find?" For example, when asked to list the people in the image, they should record simply: old man, young boy, young woman, etc., as opposed to relational terms such as husband, wife, child, etc. which would be interpretive.

4. When they have finished with each of the observational tasks on the graphic organizers, then they should proceed **to interpret** what they have **observed** by answering the questions.
5. Bring student groups back together and ask them to report on how they answered the interpretive questions. Ask them to link their **interpretations** to the observations that they used as **evidence**. Ask: *"what do you see that makes you say that?"* Encourage respectful discussions around conflicting interpretations; in each case, revisit the evidence that they used.
6. After they have completed the visual analysis, then you can assign students the Student Reading "Sleuthing in a Museum: An Interview with Maine State Museum Curator Kate McBrien." To build upon this reading, either facilitate a discussion or assign an essay that asks the following:
    - *Imagine what would it be like? Use your senses (sound, taste, smell, touch) if…*
    - *(for Option A): *you were waking up in the Eason home shown in this photograph or,*
    - *(for Option B): you were walking into the Malaga Island school in this photograph;*

Extension Activity 1 (optional): Have students choose another photograph from images available on the Maine State Museum website and repeat the visual analysis on their own.

Extension Activity 2 (optional): Have students choose a photograph from the images available online and write creatively, imagining themselves in that time, writing either from the perspective of the photographer or from the perspective of a person, or even an object, in the photograph.

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VISUAL ANALYSIS OF PHOTOGRAPHS: THREE STEPS
(adapted from www.getty.edu)

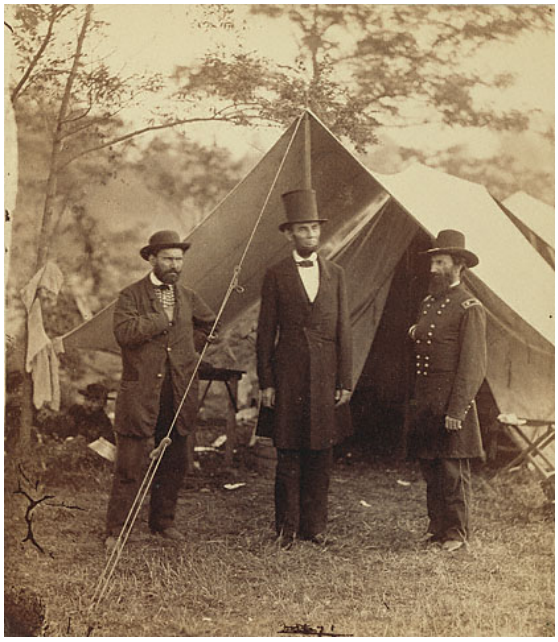
Discussion

The activities in this curriculum rely on three methods (or steps) of visual analysis:

1) description/observation,
2) reflection/interpretation, and
3) formal analysis.

These three steps provide a recommended structure and process for critically viewing, analyzing, and writing about photographs and honing overall visual literacy. For the purposes of explaining the methods of visual analysis, this teacher resource relies on Alexander Gardner's image of Lincoln on Battlefield of Antietam, Maryland from the Getty collection. The same methods of analysis described here can be applied to analyzing any image in the Malaga collection or that you might put before your students.

Step 1. Description/Observation



The first step in visual analysis is description/observation. Describing an image is a useful technique for looking closely at an image and observing its details. Descriptions should remain objective, discussing what can be seen without drawing conclusions about a photograph's meaning. For instance, when looking at Lincoln on Battlefield of Antietam, Maryland (right), it would be appropriate to say, "The tall man in the middle is wearing a dark suit," but it would be inappropriate to say "The tall man in the middle is dressed as if going to a funeral." The latter would be a subjective interpretation and should be reserved for the reflection method. A description can begin anywhere, but generally it is easiest to begin by discussing the subject matter. For example, a description of this image might begin with the basic statement, "In this black-and-white image, three men stand in front of a tent." Once you have stated the subject matter, simply elaborate on what you can see: "The man in the middle is the tallest and is posed with his hands down at his

sides, wearing a formal black suit with a bowtie and a tall stovepipe hat. The man to the left is wearing a worn, dark suit and a bowler hat. The man to the right is dressed in a military uniform with bright buttons and epaulets. The tent is pitched on a grassy clearing with trees in the background." Some useful prompts include: *what people do you see in this image? What objects do you see? What aspects of a natural environment do you see?*

