

Setting

Character

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Plot

Art Tells a Story

Martha Holden Jennings Foundation Language Arts Teacher Guide

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Resource Center for Educators

Teacher resources from the Toledo Museum of Art are available online at toledomuseum.org. Visit our Resource Center for Educators located on the ground floor of the Museum. The RCE provides educational materials that integrate art into math, social studies, language arts, history, and more. The Museum's RCE offers great ways to enliven students' learning experiences through art.

Martha Holden Jennings Foundation Language Arts Teacher Guide

The literary concepts of plot, theme, character, point of view, and setting as shown in works of art are explored in this guide. The activities suggested may be used prior to your visit to enhance learning that will take place at the Museum or after you return to the classroom.

This guide is written for teachers who may not have taught art but would like to incorporate art into their classrooms.

How to Use This Guide

1. Read the section called Arty-fact. This will give you background information about each work of art, and will help you introduce the object to your class.
2. Show students the image of the work of art included in this guide. Introduce the work of art using information learned in the Arty-fact section. Use the questions in the What's the Connection section to begin a conversation about the work of art that explores the literary concept introduced on that page. Encourage students to look closely at each image, and remind them there is no wrong answer.
3. Use the activities in the Lesson Starters section to further enhance student learning in art and literature.
4. Utilize the pull out poster. Each literary concept is explored using this image.
5. If your students enjoyed a particular section of the guide, additional activities are included. Use these activities to extend the learning that has already taken place.
6. Four additional literary areas are discussed on the last page of this guide.

These inserts are for use in class discussions for the “What’s the Connection?” activities.

Suggestions for Educators

Images of works of art from the collection of the Toledo Museum of Art can be viewed online at toledomuseum.org/collection/selections. Consider showing these works of art on a smart board in your classroom.

Sign up your class for a tour by visiting toledomuseum.org/learn/tours.

Works of art may be temporarily off view on occasion. We regret any inconvenience.

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Plot

Plot is the sequence or order of events that take place in a story, or in a work of art. Plot is the structure of a story.

3. Lesson Starters

As a class discuss how both artists and authors communicate plot in a work of art or literature. Consider a story being read in class, ask students to identify three significant events that could be identified on a plot map. Have students discuss their answers.

As a class read a story out loud. Ask students to identify the sequence of main events in the story and identify relationships between them.

Read a story out loud to the class. Ask students to illustrate the main events in the story in the style of an Indian miniature. As a class discuss which events were chosen to be illustrated and why. Put the illustrations together to create a class book.

This Indian miniature shows three scenes from the life of Krishna. Have students create a scrapbook page about three important moments in their life. Have students incorporate memorabilia that helps to convey the importance of each event. Display all the pages in class.

