



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2022 Volume III: The Social Struggles of Contemporary Black Art

Reclaiming the Lost Art of Storytelling Using Textile

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There are so many similarities in Navajo textile and African American artist, like Bisa Butler, Quilters of Gee's Bend, and Faith Ringgold. One of the similar characteristics is the ability to tell stories or recall stories about a particular piece of textile. Story telling is an important part of the history of both the Navajo and African American when they create their art. Navajo stories are often retold through storytelling, prayers, and songs. These stories often recall important events such as family and cultural histories. The tapestry can continue to preserve the struggles, perseverance, and stories woven or sewn into the art.

This unit is intended for second grade students but could be used for first grade, too. This unit will be covered in three weeks. It incorporates art and Language Art Lessons to teach the students about storytelling. Both Navajo and African American cultures have a rich history of storytelling passed down through art. Students will learn storytelling by listening and reading about artists from both cultures as they recall stories that are elicited by their art.

(Developed for Social Studies and Art, grade 2; recommended for Art, Social Studies, and Diné Studies, grades 1-3)

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