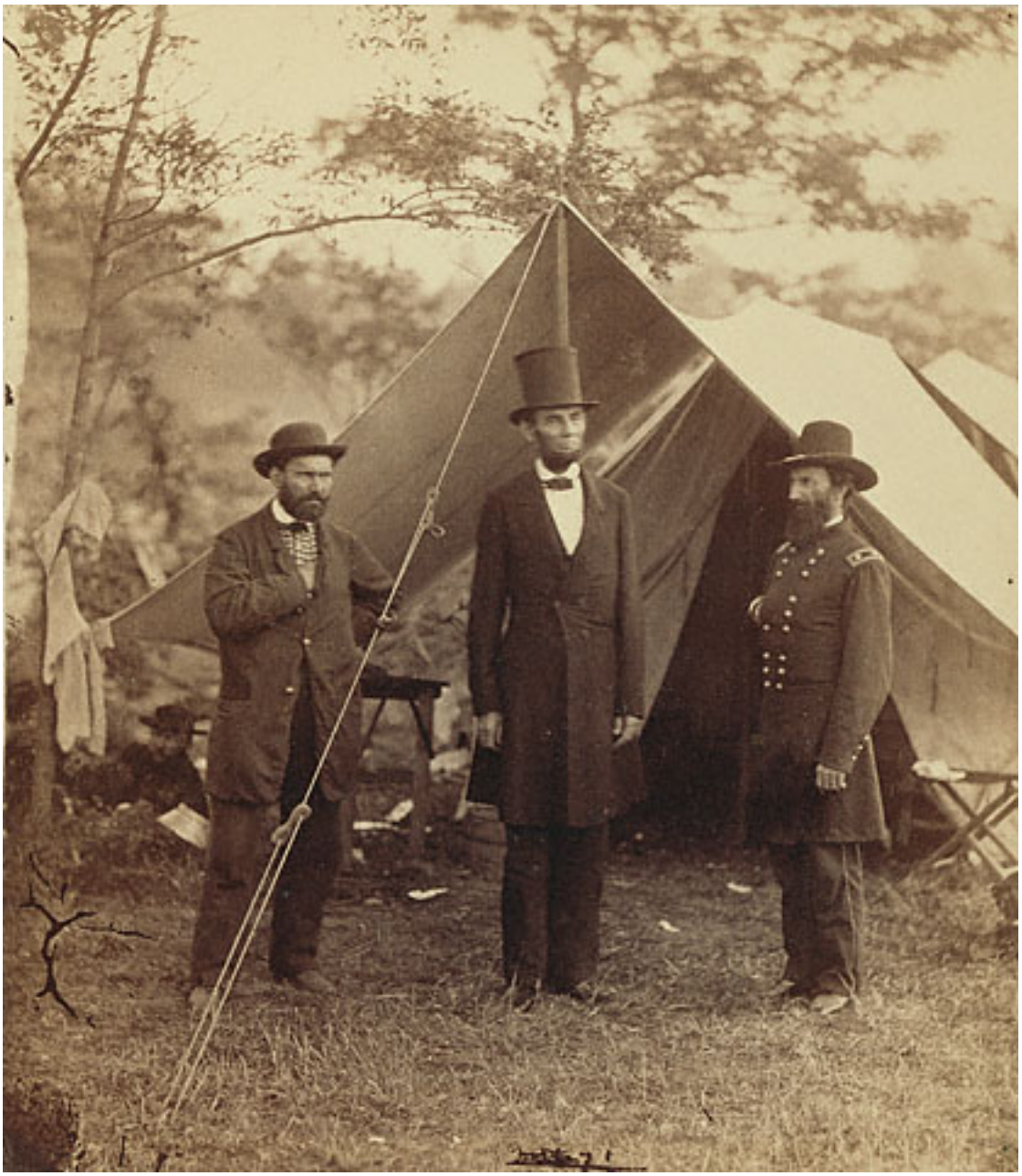
Step 2: Reflection/Interpretation

This step in visual analysis should focus on the interpretations that an image evokes for the viewer. Different viewers will react to the same image in different ways, so this exercise is not about right answers, but rather articulating what observation evokes your interpretation.

Knowing the historical context for an image can be very important for constructing reflective responses. For this image, it is important to know that the Battle of Antietam was one of the most bloody and brutal battles of the Civil War. Appropriate comments for this type of analysis include the following: "The tone of Lincoln on Battlefield of Antietam, Maryland seems very bleak. The somber facial expressions of the men, coupled with the barren grass and sparse trees give an overall impression of death and dying. There is also a sense of loneliness about the figure of President Lincoln. Although standing next to two men, he seems totally isolated. He is unresponsive to the camera; rather than making eye contact, he stares distantly off into space, increasing the sense of isolation."

Step 3: Formal Analysis

After looking carefully at an image and considering its emotional and interpretive properties, formal analysis is the next step. Each lesson in this curriculum includes links to descriptions of the elements and principles of art, which can be used as a guide in your formal analysis. The "elements of art" are the building blocks for achieving the "principles of art." A very good place to start formal analysis is by deciding which elements are most strongly represented. In the Lincoln picture, the very distinct lines and geometric shapes are immediately apparent. Upon closer inspection, it is clear that these lines and shapes function to frame and to move the viewer's eye towards the central subject, President Lincoln. For instance, note the way that all of the lines in the image draw the eye toward the figure of the president. The tent forms an inverted "V" shape directly behind Lincoln, while the vertical tent post and tree trunk in the background further elongate Lincoln's already tall figure, clearly emphasizing Lincoln's figure in the composition. There are other strongly represented elements as well. Consider the use of contrast in this image: there is a stark contrast between the white of Lincoln's shirt and his black suit, which further draws our attention towards the president's face. There is also a sense of balance, with the figures standing to either side of the president in similar poses, like mirror images.



Lincoln on Battlefield of Antietam, Maryland, taken by Alexander Gardner, October 2, 1862

Source:
http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=67188&handle=li

LOOK CLOSELY PHOTOGRAPH ANALYSIS EXERCISE

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LOOK CLOSELY Photograph Analysis Organizer

Observation: *Look closely at the historic Malaga Island photograph provided to you and study it for two minutes. Your assignment is to first make careful observations of the photograph and record them here. Next you will be asked to interpret the photograph in the questions that follow.*

List each person in the photograph:

List objects or artifacts in the photo:

List things shown in the natural environment:

List actions occurring in the photograph:

Reflection/Interpretation:

- *Can we* tell if the individuals are related to each other? Explain what you think (your interpretation) and then use observations above as evidence.

- Are there any clues here about what life was like at this time for these people? Provide your interpretation and what you used from your observations above as evidence.

- Are there any clues about when or where this photo was taken? Provide your interpretation and what you used from your observations above as evidence.

- Do you think the photographer was a stranger or a friend? Explain why.

LOOK CLOSELY Malaga Island image (option A)

Photo courtesy of Maine State Museum

LOOK CLOSELY Malaga Island image (option B)

Photo courtesy of Maine State Museum

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Sleuthing in a Museum: An Interview with Maine State Museum Curator Kate McBrien"

Q: What does a museum curator do?

McBrien: Curators are the people who are in charge of collecting, preserving, researching, and interpreting objects so they can be put on exhibit in a museum. I organized the Malaga Island exhibit.