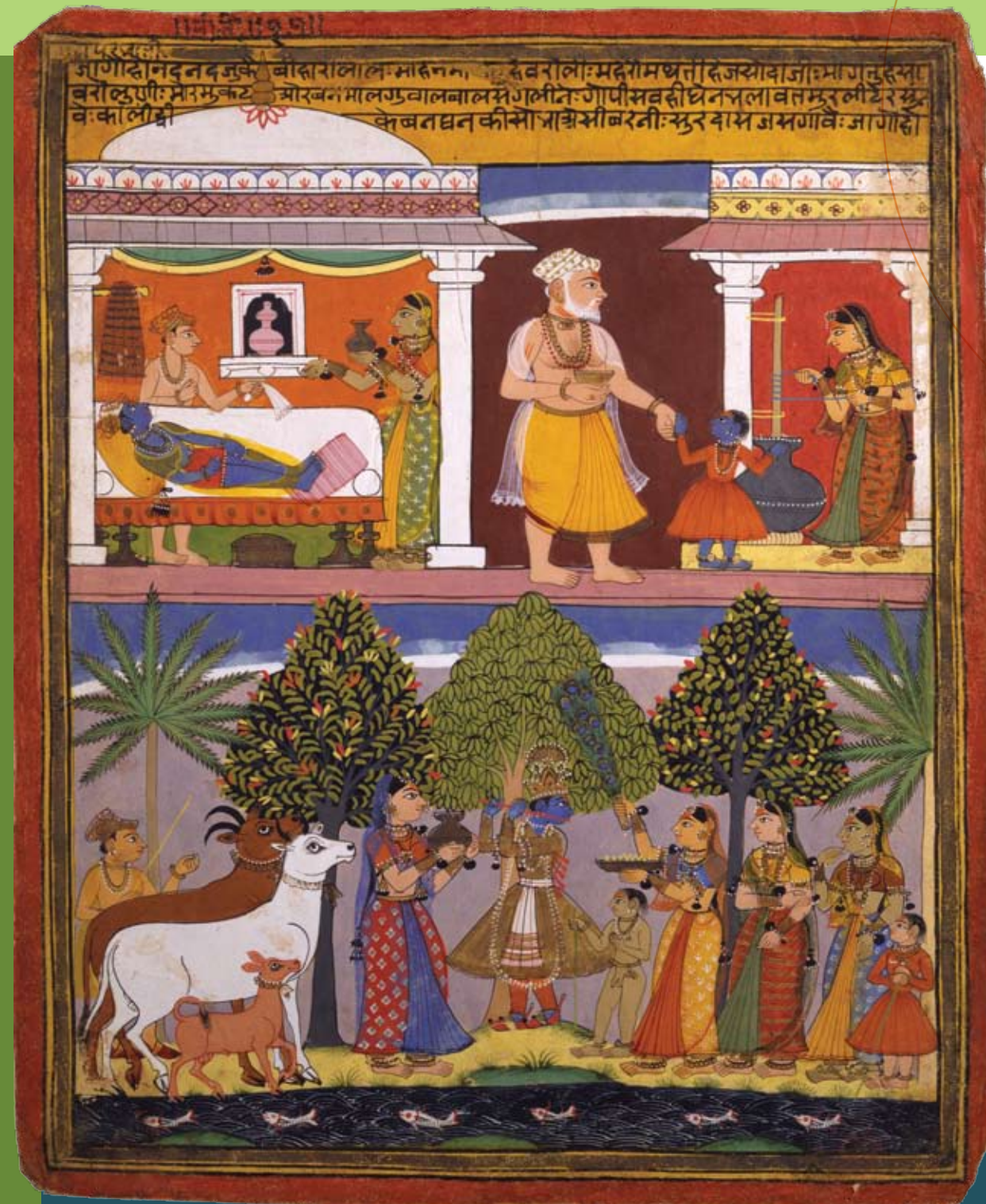
Indian [Mughal Period]
Scenes from the Childhood of Krishna
About 1655–60

1. Arty-fact

Manuscripts are unique books written and produced by hand—literally “manual scripts.” The pictures that illustrate and accompany these texts are called miniatures. Manuscripts required a tremendous amount of labor to complete, and it was not uncommon for an artist to work on a single painting for more than a year.

This manuscript is called an Indian miniature. In three scenes, it depicts the Hindu god Krishna (the blue figure) and his foster parents Nanda and Yashoda, who were cattle herders.

The top of the page is divided into two scenes. On the left, Yashoda is carrying a jug of milk and has come into Krishna’s room to wake him. On the right, Krishna is leading his father Nanda into the kitchen to watch Yashoda churning butter. (Krishna is constantly frustrated by his mother’s attempts to keep him from stealing butter, his favorite treat.) The lower part of the page shows a scene of an older Krishna playing a flute for the milkmaids. His music is so irresistible it attracts not only the milkmaids but also the cattle and the fish!



2. What’s the Connection?

Explore **Plot** with your students by discussing this work of art. Start with these questions:

How many events in this person’s life are being shown?
What happens first? What happens next?
What do you see that makes you say that?

Describe how the artist shows an order to the events.

Why may the artist have chosen to represent these three events?

This work on paper is in the Print Study Room.

Mewar School, attributed to Manohar (active, 1640–1660) Indian, Mughal period. *Scenes from the Childhood of Krishna*, from a Sur Sagar Manuscript. Pigment on paper, about 1655–60. Mrs. George W. Stevens Fund, 2002.33

Theme

Theme is the main idea of a story or the point an author wants to make. As in literature, the theme in a work of art is not usually directly stated but is inferred. Artists and authors use details, character, point of view, and setting to communicate a theme.

