

*Discovering the Story:  
A City and Its Culture*

*History Comes Alive!*

A Language Arts  
Lesson for Grades 9-12

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 ..... 3  
OBJECTIVES..... 3  
TEACHER PREPARATION ..... 4  
    CLASS PERIODS REQUIRED..... 4  
    BACKGROUND INFORMATION..... 4  
    VIDEO ..... 4  
PRE- VIDEOCONFERENCE..... 5  
    VOCABULARY..... 5  
    GUIDING QUESTIONS ..... 5  
    PROCEDURE..... 5  
VIDEOCONFERENCE..... 7  
    OBJECTIVES ..... 7  
    CONCEPT ..... 7  
    SCHEDULE ..... 7  
POST- VIDEOCONFERENCE ..... 8  
    MATERIALS..... 8  
    PROCEDURE..... 8  
ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES ..... 8  
ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS ..... 9  
    NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS - READING..... 9  
    NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS - WRITING..... 9  
    NATIONAL STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS..... 9  
    OHIO STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS ..... 10  
    OHIO STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS ..... 11

## CONCEPT

Using the background information sheet and dress photograph provided by CAM as springboards, the teacher will initiate a discussion on the dress, as well as the time period in which the dress was created. Students will be instructed to use research skills to find significant events that occurred in Cincinnati during the time period. The teacher will then guide students to create writings related to the dress and/or events in Cincinnati history. Students will orally present their accounts/information.

## 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 improve writing application skills by deliberately choosing vocabulary to enhance text and structure their writing according to audience and purpose.
- Students will increase knowledge and awareness of life in Cincinnati during the 1800s. Students will deliver presentations that effectively convey information to audiences.

*"Arts education aids students in skills needed in the workplace: flexibility, the ability to solve problems and communicate; the ability to learn new skills, to be creative and innovative, and to strive for excellence"*

Dr. Joseph M. Calahan  
Vice President, Xerox Foundation

## 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 and is 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 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.

*“It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance, and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process.”*

Henry James  
author

## 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  
Victorian  
Corset  
Bustle  
Bodice  
Train

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How does one structure a writing based on audience and purpose, and why is this important?
- What is the importance of accuracy when reporting on actual events?
- How are our lives in Cincinnati today the same as and different from the lives of Cincinnatians in the 1800s?
- In what ways have events of the 1800s shaped our lives today?

### MATERIALS

- CAM background information
- reproductions of *Reception Dress* by Selina Cadwallader at [http://www.cetconnect.org/discoveringthestory/goldenage/images/dress\\_full.jpg](http://www.cetconnect.org/discoveringthestory/goldenage/images/dress_full.jpg)
- Video featuring Cynthia Amneus

### PROCEDURE

Teacher will:

- Distribute a copy of the dress photograph to each student and allow students time to examine the photo.
- Ask students to speculate as to the time period and the occasion for the dress. Record student ideas.
- Distribute a copy of the Background Information sheet on the *Reception Dress* to each student and allow students time to read the information.
- Discuss the accuracy of their prior speculations.

- Explain to the students that they will be researching and writing about daily life in Cincinnati during the approximate time period.
- Show the video featuring Cynthia Amneus. Instruct students to engage in note-taking during the video.
- Explain to the students the purposes and goals for the videoconference. Generate a list of significant questions to ask during the videoconference, as well as appropriate behavior so that the videoconference is a positive learning experience.

*"We must infuse our lives with art. Our national leaders must be informed that we want them to use our taxes to support street theatre in order to oppose street gangs. We should have a well-supported regional theatre in order to oppose regionalism and differences which keep us apart. We need nationally to support small, medium, and large art museums which show us images of ourselves, those we like and those we dislike. In some way, very important to us, we need to see those we dislike even more than those we like because somehow we get glancing visions of how we look 'as through a window darkly.'"*

Maya Angelou, 1990  
1990 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy

## 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](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](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](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](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](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*
- Notes from the video and videoconference
- Books related to Cincinnati history
- Access to the Internet for research

### PROCEDURE

Teacher will:

- Allow students independent research time to read about and take notes on daily life in Cincinnati during the 1800s.
- Instruct students to assume the role of a person during the period of the 1800s as they write about a day in their lives including what they did, what they wore, etc.
- Give students time to complete the writing process including rough draft(s), revisions, editing (self and peer), and final draft. Allow students time to present their accounts to classmates.

### ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

- Students will research life in Cincinnati in the 1800s and write a creative piece assuming the role of a person from the time period.

*“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



## ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

### NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS – READING

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

**Grades 9–12**

**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.

**Benchmark 3:** Scans a passage to determine whether it contains relevant information.

**Benchmark 4:** Summarizes and paraphrases complex, implicit hierarchic structures in informational texts, including the relationships among the concepts and details in those structures.

### NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS – WRITING

**Standard 1:** Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

**Grades 9–12**

**Benchmark 1:** Prewriting: Uses a variety of prewriting strategies.

**Benchmark 2:** Drafting and Revising: Uses a variety of strategies to draft and revise written work.

**Benchmark 3:** Editing and Publishing: Uses a variety of strategies to edit and publish written work.

**Benchmark 5:** Uses strategies to address writing to different audiences.

**Benchmark 6:** Uses strategies to adapt writing for different purposes.

### NATIONAL STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

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

**Grades 9–12**

**Benchmark 1:** Knows a variety of historical and cultural contexts regarding characteristics and purposes of works of art.

**Benchmark 2:** Knows the function and meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places.

**Benchmark 3:** Understands relationships among works of art in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture.

## OHIO STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS

**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 8–10:

**Benchmark A:** Evaluates how features and characteristics make information accessible and usable and how structures help authors achieve their purposes.

**Benchmark B:** Identifies examples of rhetorical devices and valid and invalid inferences, and explains how authors use these devices to achieve their purposes and reach their intended audiences.

**Benchmark D:** Explains and analyzes how an author appeals to an audience and develops an argument or viewpoint in text.

**Benchmark E:** Utilizes multiple sources pertaining to a singular topic to critique the various ways authors develop their ideas.

**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 8–10:

**Benchmark A:** Formulates open-ended research questions suitable for investigation and adjusts questions as necessary while research is conducted.

**Benchmark B:** Evaluates the usefulness and credibility of data and sources.

**Benchmark C:** Organizes information from various resources and selects appropriate sources to support central ideas, concepts, and themes.

**Benchmark D:** Uses style guides to produce oral and written reports that give proper credit for sources (e.g., words, ideas, images, and information) and includes an acceptable format for source acknowledgement.

**Benchmark E:** Communicates findings, reporting on the substance and processes orally, visually, and in writing or through multimedia.

**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 8–10:**

**Benchmark A:** Formulates writing ideas and identifies a topic appropriate to the purpose and audience.

**Benchmark C:** Uses revision strategies to improve the style, variety of sentence structure, clarity of the controlling idea, logic, effectiveness of word choice, and transitions between paragraphs, passages, or ideas.

**Benchmark D:** Edits to improve sentence fluency, grammar, and usage.

**Benchmark E:** Applies tools to judge the quality of writing.

**Communication: Oral and Visual:** Students learn to communicate effectively through exposure to good models and opportunities for practice. By speaking, listening, and providing and interpreting visual images, they learn to apply their communication skills in increasingly sophisticated ways. Students learn to deliver presentations that effectively convey information and persuade or entertain audiences. Proficient speakers control language and deliberately choose vocabulary to clarify points and adjust presentations according to audience and purpose.

**Grades 8-10:**

**Benchmark E:** Gives informational presentations that present ideas in a logical sequence, include relevant facts and details from multiple sources, and use a consistent organizational structure.

## 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 9-12**

**Benchmark A:** Explains how and why visual art forms develop in the contexts in which they were made (e.g. cultural, social, historical, and political).

*“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