Q: Tell us, what do we know about this photograph that was put in the exhibit?

McBrien: The photograph was taken by Herman Bryant who was a well known and respected photographer in the central Maine area. On July 20, 1911 he took this image of the home of John and Rosella Eason on Malaga Island. Pictured with them are two of Rosella's grandchildren: Leonard Trip (the older one) and Harold Tripp.

Q: How do you know when it was taken or who the people are?

McBrien: The date "July 20, 1911" and the words "Malaga Island" were the only things recorded by Bryant.

Q: Then how did you figure out the rest?

McBrien: I figured out the identity of the people by comparing the photograph to other photographs or newspaper articles where the names of the people were known. For example, Leonard Tripp is


shells on the island and tons of have been sold by the islande people to be taken away for u road and walk building. "Clam shells!" exclaimed King

LENNIE TRIP — "BOUT 8 YEARS OLD."

of one or more districts where pre- , Kenney when asked about the pil

photographed and identified in a Maine newspaper article (see right).

I also looked at the census record; this is when the government goes door-to-door and counts everyone. The 1910 census of Malaga Island (detail below) shows us the Tripp family was living with the Easons.

Q: What do you find interesting about this home?

McBrien: The Eason's home was originally the ell from a larger house on the mainland. It was floated on a raft from the mainland to Malaga Island for use as a home.

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You Gotta See It to Believe It: Teaching Visual Literacy in the English Classroom

By teaching students how to read and view all texts critically, not just the traditional print texts, teachers can build upon the skills students need to read and write, increasing their literacy levels in all areas.

Robyn Seglem | Shelbie Witte

Clarisse: What do the instructions mean when they ask "what the painting says"?

Daniel: You've got to be able to read the picture.

Clarisse: Easy. It says "Lift Thine Eyes."

Daniel: Duh. Not just the words, you gotta be able to read the entire picture, like it has words on it. Like, look at all the people looking down. What do you think that means or what it's sayin'?

Clarisse: That people aren't paying attention?

Daniel: Right, that people are too caught up in their lives to see what's happening.

Clarisse: To stop and smell the roses? Whatever that means, I've heard my mom say it.

Daniel: Yeah, I think that's right. That sometimes we don't pay attention to life and it just goes on without us.

This discussion of Norman Rockwell's painting "Lift Up Thine Eyes" illustrates a student's discovery of a different way of reading (all student names used are pseudonyms). More than ever in the history of education, the demands placed upon students in the realm of literacy are becoming more stringent. No longer are the abilities to read and write in a linear, left-to-right fashion the sole indicators of successful communications. Rather, the world is made up of visual symbols that require more complex thinking skills than traditional literacy requires.

Today, the concept of literacy has ceased to be narrowly defined. Literacy is now a fluid concept determined by cultural context (Williams, 2004). From this necessity and with this fluidity in mind, students need instruction in analyzing and creating a variety of texts in new ways (Alvermann, 2002). If educators want students to perform well in both the world and on new assessments, students need a critical understanding of print and nonprint texts in relationship to themselves as readers and viewers within different

social, cultural, and historical contexts (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000). Incorporating visual literacy into the curriculum is vital for student success.

Why Visual Literacy?

While many agree that visual literacy should be included in the educational arena, there has been great debate among researchers as to what the term actually encompasses. Visual literacy was originally recognized as the ability for someone to discriminate and interpret the visuals encountered in the environment as fundamental to learning (Debes, 1969). Critics of that original interpretation of visual literacy feel it is too broadly stated, failing to narrow the concept to what visual literacy allows people to do or how symbols work within its context (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997). During the 1980s and early 1990s, three major categories emerged to refer to visual literacy: human abilities, the promotion of ideas, and teaching strategies (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997). With these three categories in mind, perhaps the best definition for visual literacy is a simple one, such as the one Braden and Hortin (1982) proposed: "Visual literacy is the ability to understand and use images, including the ability to think, learn and express oneself in terms of images" (p. 38).

Because using visuals is a powerful instructional tool, and because students receive information in a variety of formats, literacy must be expanded beyond traditional reading and writing to include the visual arts as one of the ways in which we communicate (Flood & Lapp, 1997/1998). According to Flood and Lapp (1997/1998), the best reason most teachers give for not including visual arts within the classroom is their fear that it would take time away from traditional reading and writing skills. Their view, while legitimate, denies students the experience of the layered information in the real world and reflects the unsupported view that traditional literacy is the only literacy. This article seeks to explore the issues encompassing visual literacies as well as to provide ideas for teachers on how to begin working with them in the classroom.

Visual Literacy at Work

Including visualization in the classroom cannot be a one-shot activity. Rather, it must be woven into the regular classroom curriculum. Following Eisner's (1992) philosophy that imagination and reading ability are closely interwoven, it is important to understand the diverse ways in which students imagine or visualize. Instantaneously, students can receive imagery and information from television shows and movies, cartoons, websites, and advertisements. Helping students to understand the diversity of print and nonprint texts as well as the visual connections that can be made between them is a practical way to connect the concrete and abstract thinking of students who struggle to make meaning from text. While many students automatically interpret print text into nonprint visual images, some students struggle with making the leap from words to images.

Visualization—the ability to build mental pictures or images while reading—partnered with a reader's prior background knowledge and level of engagement in the reading topic greatly affects the reader's understanding of the text (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997). Visualization allows students the ability to become more engaged in their reading and use their imagery to draw conclusions, create interpretations of the text, and recall details and elements from the text (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997). Struggling students' ability to monitor and evaluate their own comprehension is enhanced by mental imagery (Gambrell & Bales, 1986). When a breakdown in comprehension occurs, and a mental image cannot be visualized, students will become aware of the need for a corrective strategy.

