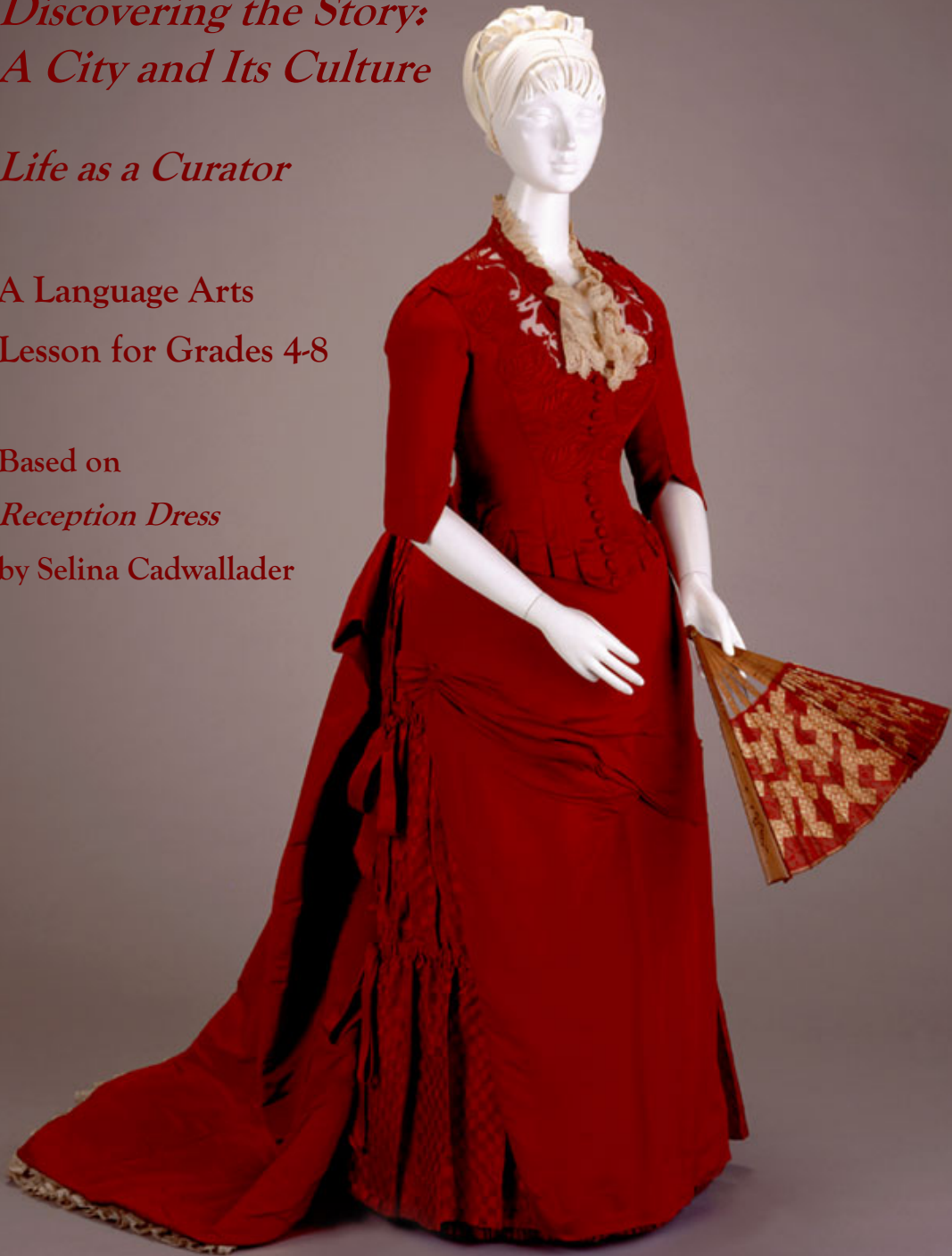


*Discovering the Story:
A City and Its Culture*

Life as a Curator

A Language Arts
Lesson for Grades 4-8

Based on
Reception Dress
by Selina Cadwallader



Selina Cadwallader (active 1870-1886)
Reception Dress, 1886
Gift of Wilmar Antiques c/o Mr. Maurice Oshry, 1971.550 a-c

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CONCEPT

Using the background information sheet and dress photograph provided by Cincinnati Art Museum as springboards, the teacher will initiate a discussion on the dress as well as the role and responsibilities of a museum curator. The teacher will help students generate an awareness of the qualifications and training necessary to become a curator. The teacher will then assist students to focus on the importance of the curator's responsibility for writing labels about museum pieces.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will further develop their language and writing skills through discussions and writings inspired by the study of the *Reception Dress* by Selina Cadwallader.
- Students will generate an understanding of the role and responsibilities of a museum curator.
- Students will enhance their writing application by deliberately choosing vocabulary to enhance text and structure their writing according to audience and purpose.

