

WHAT'S IN YOUR TRUNK?

IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES WITH CLAY

ART AND SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADES: K-8

BASED ON

James Henry Beard (1811-1893)

NORTH CAROLINA EMIGRANTS, POOR WHITE FOLKS, 1845

Gift of The Procter & Gamble Company, 2003.52

OBJECTIVES

- Students connect their knowledge of immigration to the United States, with a clay project.
- Students review images of immigrants, Ellis Island and particularly *North Carolina Emigrants, Poor White Folks* by James Henry Beard.
- Students brainstorm ideas about 'the trip to America' for immigrants, who would come with them and what would be essential to bring.
- Students construct and decorate a trunk and objects with clay, for their trip to America.

CONCEPT

In this unit, students will learn about immigrants and emigrants as they study U.S. Immigration and Ellis Island. Students will create clay trunks and objects for 'their trip'.

VOCABULARY

Immigrants

Ellis Island

Emigrants

Immigration

Loop Tool

Score and Slip

Trunk

Observation

MATERIALS/PROCEDURE

- Image of *North Carolina Emigrants, Poor White Folks* painting
- Reference books on immigration and Ellis Island and images of trunks and suitcases
- 9" x12" sketch paper
- Pencils/Erasers
- Old suitcase for visual reference
- White, low-fire clay (approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. per student)
- Clay tools: loop tool, needle tool, modeling tool, and rolling pin
- Clay slip
- Canvas mats for each student
- Plastic bags for storage
- Newspaper
- Handouts: Immigration, trunks
- Kiln
- Brushes
- Watercolors
- Water containers
- Paper towels
- Tempera paint (black, silver, brown, gold, yellow, red)
- Buckets for dipping

CLASS EXPERIENCE

1. Discuss immigration and the idea of leaving the home you know permanently and going to a new country where you don't know the language, the customs, or the land.
2. Review the painting, *North Carolina Emigrants, Poor White Folks*. Discuss what the students observe, what they guess about the people in the painting, what they guess about the artist. Discuss immigration vs. emigration.
3. Have students brainstorm by answering the following questions: Who would go with you on such a permanent trip? How long would your boat voyage be? What would you wear? What THREE objects are essential to you that you would have to bring with you in your trunk? Students sketch out their objects.
4. After watching a demonstration, the students will receive a ½ lb. block of clay. Have them wedge their clay into a square or brick form. Using a loop tool, carve out the block to create the inside of their trunk, leaving the wall and base about 3/8" thick. The clay that they have carved out is now going to be used for the decorations on the side of the trunk: the rivets, the cording, the straps, and all the details of the trunk's exterior.
5. Students form three-dimensional objects for inside their trunks, the 3 objects that they would HAVE to take with them. The objects are then nestled inside the trunk with a piece of newspaper between the objects and the trunk's interior.
6. Students next roll out a lid for their trunk and decorate it similarly to the trunk, with straps, etc.
7. Drying time can take almost two weeks before bisque firing. Once bisque-fired, the students will tint their trunks by dipping them in a tempera 'bath' (approximately ½ cup tempera with ½ gallon of warm water). They can dip in multiple colors, depending on the look that they wanted. Colors included: brown/gold, black/silver, and yellow/brown.
8. Students use watercolors to paint their objects for inside their trunks.
9. Students evaluate their projects and their thoughts on immigration.

ASSESSMENT

Individual artwork evaluations will examine the following criteria:

- Meeting the *goals of assignment*: tinted clay trunk with lid that stays on, detailed with decorative straps, buttons, etc., at least 3 clay objects, painted in detail, enclosed within the trunk.
- *Successful craftsmanship*: clay carefully carved out, slip used to securely attach the trunk and lid details, thought was given to the watercolor objects, skill is demonstrated in the care and use of materials, time was spent to create all parts of the trunk and objects,
- *Overall effort*
- *Creativity/visual impact*

NATIONAL STANDARDS

VISUAL ART

Standard 1- Understands and applies media, techniques and processes related to the visual arts.

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

LANGUAGE ART

United States History:

Standard 3- Understands why the Americas attracted Europeans, why they brought enslaved Africans to their colonies and how Europeans struggled for control of North America.

Standard 17- Understands massive immigration after 1870 and how new social patterns, conflicts and ideas of national unity developed amid growing cultural diversity.

RESOURCES

Ellis Island, Judith Jango-Cohen

Island of Hope: the story of Ellis Island and the Journey to America, Martin Sandler

Arriving at Ellis Island, MaryLee Knowlton

Ellis Island, Patricia Quiri

Ellis Island, Lucia Raatma

www.ellisland.org

www.jaha.org

www.loc.gov/rr/print/



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