Creating visual images or mind movies while one reads is an essential element of engagement with the text, comprehension, and reflection (Wilhelm, 2004). Visualization and the creation of visuals allow students ways to read, respond, analyze, organize, and represent the learning that is taking place. Visualization strategies (Gambrell & Koskinen, 2002; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Wilhelm, 1995) can do the following:

- Heighten motivation, engagement, and enjoyment of reading
- Immerse students in rich details of the text

- Improve literal comprehension of texts
- Build background knowledge
- Aid in identifying important details to form inferences, elaborations, and patterns across multiple texts
- Help in solving spatial and verbal problems
- Improve a reader's ability to share, critique, and revise what has been learned with others

Through emphasizing and modeling visualization with students, teachers show how effortlessly connections between text and media can be made. Bridging visualization to the world of multiliteracies allows students to compose and explore ideas through "democratic avenues of meaning making" (Wilhelm, 2004, p. 17).

Tattoos

Visual media are not confined to glossy pages or computer screens. Perhaps one of the most fascinating forms to today's youth are the colorful images that span the bicep or peek over the top of a sock. Like a modern-day coat-of-arms, tattoos have burst into the popular culture of the United States in a powerful way. Tattoos, once viewed as taboo, are seen in a variety of environments. Celebrities such as Angelina Jolie famously bare their tattoos for tabloids, while networks develop reality shows depicting the journeys of tattoo artists, shops, and the background stories about the individuals who patronize them (e.g., *Inked*, *Miami Ink*, *L.A. Ink*). This fascination can be translated into an introduction to visual media.

To accomplish this, we introduced our ninth-grade students to the Norman Rockwell painting "Tattoo Artist." Rockwell illustrates a scene in which a Navy sailor chooses to have a tattoo applied, signaling his newest relationship with Betty, while above the chosen spot, viewers can see that this arm has chronicled all his past relationships, a single line struck through each name to signify the end of the relationship. Typically, the students picked up on the irony of the painting immediately and make the connection to their own relationship pasts. Many students cringed when thinking what their arms might look like had they tattooed each former flame on their arms.

To encourage students to move beyond their initial reactions, we also prompted them to think of Rockwell's painting as a scene from a movie, predicting what each character is thinking in this snapshot of a scene. This required students to pay close attention to the details presented in the painting. They had to read every nuance to frame a narrative that explores each character's motivation and reactions. This attention to detail also highlights that the growing list of names, like tattoos, cannot be undone with a simple change of mind.

Once students realized the permanence of tattoos as depicted in Rockwell's painting, we provided articles related to the health risks and issues surrounding tattoos. We then asked students to design personal tattoos that symbolized an important life event. Although the tattoo designs were not applied as actual tattoos, designing hypothetical personal tattoos gave students the opportunity to express themselves and their experiences through color and images. Knowing that tattoos are essentially permanent, the students were asked to keep this permanence in mind as they designed their tattoos.

Megan, a student reluctant to write in class, created a tree tattoo to symbolize her complicated family history (see Figure 1). Because we asked students to write about the tattoo's symbolism Megan wrote at length about the impact of her family history on her life:

> My family tree is complicated, so complicated that to explain it at length wouldn't really matter. What matters is my life is a tree unlike any other...not straight and tall like a redwood or well-rounded and full like an evergreen. My tree is broken and jagged and yet, it springs a newness when I least expect it.

Megan was also able to verbalize the impact that this visual image would have on others as they view it. "When others see my tattoo, I don't want them to feel sorry for me or focus on all of the dead branches. I want them to focus on the hope that there will be more leaves if I'm given the chance."

Once students had an opportunity to explore how their own histories would shape their tattoos, they were then asked to apply the tattoo activity to a character from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Creating a tattoo to represent the character traits of one of

Shakespeare's memorable characters allowed the students to better examine the play as well as understand how precisely a visual image can be used to represent their comprehension. Kevin chose to create a tattoo for the character of Friar Lawrence (see Figure 2). In his explanation of the tattoo, Kevin wrote about the importance of Friar Lawrence:

> Some people think that Friar Lawrence wasn't an important character in the play, but I disagree. I think that he was really important because not only does he marry Romeo and Juliet in secret, but he also spends the rest of the play trying to cover up his mistakes as they snowball. The scales for the Montague and Capulet families represent his efforts to balance the destruction that will follow.

Kevin went on to analyze the ethical repercussions of Friar Lawrence's actions, explaining that "the serpent in the tattoo represents the sin that rears its head in his actions and intertwines itself so closely to him that he has difficulty determining the difference between right and wrong."

More than an art activity, creating tattoos to represent literary characters challenges students to think beyond the written text. By representing their personal journeys as well as fictional characters in texts, students weave together their exposure to print and nonprint texts through a layering of mental, emotional, and physical learning activities (Bloom, 1969; Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964; Simpson, 1972).

Figure 1 Megan's Tree Tattoo

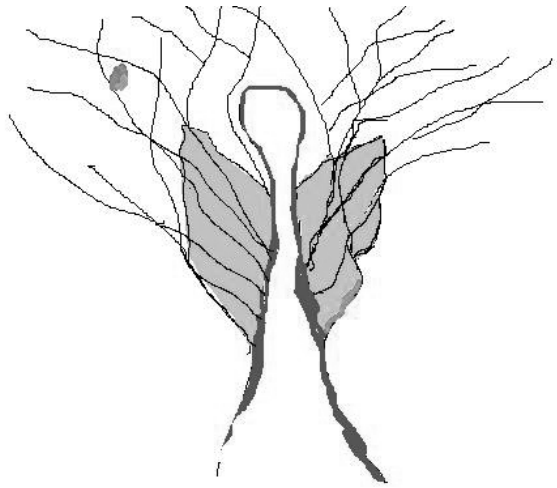
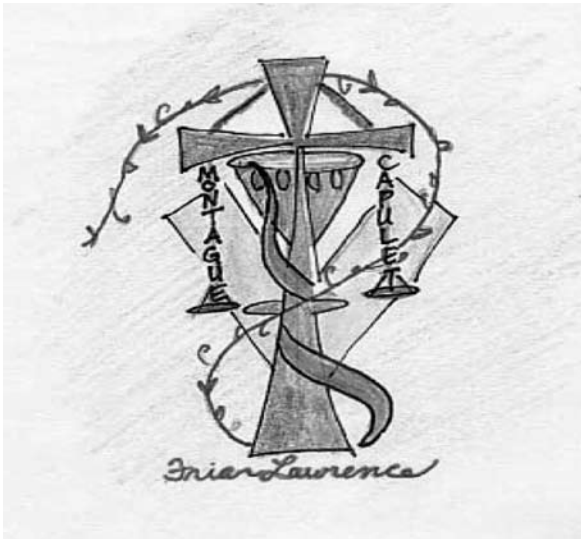