Jasper Francis Cropsey (American, 1823–1900)
Starrucca Viaduct, Pennsylvania
1865

1. Arty-fact

Starrucca Viaduct, Pennsylvania shows both American nature and industry. Built in Northeastern Pennsylvania by the New York and Erie Railroad in 1847–1848, the viaduct was a great engineering feat of its time. The size and scale of the new viaduct dwarfs the old-fashioned wooden bridge in the middle ground that leads to the village of Lanesboro. In nineteenth-century painting the railroad was often seen as a symbol of industrial progress and change, or of man's destruction and exploitation of nature.

In this painting the artist seems to suggest that nature can absorb the effects of technology without adverse consequences. Figures in the foreground looking out toward the train, the nestling of technology within the landscape, and the dominance of the undisturbed wilderness make the picture appear beautiful and serene.



3. Lesson Starters

Organize students into groups of three. Have each group read a short story and identify the theme. Like an artist, how does the author use details to convey the main idea?

Ask students to read a children's picture book and make a list of five details that the author uses to develop the theme and add meaning to the story. Next have students write a theme statement. Have volunteers share their statements with the class. As a class evaluate these responses.

Have students find a work of art that shows a theme similar to a story read in class. Ask students to present their work of art and explain their findings.

Ask students to create a collage showing the same theme as a story read in class. Students should include key words from the story. Display and discuss their choices.

2. What's the Connection?

Explore **Theme** with your students by discussing this work of art. Start with these questions:

Look closely at this work of art and describe the foreground; then the background.

What main idea/theme is the artist trying to communicate? What do you see in the painting that makes you say that?

How does the artist use details to convey the theme?

Visit the Museum and see this painting in Gallery 29B.

Jasper Francis Cropsey (American, 1823–1900) *Starrucca Viaduct, Pennsylvania*. Oil on canvas, 1865. Purchased with funds from the Florence Scott Libbey Bequest in Memory of her Father, Maurice A. Scott, 1947.58

Character

A character is a representation of a person or animal in a work of art or literature. Characters can be described physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, or philosophically.

Jules Breton (French, 1827–1906)
The Shepherd's Star
1887



1. Arty-fact

This painting shows a barefoot young peasant woman returning from the fields in the early evening as Capella, or “shepherd’s star” rises over her shoulder. On her head she carries a sack of potatoes.

Jules Breton painted this French peasant in a manner that avoids any commentary on her social position. Instead the woman appears as an idealized and heroic embodiment of a traditional, idyllic way of life—one that was rapidly disappearing under the pressures of the Industrial Revolution.

3. Lesson Starters

As a class discuss the background of a story being read in class, find a similar important event, like a Shepherd’s Star, that is evident.

In groups ask students to discuss a story that was read for class. Brainstorm a list of ten words that describe a character in the story. Which three words best describe the person? Report the findings to the rest of the class.

Ask students to describe the most important details the artist uses to help the viewer get to know this woman. What would the character say if she could speak? Ask students to create a short story that tells the background story of the woman shown in this painting. Have students explain where she was before this picture was painted, the day before and so on. Invite students to include illustrations with their text.

Have students describe a character in a story being read in class or at home. Ask who the character’s friends might be, where the person lives, or a typical day in the character’s life. Have students create a drawing that shows this person based on these questions and share the drawings with the class.

How would the Industrial Revolution impact the work of the woman shown in this painting? Tell a story of how her life might change with the onset of industry.

2. What’s the Connection?

Explore **Character** with your students by discussing this work of art. Start with these questions:

Describe the woman in the painting. What can you tell about her by looking at her clothes, where she is and what she is doing?

What details has the artist included to let the viewer get to know her?

Describe the background of this painting. What might these details reveal about this woman? Why might the artist have included the Shepherd’s Star?

If you could ask this woman one question, what would it be?

Visit the Museum and see this painting in Gallery 32.

Jules Breton (French, 1827–1906) *The Shepherd’s Star*. Oil on canvas, 1887. Gift of Arthur J. Secor, 1922.41

Setting

Setting is the location of a story or work of art in time and space. The setting may be a time in history, a geographical place, or an imaginary location.