"Art is everywhere, except it has to pass through a creative mind."

Louise Nevelson

Teacher Preparation

CLASS PERIODS REQUIRED

- 1 (30-50 min.) periods for Pre-Lesson Activities
- 1 (50-min.) class period for Videoconference
- 1 to 2 (30-50 min.) periods for Post-Lesson Activities
- 1 to 2 (30-50 min.) periods for Art Enrichment Activity (optional)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background Information, which contains additional details on the *Reception Dress* and the artist who created it, has been written for teachers to review before the lesson and then share with students. You can find the background information on the *Discovering the Story* website at <http://www.discoveringthestory.org/goldenage/dress/background.asp>

VIDEO

Share the dressmaker video with your students prior to the videoconference. The video, which is on the *Discovering the Story* website at <http://www.discoveringthestory.org/goldenage/dress/video.asp> depicts Museum curator, Cynthia Amneus, as she prepares the *Reception Dress* for exhibition. While she works, she speaks at length on the *Reception Dress*. This video is an excellent resource that will help to prepare students for the videoconference.

Video Duration – 6 minutes.

“I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way -- things I had no words for.”

Georgia O'Keeffe

PRE- VIDEOCONFERENCE

VOCABULARY

Definitions can be found in the Glossary on the *Discovering the Story* website at <http://www.discoveringthestory.org/goldenage/bed/glossary.asp>.

Dressmaker
Client
Criteria
Handiwork
Victorian
Reception
Corset
Museum curator

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is a museum curator?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of a museum curator?
- What qualifications and/or training must a museum curator have?
- What is the importance of accuracy when reporting on factual information?
- How does one structure a piece of writing based on audience and purpose?

MATERIALS

- CAM background information
- reproduction of *Reception Dress* by Selina Cadwallader on the website at http://www.cetconnect.org/discoveringthestory/goldenage/images/dress_full.jpg.

PROCEDURE

Teacher will:

- Distribute a copy of the dress photograph to each student and allow students time to look at the dress.
- Ask students such questions as:
 - Who may have worn the dress?
 - During what time period may it have been worn?
 - For what occasions may it have been worn?

- How was the dress made and by whom?
- What materials were used to make the dress?
- List possible answers to the questions on the board or on chart paper.
- Distribute a copy of the Background Information sheet on the *Reception Dress* to each student.
- Allow students time to read it over and to see which of their answers to the questions posed earlier were correct.
- Explain to the students that a museum curator wrote the background piece.
- Discuss training, qualifications, and responsibilities of a museum curator.

Curator

A curator is a specialist in an academic discipline relevant to the museum's collection field. Curators are responsible for the care and interpretation of the objects, materials, and specimens belonging to or lent to the museum. They perform research to identify the history of the objects in the collection and publish monographs, books, and other materials based on their research. Curators also conceive and manage the development of exhibitions.

- Explain to students that they will be acting as museum curators soon but that they will need to do some additional research.
- Show the video featuring Cynthia Amneus. Encourage students to take notes to help them become better curators.
- Explain to the students the purposes and goals for the videoconference.
- Generate a list of possible questions to ask during the videoconference, as well as appropriate behavior so that the videoconference is a positive learning experience.

"I believe arts education in music, theater, dance and the visual arts is one of the most creative ways we have to find the gold that is buried just beneath the surface. They (children) have an enthusiasm for life, a spark of creativity, and vivid imaginations that need training...training that prepares them to become confident young men and women. As I visit schools around the country I see a renewed interest in arts education and a growing concern about the negative impact of cutting art and music out of the curriculum. The creativity of the arts and the joy of music should be central to the education of every American child."

Richard W. Riley
former Secretary of Education
United States of America

VIDEOCONFERENCE

OBJECTIVES

- Students will interact with the Cincinnati Art Museum staff through a sixty-minute videoconference. Information is at <http://www.discoveringthistory.org/videoconference/>.
- Students will learn about Cincinnati history from 1850 to 1900.
- Students will use Museum objects to reinforce activities completed in preparation for this videoconference.

CONCEPT

A videoconference conducted by the Cincinnati Art Museum staff extends student learning through emphasis on the viewing and discussion of art objects. During this videoconference with the Museum, students will explore Cincinnati art history and the methods and practices of many of the artists working in the city.

SCHEDULE

- **5 minutes** Introduction to CAM staff (*This is also buffer time in case of connection complications*)
- **10 minutes** Brief discussion of student pre-videoconferencing activities.
- **10 minutes** Museum staff will lead an interactive discussion with students on the history of Cincinnati from 1850-1900
- **20 minutes** Museum staff will lead students in an in-depth investigation of selected Museum objects.