Figure 2 Kevin's Friar Lawrence Tattoo



Collages

Including visuals is sometimes as simple as reexamining how we accomplish routine classroom assignments. Take research, for example. The traditional approach to teaching students how to research and paraphrase sources tends to be rather linear. Students find information on their topics, write down their sources, and then attempt to put what they found in their own words. Unfortunately, this often leads to hours of frustration as teachers discover paper after paper that simply lifted information from the original sources. Angered, the teacher returns to the classroom, scolding the class for their laziness. Then, when the next group of papers comes in, the process repeats itself, leaving the teacher even more upset. Plagiarism is an issue that English teachers across the country battle on a regular basis, particularly with the advent of the Internet. Some students very consciously choose to follow that easy route, anxious to get their papers turned in and out of the way. But for others, plagiarism occurs because they cannot figure out how to avoid doing it. For these students, the linear path leads to a direct transfer of information, resulting in papers that sound almost identical to the original sources.

Brock was one such student. When we asked him to research his idol, Jackie Robinson, Brock followed the traditional research route. He combed the Internet looking for sources and even brought in a book from home. And when the time came for him to turn in his paper, it reflected none of Brock's admiration. Rather, the paper was a re-creation of his three sources, albeit rearranged with words changed here and there. When we approached him, it became obvious that Brock had not purposefully cheated on the assignment. Tears filled his eyes as he promised he had not cheated. He had, he said, simply read through the information and then written it down on his note cards. Brock had such a memory for written text that even when he was not looking at the screen, he recalled most of what he had read, and because he knew he needed to get the information down, he wrote what he remembered. Brock needed something to break the linear path. Fortunately, incorporating visuals into the research process can do just that.

As one way to break the linear path and to incorporate visuals into the research process, we asked students to select a topic, searching for information just as they had always done. Instead of taking notes on the information they discovered, however, students began flipping through magazines, seeking out images to represent the key facts. This forced students to activate their background knowledge as they worked to build connections between the images in the magazines and the information they needed to convey. More often than not, students had to be creative in their illustrations because the likelihood of finding a picture of Jackie Robinson playing baseball or a Holocaust victim working behind barbed wire was slim. Then, on note cards or half sheets of paper, they would affix their pictures. Each collage represented a single idea or fact. After creating the collage, our students turned their papers over, and, using the images as a guide, they wrote one to two sentences explaining the images and citing the original source. The process required them to focus on the ideas and facts represented in their sources and not on a word-for-word replay. Most important, it broke the linear path between the written text in their sources and the written text of their papers. By taking the time to work with the information in a visual format, students were able to separate themselves from the language of the source, which resulted in language of their own. By the time they finished with the process, they had a collection of images they could arrange and rearrange as they began organizing their ideas for their papers.

Paintings

While creating collages provides an effective avenue for teaching students to paraphrase by using visual images, it can still be a challenge to some students. So what other forms can visualizing take? Anyone wandering into our classrooms might find students sketching out their preliminary ideas or sweeping broad strokes of color onto white canvasses. In fact, outsiders might mistake our English class for an art class as students work to create symbolic representations of novels in the form of 11" × 14" paintings. For some, this task provides an avenue to explore their ideas and interpretations in a creative way or allows them to showcase their artistic talents in a forum that usually focuses on written language. For others, just getting started is a struggle because the novel's meaning and messages continue to elude them. Take Jake, for example. A sophomore, Jake simply did not see himself as a successful student. He struggled to keep up with reading expectations and rarely completed a writing assignment. When asked to visualize what he read, his first reaction was to throw up his hands in defeat. He simply did not know how to complete this task. Yet, he wanted to. All around him, he watched his classmates laughing as they set to work, stopping from time to time to ask their peers to read their pictures or to share their visions with us. This, he recognized, was not the typical English assignment, and he wanted to experience it just like everyone else.

To begin the assignment, we asked the class to free write on a series of guiding questions: When you think of your book, what is the overall feeling you walk away with? Which scenes in the book are attributed to this feeling? What is the overall theme or message of the book? We talked about symbolism and how to use concrete symbols to represent the abstract ideas presented in the books. The students spent an entire class period writing and sketching their ideas. When Jake left the classroom that day, his page was blank. Although he had completed his book, *I Know*

What You Did Last Summer by Lois Duncan, he could not see how our class discussions could apply to this teen suspense novel. His understanding of the book was superficial. He could recite the basics of the plot but could not move his comprehension to a deeper thinking level. Thus began a series of conversations between us.

We started with what Jake did know. The book, he explained, was about four teens who had been involved in an accident the previous summer, which resulted in the death of a young boy. Months later, each of the teens was reminded of this crime as an unknown figure stalked them, sending them alarming messages. We talked about the setting of the book, pointing out that while the bulk of the book takes place during the time of the stalking, the past has a significant impact on its events. We talked about how the characters felt about what they had done, as well as about what was happening to them. We talked about the significant objects in the book that helped relay the tone and message in the book. And then we gave Jake time to think, to imagine how these elements could all come together in a single visual image. While a cohesive picture did not emerge all at once, Jake had progressed at each check. The first image he settled on became the centerpiece of his entire painting (see Figure 3). On a sheet of paper, he had sketched a large rectangle across the top third of the page. This, he explained, was a rearview mirror. It represented the actual accident because it had been a hit-and-run, but he chose the mirror rather than another part of the car because the characters were being forced to look back on what they had done. Already, Jake was demonstrating that he had moved to a deeper understanding of the book.

