



Art Historian: Native American Arts and the Economy

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, students will think like an art historian and create QR codes that professionals can use to analyze the impact of Native American arts on the Arizona economy.

Activity

Teacher Notes:

- This activity is long and can be completed across multiple days. You can complete Steps 1-4 on one day and Steps 5-6 on another day.
- Students will need computers in Step 5. If students do not have access to computers, skip this step. If students do have access to computers, you will need to set up a free account QR generator website before class. See [Handout: Teacher Prep](#) for steps.

Step 1: Background Information on Economy and Native American Arts (5-10 minutes)

- Show [Video: Native American Arts and the Economy](#).
- Review how Native American artists contribute to the history of Arizona and to the art history of the state. Ask students the following:
 - How do artists contribute to the economy of a place? (e.g., selling their art brings in income for the artist and money for local and state governments through sales taxes)
 - How do the arts including museums and art galleries contribute to a local and state economy? (e.g., museums charge visitors to come and look at their collections, galleries sell art for the artists and to people, both can attract tourists who spend money, all of which helps local and state economies.
- Next, explain to students that art historians study the art of different cultures and periods of history to understand what people thought about and how they viewed the world at that time.
- Explain that for many years, Native American art was overlooked. This is because Native Americans have not historically been treated well by European settlers.
- Show [Handout: Background on Native American Arts in Arizona](#). Read through as a class. Discuss why art historians might study the economic impact of art on a local or state economy.
- Ask students why they think it is important for art historians to study how artists impact an economy and how Native American artists help teach others about their cultures while helping their economy. (e.g., to show that artists and the arts can play an important part in an economy and Native Americans artists create art to show their history and culture and to make money.

Step 2: Activity Set Up (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will work in a group to create a 3D art installation that explains how Native American artists help the Arizona economy. They will then take a photo of their art installation so that it can be featured in a virtual art exhibit so people anywhere in the world can see it.
- Ask students why art historians and other professionals create virtual exhibits (e.g., to allow people to learn about the art and history without visiting a museum in person, allow people around the world to share ideas and collaborate on projects, allow students to go on a “virtual field trip to a museum.

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- Next, explain that after students take a picture of their art installation, they will create a QR code that is linked to the picture. When people scan the QR code, they will be able to access the picture of the 3D art installation online.
- Divide students into pairs or small groups to complete the activity. Provide pairs/groups with the following materials:
 - Handout: [Steps to Create a Virtual Art Exhibit](#)
 - Handout: [Background on Native American Arts in Arizona](#)

Step 3: Creating a Message (5+ minutes)

- As a class, review Step 1 of [Handout: Steps to Create a Virtual Art Exhibit](#). Explain to students that they will first come up with the main message that the installation will communicate. Explain that art historians can create an exhibit by organizing and grouping different pieces of art together that all help teach one central message. Their message should be related to how Native American artists use art not only to tell the story of their history, but that their art also helps the state economy.
- Have students read through [Handout: Background on Native American Arts in Arizona](#) to get idea about what their message will be.
- If students need help creating a message, ask them the following questions:
 - What do you want visitors to learn when they see your exhibit?
 - What story do you want to tell about Native American arts and its impact on the Arizona economy?
- While students are working, ask the following:
 - What can people learn from looking at art of different cultures?
 - What differences in perspective might you see in looking at Native American art? How does that art help tell the story about the history of the state? For example, looking at a painting of a buffalo hunt tells the viewer something about everyday life of a Native American group.
 - What influences do you see in everyday life that tells you something about how artists and the arts help to grow an economy? For example, how do artists objects like clothing to create art that represents them and also makes money?

Step 4: Brainstorming and Sketching Ideas (10+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now complete step 2 on the handout, brainstorming and sketching ideas for their 3D art installation. As a class, review requirements.
- Explain to students that they can select images from [Handout: Background on Native American Arts in Arizona](#) to use as part of their installation. Students can also create their own images.

Step 5: Building a 3D Installation (25+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now complete steps 3 - 4 on the handout.
- Provide students with art supplies and building materials.
- Have students create their 3D installation and write their own captions.
- While students are working, ask them the following questions:
 - How does your 3-D art installation help viewers understand your message?
 - Is your installation interesting from all sides?

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Step 6: Creating QR Code (15+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now make their art installation virtual. This means that people will be able to view their installation online.
- To make the installation virtual, students will create QR codes. When people see the QR code, they will be able to scan the code with a phone and access pictures of your installation. All of the QR codes will be on a website for people to access. That way, anyone around the world can access the art installations of the entire class.
- Teacher Note: if student are not familiar with QR codes, explain the following:
 - A QR code is a symbol that is linked to information.
 - When you hold the camera from a phone over the QR code, a link will pop up.
 - This link will send you to a website with the information that is linked to the QR code.
- Next, show student an example QR code. See [Handout: Example of QR Code](#). This QR code links to a database entry that a middle school student created about a spy in the American Revolution. You will need a smart phone to access the QR code. You do not need to download any apps to access the QR code. You will simply turn the camera on your phone and hold it above the QR code. Then you will be directed to the website and the data entry created by the student.
- Explain to students that they will first need to take a picture of their art installation and caption it. Have student place their art installations on a flat surface like a desk or floor. Have them place their caption next to or in front of the art installation. Then have students take a picture of their installation and caption using a phone or tablet.
- Have students email the photo to themselves. Then, they should drag or download the photo onto their desktop so they can access it when they make a QR code.
- Explain to students that they should follow the instructions on [Handout: Steps to Create a QR Code](#) to finish making their art instillation virtual.

Step 7: Discussion and Presentation (5-10 minutes)

- Have students present their QR codes and art installation to the class.
- Have a concluding class discussion about why it is important for art historians to show the importance of Native American art. Discuss the following:
 - Why are traditional arts such as jewelry making and basket weaving still important? (e.g., many people see these objects as beautiful and wish to own them.)
 - How do Native American artists use their history and culture with more modern objects? (e.g., they decorate objects such as clothing to show traditional designs.)
 - How do museums and art galleries help with local and state economies? (e.g., people visit to learn more about Native American history, money is made through admission fees or buying things in a gift shop).
- Optional: Invite other classes to come see students' art installations using QR codes. You can print out the QR codes and post them around the room. Then, the other class can go around the room and learn about the different pieces of art. Another option is to have the other class access pictures of the art installations using the Google drive link.

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Materials List

Provided online:

- Handout: Teacher Prep
- Video: Native American Arts and the Economy
- Handout: Background on Native American Arts in Arizona
- Handout: Steps to Create a Virtual Art Exhibit
- Handout: Example of QR Code
- Handout: Steps to Create a QR Code

Not provided:

- Tape
- Scissors
- Assortment of recycled materials (cardboard pieces, egg cartons, etc)
- Assortment of art supplies (pipe cleaners, pom pom balls, construction paper)
- Smartphone or Tablet (optional)

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