Objects Include:

- *Bedstead* by Benn Pitman, Adelaide Nourse Pitman, and Elizabeth Nourse. http://www.discoveringthistory.org/goldenage/images/bedstead_full.jpg
- *Reception Dress* by Selina Cadwallader. This image can be found at http://www.discoveringthistory.org/goldenage/images/dress_full.jpg
- *Aladdin Vase* by Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, which is available at http://www.discoveringthistory.org/goldenage/images/aladdin_full.jpg
- *Ali Baba Vase* by M. Louise McLaughlin, which is available at http://www.discoveringthistory.org/goldenage/images/alibaba_full.jpg
- *Vase and Dedication Medallion* by Tiffany & Co. This image is on the Website at http://www.discoveringthistory.org/goldenage/images/springer_full.jpg
- **10 minutes** Questions and student sharing of art projects.

- **5 minutes** Closing (*This is also buffer time in case of connection complications*)

POST- VIDEOCONFERENCE

MATERIALS

- Background Information sheet
- Photograph of the *Reception Dress*
- Computer for use in creating label for dress (optional)
- Drawing paper to make a picture of the dress (optional)

PROCEDURE

Teacher will:

- Review the role of curator.
- Discuss the importance of accuracy in writing labels for museum pieces.
- Go over resources the students have regarding the dress (i.e. Background Informational sheet, the photo, the notes from the video and from the videoconference).
- Review the importance of writing for a particular audience. Ask who they think the audience is for the Cincinnati Art Museum-provided information sheet.
- Explain that their job as museum curator is to write a new background piece for the *Reception Dress* with the intended audience to be five- and six-year-olds.
- Give students time to complete the writing process including rough draft(s), revisions, editing (self and peer), and final draft. (This may be done on computers or in longhand.)
- Have students make their own pictures of the dress with crayons, colored pencils, or paints (optional).
- Allow students to share their labels and pictures with five- and six-year-olds in your school. If your school does not have students that young, perhaps pen pals could be established with another school.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

- Students will write a new informational piece for the *Reception Dress* for an audience of five- and six-year-olds.

ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS – READING

Standard 6: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts.

Grades 3–5

Benchmark 1: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of literary passages and texts.

Benchmark 2: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres.

Grades 6–8

Benchmark 1: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of literary passages and texts.

Benchmark 2: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres.

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts.

Grades 3–5

Benchmark 1: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts.

Benchmark 2: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of informational texts.

Grades 6–8

Benchmark 1: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts.

Benchmark 2: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of informational texts.

NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS – WRITING

Standard 2: Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.

Grades 3–5

Benchmark 1: Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas.

Benchmark 2: Uses paragraph form in writing.

Benchmark 3: Uses a variety of sentence structures in writing.

Grades 6–8

Benchmark 1: Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas.

Benchmark 2: Uses paragraph form in writing.

Benchmark 3: Uses a variety of sentence structures to expand and embed ideas.

Benchmark 4: Uses explicit transitional devices.

Standard 3: Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions.

Grades 3–5

Benchmark 2: Uses exclamatory and imperative sentences in written compositions.

Benchmark 3: Uses pronouns in written compositions.

Benchmark 4: Uses nouns in written compositions.

Benchmark 5: Uses verbs in written compositions.

- Benchmark 6:** Uses adjectives in written compositions.
- Benchmark 7:** Uses adverbs in written compositions.
- Benchmark 8:** Uses coordinating conjunctions in written compositions.
- Benchmark 9:** Uses negatives in written compositions.
- Benchmark 10:** Uses conventions of spelling in written compositions.
- Benchmark 11:** Uses conventions of capitalization in written compositions.
- Benchmark 12:** Uses conventions of punctuation in written compositions.

Grades 6–8

- Benchmark 1:** Uses simple and compound sentences in written compositions.
- Benchmark 2:** Uses pronouns in written compositions.
- Benchmark 3:** Uses nouns in written compositions.
- Benchmark 4:** Uses verbs in written compositions.
- Benchmark 5:** Uses adjectives in written compositions.
- Benchmark 6:** Uses adverbs in written compositions.
- Benchmark 7:** Uses prepositions and coordinating conjunctions in written compositions.
- Benchmark 8:** Uses interjections in written compositions.
- Benchmark 9:** Uses conventions of spelling in written compositions.
- Benchmark 10:** Uses conventions of capitalization in written compositions.
- Benchmark 11:** Uses conventions of punctuation in written compositions.
- Benchmark 12:** Uses appropriate format in written compositions.

NATIONAL STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

Standard 4: Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Grades 5–8

- Benchmark 1:** Understands similarities and differences among the characteristics of artworks from various eras and cultures.
- Benchmark 2:** Understands the historical and cultural contexts of a variety of art objects.
- Benchmark 3:** Understands how factors of time and place influence visual, spatial, or temporal characteristics that give meaning or function to a work of art.