His face lit up when praised about his progress, and he eagerly turned back to his sketch when presented with more questions to consider. We repeated this process as Jake worked on his confidence as a reader. By the time he had completed his painting, he had obviously made great progress in his visualization skills, resulting in a deeper understanding of the book itself. The rearview mirror reflected details like a noose, signaling the threats of the stalker, next to a set of child's clothing hanging on a clothesline. From the mirror hung the traditional evergreen air freshener,

Figure 3 Jake's Painting of *I Know What You Did Last Summer*

but this one was covered in blood, symbolizing how sour everything had gone, Jake explained. Through the process, Jake had learned to use the details from the book, as well as his own detailed interpretations, leaving him with a much stronger understanding of what he had read than he had possessed before.

Persuasive Narratives: J. Peterman Catalog

As big fans of *Seinfeld* in the 1990s, we believed the J. Peterman Company featured on the show was fictional. Elaine, one of the show's main characters, worked at J. Peterman in a variety of capacities; most memorably, she wrote advertisements for the catalog's eclectic collection of clothing and accessories. The persuasive advertisements were long passages of description embedded within narrative, intended to bring the item to life through an adventurous story. We were thrilled to discover that the company actually existed, and we quickly ordered the catalog to use in our classrooms as examples of how writing can create visual images in a real-world medium.

To begin the activity, we showed a series of short clips from *Seinfeld* in which J. Peterman was depicted or in which the characters were working on the catalog. Although several of our students had seen *Seinfeld* in syndication, we felt it was important for all of the students to see how stories about the merchandise were developed and depicted in popular culture. Also, to

If the culture teens are immersed in revolves around the visual and the media, their minds recognize the patterns created by these images, creating a persuasive argument for incorporating these patterns within the classroom.

help our students understand what made the catalog so unique, we surveyed a variety of catalogs from department stores to discover the ways in which items were displayed and described. Students quickly noted the differences in catalogs and the unique characteristics of J. Peterman's catalog.

To practice using the detailed narrative style, students cut out pictures of clothing and accessories from fashion and sports magazines to create parody advertisements in the J. Peterman style. Clarisse, a fashionista at heart, took great care to describe the boots in her parody ad:

> Life gets hard on the road, but that's not an excuse to not look my best. Confident and determined, I travel from city to city, state to state, meeting to meeting, with a strong walk and an even stronger mind. It's all about the impression you give, my dad would say. I'm proud to be following in his footsteps, his bootsteps. I wouldn't travel anywhere without my suede leather boots, No. 5446, in sizes 6–10, colors brown, black, and purple. $599.00.

Daniel, an unlikely catalog or mall shopper, was also inspired by the assignment and wanted to write about his mother's U.S. Army uniform:

> This uniform is not for the timid or meek, nor is it for the lazy or those known to be cowards. This uniform is for those who sacrifice their lives in more ways than one. It is not a costume for your Halloween party, nor is it a piece of clothing that should be put on as carelessly as a white t-shirt while running to the store. This uniform deserves your respect. It is bravery, pride, and tradition. It is freedom. Army Dress Uniform, No. 111, in sizes 2–14, standard issue color. PRICELESS.

Clarisse and Daniel wove their narrative storylines into persuasive advertisements, including the description of the items, targeting specific audiences. This activity also prepared the students to think about objects in a personified way and to think about purpose and audience in their writing.

Our next step in the activity transitioned to writing about iconic symbols in young adult literature. Students worked collaboratively to create J. Peterman catalogs for the texts they were reading in their literature circle/book study groups. Students created catalogs for Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*, Walter Dean Myers's *Monster*, and Ben Mikaelsen's *Touching Spirit Bear*. The *Touching Spirit Bear* book club created an advertisement for many important objects and events in the text, most notably, the Ancestor Rock:

> In a place where cold, salty water sweeps onto the rocky shore of a long forgotten island, Tlingit elders chisel away at a mountainside, freeing away tools for their tribal rituals. The Ancestor Rock is more than rock; it is truth, introspection, and justice. While pushing it up steep hillsides, the Ancestor Rock serves as a mentor and protector. And yet, when it is let go, to fall quickly down the hill it had recently climbed, it is forgiveness. Ancestor Rock, No. 232, One size fits all, Colors will vary. $199.00

Not only did the activity emphasize purpose and audience in writing, but it also demonstrated how written texts do not always need to be created in isolation. Persuasive, descriptive, and narrative texts can be interwoven to create a powerful companion to visual images. Through the development of their book club catalogs, the students touched on the important themes of each novel as well as described specific setting details and character traits of important characters. Collaboratively, the students created meaning from the text and worked together to create a project with print and nonprint texts that symbolized their collective understanding of the novel.

Gee (2000) stated that when creating meaning from texts, the human mind is social. Additionally, as the mind engages in thinking, it distributes information "across other people and various symbols, tools, objects and technologies" (para. 6). If the culture teens are immersed in revolves around the visual and the media, their minds recognize the patterns created by these images, creating a persuasive argument for incorporating these patterns within the classroom. Gee wrote that "Thinking and using language is an active matter of assembling the situated meanings that you need for action in the world" (para. 12). Taking these meanings and showing students how to apply them both inside and outside the classroom can be an effective instructional tool.

