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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2013 Volume I: Picture Writing

One Starfish at a Time: Combining Animals, Art, Literature, and Community Service

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This unit is designed for middle school art students, but it can easily be adapted to upper elementary and high school levels. The key concept is that students can have a positive influence on the world. After examining how art and literature facilitated change in the Victorian perception of animals, my sixth- grade students will create portraits of animals that will be reproduced as cards and given to the local SPCA to sell. The students will use oil pastels to create animal portraits and will complete a variety of activities that integrate writing and evaluating art. By connecting the novel *Black Beauty* and the art of Edwin Landseer and Harrison Weir with the idea that one person can make a change, I intend to have students understand that they can impact the world through their art, writing, and community service. By teaching this unit, I hope to give them a sense of empowerment. I want them to feel that they too, even if only in a small way, can bring positive change to the world.

(Developed for Art, grade 6; recommended for Art and English, Elementary, Middle, and High School grades)

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