

LESSON M-UVI-L2

Remembrance and Memory as Seen Through the Eyes of Artists

Unit VI: Remembrance and the Creation of Memory

Grade Levels: 6–8

Time: 90+ minutes



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Objective

- Demonstrate an ability to comprehend the use of art by children and adults to express emotions and viewpoints and to preserve memory.

Key Terms

- carnage
- modern art

Lesson Materials

- The Day Our World Changed: Children’s Art of 9/11 by Robin F. Goodman
- Guernica by Pablo Picasso (found at <http://arts.anu.edu.au/polsci/courses/pols1005/2007/Images/Picasso.Guernica2.jpg>)

Lesson Plan

- Have the students participate in a Think-Pair-Share activity. Guide pairs to respond to the statement: “Many historians have stated that those who ignore history tend to repeat it.” Ask the students: What does this statement mean? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your response. Ask pairs to share their responses with the class.
- Display Pablo Picasso’s painting, *Guernica*, and have the students share their observations as a class. Guide them through the following steps and questions: Have the students carefully examine the painting. Make a list of images the students see in each quadrant. What are some shapes and colors you see? What symbols, if any, are used in the painting? If so, what do those symbols represent? What is the artist trying to tell the viewer?
- Once everyone has had an opportunity to share their observations and reactions to the painting, explain that this work of art depicts the suffering and destruction of people, animals, and buildings wrenched by violence and chaos. It is Picasso’s depiction of the Nazi bombing of the city of Guernica, Spain, on April 26, 1937. Picasso painted it as an expression to the world of the meaningless carnage of wars.
- Explain that a tapestry copy of this painting was made and placed in the United Nations Building in New York City at the entrance to the Security Council Room. Ask the students: “Why do you think this image was placed there?” (To remind people of the horrors of war.)
- Explain to the students that many people believe this painting is modern art’s most powerful antiwar statement.

- Next, show the students *Children’s Guernica* (found on page 46 of *The Day Our World Changed*). Discuss what is depicted in the picture. Ask: “How and why did this child relate his painting to Picasso’s?” (Read the quote from the artist after discussing the picture.)
- Show the students *They Saw, They Conquered, We Cried* (found on page 27 of *The Day Our World Changed*). Discuss what is depicted in the picture. Read the artist’s feelings and reactions to not seeing the Twin Towers that day.
- Show the students *Untitled* (pages 102 and 103 of *The Day Our World Changed*). Discuss why this child chose to paint the skyline of NYC as it was before 9/11.
- Then ask the students: “In what ways were the events depicted in *Guernica* similar to the 9/11 attacks?”
- Finally, discuss the importance of art as a form to express emotion and preserve memory.

Evidence of Understanding

Have the students reflect on the images and answer the following question in writing: “What does this artwork express that is not described in history books?”

Additional Activities and Resources

- Ask students to discuss the question: “Can art be a form of activism?”
- Have students research another work of art created after 9/11 that has meaning for them.

Taking Action and Giving Service

- Have the students design a postage stamp to memorialize and remember the events of 9/11.
- Have students create their own piece of artwork.