A study by Pompe (1996) about popular culture's influence on young consumers upheld her convictions as to why it is so influential on students. She found that the pleasures provided by these visually oriented texts were deep in nature, rather than superficial; that consumers' desires were powerful influences on what the popular media produced; that viewers and listeners of audiovisual texts just as actively made meaning as readers of print text; and that teachers and students could satisfy their own desires while they were learning about the desires of others. It is this powerful influence that makes popular media texts important additions to the classroom. By including elements of popular culture, teachers can tap into the patterns students' minds already recognize, which makes transitioning them to more traditional texts much more effective.

Poetry Comics

Graphic novels are more popular in our culture than ever before. Whether they are in the form of the traditional Japanese art (manga) or the more popular Americanized version of graphic illustrations such as the *Bone* novels by Jeff Smith, these books often sit atop a pile of students' chosen books. Canon classics and new young adult literature are even being reformatted to appeal to a new generation of graphic novel readers. Much more than comic strips, today's graphic novels are complex and mature, capturing an intellectual readership looking for more visual stimulation from their reading experiences.

There are two reasons teachers should be drawn to the manga genre: first, the popularity of the genre, measured by sales and distribution, and second, the unique multimodal reading that manga demands (Schwartz & Rubinstein-Ávila, 2006). Fortunately, it is possible to marry students' outside interests with those of traditional academia. An example of this would be tackling complicated texts in the classroom using poetry comics. Poetry comics illustrate poetry in the form of a comic strip. The text of the comic strip is the text of the poem, with illustrations inspired by the text. To begin this activity with our eighth-grade students, we introduced Langston Hughes's "A Dream Deferred," and after reading it as a class, we presented a poetry comic based on Hughes's poem (see Morice, 2002). A comparison of the two emphasizes the ways in which poetry can be interpreted and illustrated differently by each reader.

Once students had a clear understanding of poetry comics, we asked them to read two complex poems, Walt Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain" and T.S. Eliot's "The Naming of Cats," and demonstrate their understanding through poetry comics. Jasmine tackled Eliot and illustrated the poem with her understanding of the text (see Figure 4). Ordered in a traditional comic strip format, Jasmine also added personalized touches outside of the borders. Jasmine incorporated the entire poem in its traditional form, while giving the narrator a cat personality.

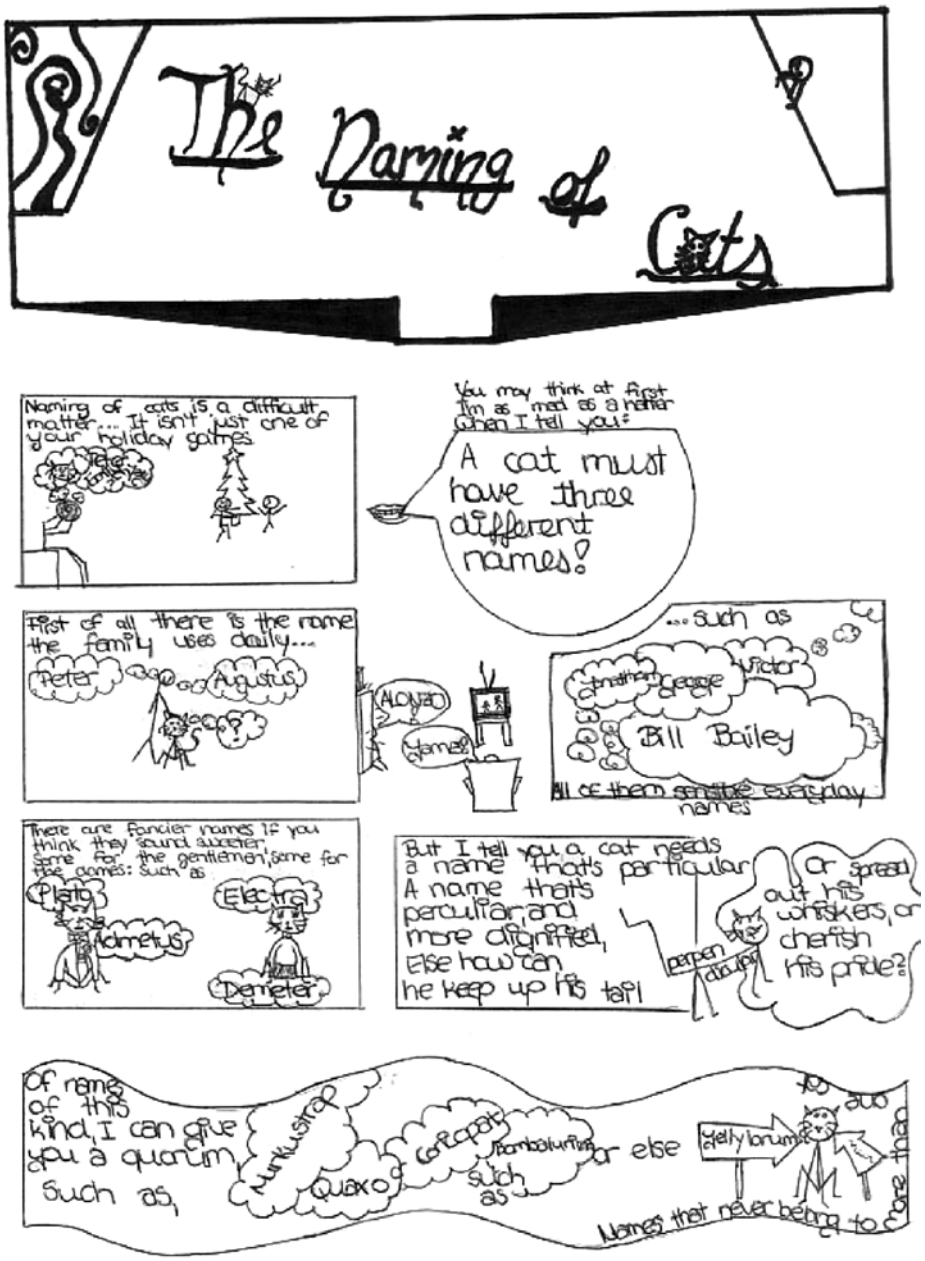
Kaitlin approached Whitman in a different comic format (see Figure 5). Instead of the traditional squares in a linear sequence, Kaitlin opted for ships to anchor each stanza, with characters quoting lines from the poem. Kaitlin understood the poem to be about President Abraham Lincoln's death and chose to depict the country metaphorically as the ship Whitman speaks of in the poem.