OHIO STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS

Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies, and Self-Monitoring Strategies: Students develop and learn to apply strategies that help them to comprehend and interpret informational and literary texts. Reading and learning to read are problem-solving processes that require strategies for the reader to make sense of written language and remain engaged with texts. Beginners develop basic concepts about print (e.g., that print holds meaning) and how books work (e.g., text organization). As strategic readers, students learn to analyze and evaluate texts to demonstrate their understanding of text. Additionally, students learn to self-monitor their comprehension by asking and answering questions about the text, self-correcting errors, and assessing their own understanding. They apply these strategies effectively to assigned and self-selected texts read in and out of the classroom.

Grades 4-7

Benchmark A: Determines a purpose for reading and uses a range of reading comprehension strategies to better understand text.

Benchmark B: Applies effective reading comprehension strategies, including summarizing and making predictions, and comparisons using information in text, between text, and across subject areas.

Benchmark D: Applies self-monitoring strategies to clarify confusion about text and to monitor comprehension.

Informational, Technical, and Persuasive Text: Students gain information from reading for purposes of learning about a subject, doing a job, making decisions, and accomplishing a task. Students need to apply the reading process to various types of informational texts, including essays, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, instruction manuals, consumer and workplace documents, reference materials, multimedia, and electronic resources. They learn to attend to text features, such as titles, subtitles, and visual aids, to make predictions and build text knowledge. They learn to read diagrams, charts, graphs, maps, and displays in text as sources of additional information. Students use their knowledge of text structure to organize content information, analyze it, and draw inferences from it. Strategic readers learn to recognize arguments, bias, stereotyping, and propaganda in informational text sources.

Grades 4-7

Benchmark A: Uses text features and graphics to organize, analyze, and draw inferences from content and to gain additional information.

Benchmark B: Recognizes the difference between cause and effect and fact and opinion to analyze text.

Benchmark C: Explains how main ideas connect to each other in a variety of sources.

Benchmark E: Explains the treatment, scope, and organization of ideas from different texts to draw conclusions about a topic.

Benchmark F: Determines the extent to which a summary accurately reflects the main idea, critical details, and underlying meaning of original text.

Writing Process: Students' writing develops when they regularly engage in the major phases of the writing process. The writing process includes the phases of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing and publishing. They learn to plan their writing for different purposes and audiences. They learn to apply their writing skills in increasingly sophisticated ways to create and produce compositions that reflect effective word and grammatical choices. Students develop revision strategies to improve the content, organization, and language of their writing. Students also develop editing skills to improve writing conventions.

Grades 5-7

Benchmark A: Generates writing topics and establishes a purpose appropriate for the audience.

Benchmark B: Determines audience and purpose for self-selected and assigned writing tasks.

Benchmark D: Uses revision strategies to improve the overall organization, the clarity and consistency of ideas within and among paragraphs, and the logic and effectiveness of word choices.

Benchmark E: Selects more effective vocabulary when editing by using a variety of resources and reference materials.

Benchmark F: Edits to improve fluency, grammar, and usage.

Writing Applications: Students need to understand that various types of writing require different language, formatting, and special vocabulary. Writing serves many purposes across the curriculum and takes various forms. Beginning writers learn about the various purposes of writing; they attempt and use a small range of familiar forms (e.g., letters). Developing writers are able to select text forms to suit purpose and audience. They can explain why some text forms are more suited to a purpose than others and begin to use content-specific vocabulary to achieve their communication goals. Proficient writers control effectively the language and structural features of a large repertoire of text forms. They deliberately choose vocabulary to enhance text and structure their writing according to audience and purpose.

Grades 5-7

Benchmark D: Produces informational essays or reports that convey a clear and accurate perspective and support the main ideas with facts, details, examples, and explanations.

Research: Students define and investigate self-selected or assigned issues, topics, and problems. They locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources. Students use an appropriate form to communicate their findings.

Grades 5-7

Benchmark B: Locates and summarizes important information from multiple sources

Benchmark E: Communicates findings orally, visually, and in writing or through multimedia.

OHIO STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

Historical, Social, and Cultural Contexts: Students understand the impact of visual art on history, culture, and society from which it emanates. They understand the cultural, social, and political forces that, in turn, shape visual art communication and expression. Students identify the significant contributions of visual artists to cultural heritage. They analyze the historical, cultural, social, and political contexts that influence the function and role of visual art in people's lives.

Grades 5-8

Benchmark A: Compares and contrasts the distinctive characteristics of art forms from various cultural, historical, and social contexts.

“How important are the visual arts in our society? I feel strongly that the visual arts are of vast and incalculable importance. Of course I could be prejudiced. I am a visual art.”

Kermit the Frog