3. Lesson Starters

Just as artists create a setting for their work of art, authors choose words to create a setting for a story. Ask students to list three stories or novels and briefly describe the settings in each. Next, have students select a passage from each book that illustrates the text and share them with the class.

Ask students to identify the sequence of settings in a book or story, in order of appearance. How does the author make the settings vivid for the reader? What words does the author use to convey the look and feel of the surroundings?

Ask students to imagine themselves in this setting. Invite students to create a story about this place or compare this setting to that in a story being read in class. What similar techniques do artist and artists use to create setting?

Have students create a diorama based on a favorite place near their home. Ask them to write a story about the place and present these works of art to the class.

Using found objects or a variety of materials, have students create a life-sized menu item that might be served at the diner. Have a conversation about what might be served and who would order it.

Emily Brock (American, born 1946)
The Counterman Diner
1991–92

1. Arty-fact

Emily Brock is an artist who creates works of art from vividly-colored fused and slumped glass. Brock is famous for creating rooms in various settings, both in and outside, making the viewer feel they are actually in them. Her recent works include molded glass characters or people in the settings.

This artist has recreated in minute detail a 1930's era diner from her neighborhood in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Although the diner seems empty the presence of people is conveyed through details like an open newspaper, dropped napkin, an empty glass with a straw, four pies and one cake.



2. What's the Connection?

Explore **Setting** with your students by discussing this work of art. Start with these questions:

Look closely at this work of art. What details has the artist included to make this setting look real? What would you see, hear, taste, or smell here?

Where might this type of restaurant be located? What do you see that makes you see that? During what time in American history were diners like this popular?

Visit the Museum and see this sculpture in the Glass Pavilion.

Emily Brock (American, born 1946) *The Counterman Diner*. Glass, fused, slumped, lampworked; metal, 1991–92. Purchased with funds given in memory of Judie Chatreau by friends and co-workers at Society Bank & Trust and with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1992.2 ©1992 Emily Brock

Point of View

In literature, point of view is the attitude or outlook of the narrator or character(s). In art, point of view can be the attitude or outlook of the artist, character(s), or viewer.

Edward Hopper (American, 1882–1967)
Two on the Aisle
1927

1. Arty-fact

The elegantly dressed couple in this painting is the artist and his wife Jo, who modeled for nearly all of his female figures. The artist and his wife were fans of both plays and movies in their hometown of New York City, and for this performance must have arrived early as the orchestra pit is still empty, and there is only one other patron in the theater.

Even though the Hoppers lived in the bustling city of New York, the artist painted scenes of streets, restaurants, offices, and theaters typically showing only one or a few figures. He was often known as the “painter of loneliness.” While his scenes seem sparse they are a reflection of his personal vision of the isolation of modern American life.



3. Lesson Starters

Ask students to consider a story being read in class and how the story would change if a different character told the tale.

Have students identify the main point of view of a story being read in class. Ask students to identify the main character, then to rewrite the story from a different perspective. In small groups discuss how character and point of view impact the story. Ask which viewpoint they like best.

Have students create a monologue told by each of the characters in this work of art. Have each student express what is happening between the characters; describe their attitudes and perspective of their world.

Make a color copy of this work of art. Ask students to write one or two sentences in a word or thought bubble that each character might be thinking. Put these together in a book to create cartoons.

2. What's the Connection?

Explore **Point of View** with your students by discussing this work of art. Start with these questions:

Describe this work of art, what do you think the relationship is between the characters? What do you see that makes you say that?

How many different points of view are in the painting? What viewpoints might not be so obvious? What do you think is the artist's point of view?

Tell the story of this work of art from each point of view. Imagine a dialogue between the characters. How is the story different if told from each character's point of view?

Visit the Museum and see this painting in Gallery 7.

Edward Hopper (American, 1882–1967) *Two on the Aisle*. Oil on canvas, 1927. Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1935.49 ©1927 Edward Hopper

Additional Activities

Extend the learning that has already taken place by using these activities in your classroom:

Plot

Create a Cartoon Strip

Ask students to make a cartoon strip of the main events of a story. Be sure to draw or paint scenes that give clues to the story's plot. Discuss with students the importance of text to convey their ideas.