Much more than a superficial illustration of poetry, these poetry comics allow for students to experiment with narrator voice, setting, and literal and metaphorical meanings. Layering complex literary analysis skills with visual representations allows students to practice visualizing the texts that they read. Graphic representations of popular texts provide a contemporary canvas for authors to share their stories using a fresh, relevant approach. Educators, librarians, and bookstores that have embraced this new genre of literature have difficulty keeping titles on their shelves. Further, they are pleased to see more young people choosing books at a time when video games and the Internet seem to take up so much attention. With the growing demand for and popularity of graphic novels, the integration of the genre with traditional English language arts practices should continue to be explored (Schwartz & Rubinstein-Ávila, 2006).

Final Thoughts

Just as the classrooms and students of the 21st century look very different than those of centuries before, so too must the curriculum change. Teachers can prepare students for today's changing world by introducing texts of all types into the learning environment.

Figure 4 Jasmine's Poetry Comic of "The Naming of Cats"



By teaching students how to critically read and view all texts, not just the traditional print texts, teachers can build upon the skills needed to read and write, increasing students' literacy levels in all areas. And perhaps even more important, as O'Brien (2001) pointed out, the study of visual symbols can reach those students who have been burned by print. Ultimately, however, visual literacy must be included within all school curricula if teachers want to adequately prepare students for a world that is surrounded by and driven by images.

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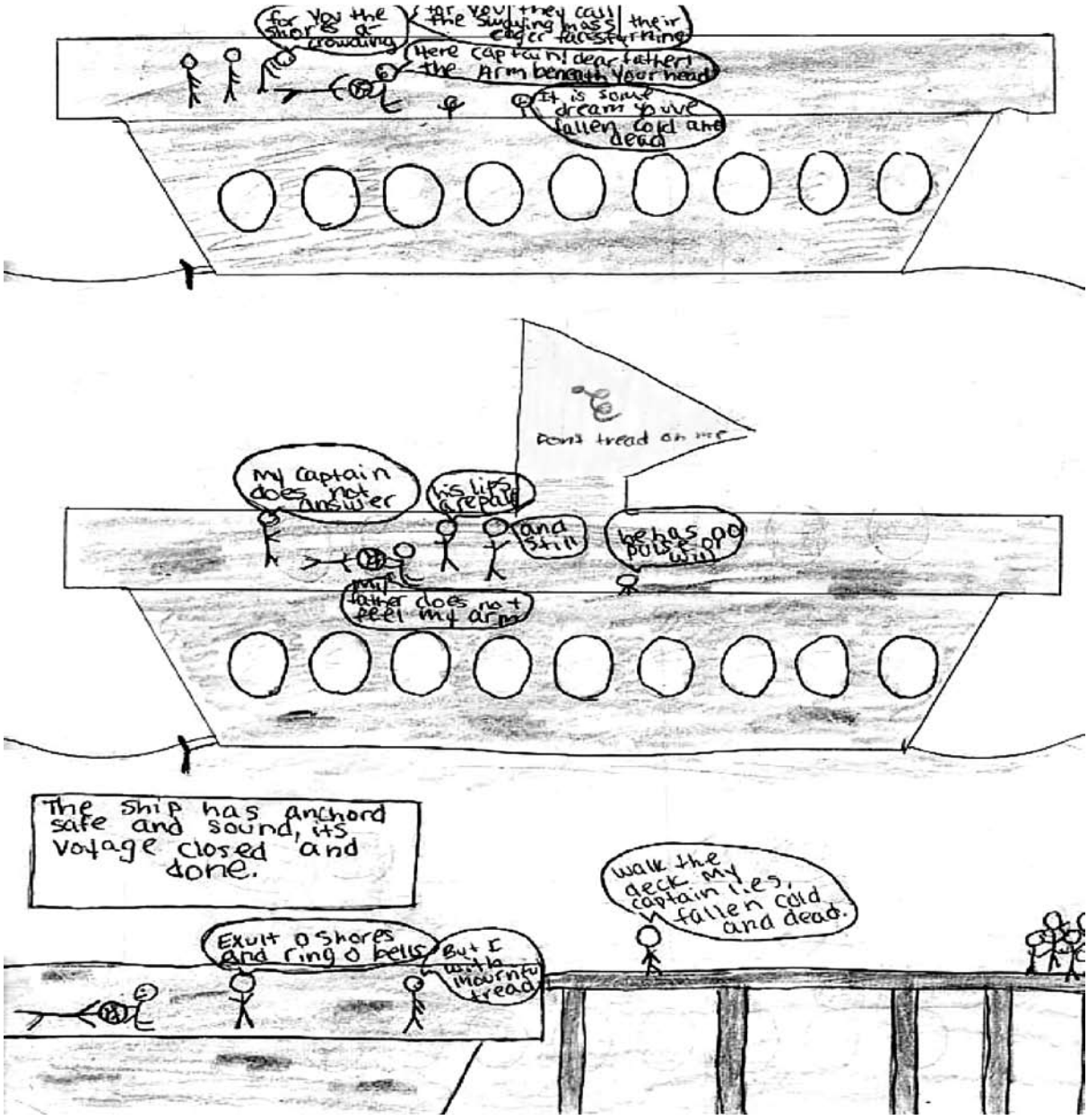
Figure 5 Kaitlin's Poetry Comic of "O Captain, My Captain!"



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