



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

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Dramatizing Art: Tableaux Vivants

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Tableaux vivant is a playful pastime which has served significant educational and recreational purposes in the cultural history of the United States. Translated from French, tableaux vivant means 'living pictures'. This eight-week history unit for primary-level students uses tableaux vivants to integrate art, social studies, writing and theater through trips to local art museums, stories from history, journals for writing and sketching, and opportunities for dramatic representation.

Students will enjoy the opportunity to view authentic pieces of artwork in museums, gain an appreciation of art through exposure to several paintings, expand their art vocabulary, and develop critical thinking skills through discussion, questioning and the creation of their own art. As a culminating experience, the students will write a narrative, inspired by an authentic painting viewed at the Yale Center for British Arts and bring that art to life through tableaux and play-writing.

(Developed for Reading and Writing, grade 2; recommended for Reading and Writing, grades K-5)

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