Map It

Choose a work of art from the collection of the Toledo Museum of Art. Discuss the literary aspects of the story the artist is telling. Have students create plot maps that show where the characters went before, during, and after the story told by the work of art.

Theme

Make a Collage

After discussing theme in the classroom, ask students to discuss different themes in stories that have been read. Have students create a collage based on the same theme. Students can bring objects from home or use found items.

Talk About It

Have students choose a work of art from the collection of the Toledo Museum of Art. Discuss the theme of the work of art. Afterwards ask students to create a public service announcement for radio, television, or a full-page advertisement that focuses on the same theme and significance as the work of art.

Character

Artist Trading Cards

Artist Trading Cards are miniature works of art that are traded among artists. Following this idea have students create Character Trading Cards (like baseball cards) for the main characters in a work of literature. Illustrate the character on one side and include important statistics on the other. Have students organize their cards in a three ring binder as a study guide.

Who Are You?

As a class, create portraits of the characters of a story. Hang the portraits in the classroom. Have students write descriptive paragraphs of each character choosing words that bring each person to life. Ask students to share the paragraphs and portraits.

Setting

Write it, Make it!

Explore sensory details with your class. Choose a book you are reading and ask students to describe its setting using five words for each of the five senses. Choose the best words and create a poem and a drawing of that location.

Build It

Choose a work of art or a story that has an incredible architectural setting. Have students research similar structures during that time period. Lead a discussion of setting and the significance of architecture. Afterward have students create their own fabulous structures using only masking tape, newspaper, and paper tubes. Write a story about this place.

Point of View

Break an Egg

After discussing point of view in class, gather students together, and drop a raw egg on the floor. Ask students to draw a picture of the egg and then write a story from one point of view. Points of view might include the egg, the floor, the teacher, the viewer, the janitor, and so on.

Art Vocabulary & English Language Art Terms

Visual artists and authors often use similar elements when creating works. Using art to illustrate literary terms can help make abstract ideas more concrete. Here are some examples:

Epic: a narrative poem about gods, heroes or legendary events. Greek vases or paintings of battle scenes or historical events are visual representations of an epic. This painting depicts a story from ancient Rome.



Gallery 28A | Jacques-Louis David (French, 1748–1825) *The Oath of the Horatii*. Oil on canvas, 1786. Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1950.308

Symbols: words or objects used to represent an idea or convey deeper meaning. Artists and authors use symbols to evoke a response or illustrate a point. The objects in this painting identify the employment of these individuals.



Gallery 23 | Thomas de Keyser (Dutch, 1596/97–1667) *The Syndics of the Amsterdam Goldsmiths Guild*. Oil on canvas, 1627. Museum purchase, 1960.11

Allegory: a representation of ideas through objects or characters. Many works of art use visual images to stand in for an idea or emotion. The artist uses the objects in this painting to represent concepts of vanity and mortality.



Gallery 23 | Jan Miense Molenaer (Dutch, about 1610–1668) *Allegory of Vanity*. Oil on canvas, 1633. Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1975.21

Foreshadowing: use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later. Because they are frozen in a particular moment in time, many paintings create a sense that climactic action is about to take place. By including the small figure in the boat, the artist implies there is more to the story.



Gallery 31 | John Martin (British, 1789–1854) *The Destruction of Tyre*. Oil on canvas, 1840. Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1952.88



Hours

Tuesday–Thursday 10 A.M.–4 P.M.

Friday 10 A.M.–10 P.M.

Saturday 10 A.M.–6 P.M.

Sunday NOON–6 P.M.

Admission

Free to all thanks in part to the support of Museum members. There is a charge for select ticketed exhibitions.

Directions

Just off I-75 near downtown Toledo. Take either the Collingwood or Detroit Avenue exits, then follow the signs.

Information

419.255.8000

toledomuseum.org

Our Mission

We believe in the power of art to ignite the imagination, stimulate thought, and provide enjoyment. Through our collection and programs, we strive to integrate art into the lives of people.