



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

*to strengthen teaching in public schools®*

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2015 Volume III: History in Our Everyday Lives

---

## **The History and Analysis of Public Art: Using Delaware's Desegregation History as a Ground to Learn, Interpret, and Create**

Curriculum Unit 15.03.09, published September 2015  
by Liz Terlecki

### **Introduction**

---

The job offer that I received over four years ago came with much more unsolicited commentary—other than the expected congratulatory remarks—than I'd ever anticipated. Making the move to a small (and insanely notorious) inner-city charter school to a much larger public high school in the suburbs seemed like a beneficial one to me for several reasons, but other residents of the area who were familiar with the school had less than stellar things to say about the things I should expect from my new place of employment. Glasgow High School has been around since the 1970's, and according to most Newark, Delaware residents, has been stuck in a perpetual downward reputative spiral since the late 1970's when students from the near-distant city of Wilmington began being bused out of the city and into the suburbs in order to attend school.

The busing from Wilmington into Newark that still continues today is typically looked upon with a negative attitude, both by students and the communities surrounding the high school. Suburban students often voice complaints to me, in confidence, about having to share "their" school with students from the city. Likewise, students from the city gripe about the bus ride to and from Wilmington, and the fact that they are on the corner awaiting the bus's arrival before daylight in order to make it to school by its 7:00am start time. While students are anything but shy when it comes to voicing concerns, there seems to be a total lack of understanding about why this procedure is in place and has been for over 35 years. This unit gives students a chance to truly explore the reasons behind their unusual conglomeration and represent their combined cultures in a collaborative piece of three-dimensional art. By merging local history content and information on public art, students will gain the unique experience of creating original art informed by collective history and experience.

## Rationale

---

The district's implementation of busing in 1979 exists today in a unique real-life representation of a school population composed of city mouse/country mouse. Glasgow High School serves both students who live within close proximity of the school and students who travel down a 15-mile stretch of I-95 in order to receive their education. Each group of students comes from a drastically different residential setting. Students residing near the school are acclimated to a suburban landscape of strip malls and destinations best reached by car, while Wilmington students live in a typical pedestrian and public transit-dominated grid. The visual layout of each group's physical space is just one of many differences, and these stark variations between both groups play an obvious role in the overall culture and climate of the school.

Although the students are aware of the two categories - urban and suburban -- into which they can easily be sorted, they generally seem to be oblivious as to why it is that they have been combined into this one building; many students chalk it up to the fact that Wilmington is completely devoid of a public high school. While Wilmington's lack of a public high school certainly contributes to the overall reason for the district's busing procedures, it is only a portion of a much larger history that fuels this unique synthesis of cultures under one suburban roof.

Therefore, the investigation of our students' uncommon situation will provide the background knowledge that students will need in order to complete a collaborative art project. The history of desegregation and busing as a part of desegregation is necessary to understand in order for students to have informed views and opinions of how the district arrived at the decision to bus students from the city into the suburbs. Therefore, the investigation of our students' unconventional mix will provide the background they need to complete a large-scale project; students will need to determine how to best represent their combined histories and cultures in a work of student-designed and created public art.

In addition to learning valuable information that will provide the meaning or theme of their original artwork, students will need to gain an understanding of public art in general. Therefore, students will learn about different types of public art (including monuments and memorials), with a particular focus on both public art throughout the city of Wilmington and more famous or prominent public art works outside of the state of Delaware. Students will then combine what they have learned about their own history and the practice of public art and bring these two seemingly unrelated avenues of instruction to create a collaborative representational piece of public art about the history of their school's formation.

This unit obviously contains a notable "history lesson" with which some art teachers might be uncomfortable, however, the freedom that I have with my curriculum means that I tend to make cross-curricular ventures more often than teachers with significantly less freedom. I often view the fact that I design and deliver my own curriculum as a proverbial double-edged sword; while many teachers of core content areas are envious of the fact that I simply decide what my students will do and when they will do it, what they typically fail to understand right away is the havoc this kind of freedom can reap on a creative mind. However, it is this freedom that I have with my curriculum that allows me to focus on aspects of visual art that are typically not explored within "cookie cutter art curricula" such as public art—and, more specifically, local public art. The usual tie between history and art occurs only in an art history context, which is unfortunate given the critical role that visual art and design plays in public history. For example, some of the most well known pieces of public art, specifically, monuments and memorials, demonstrate the importance of historical research in informing the artistic process.

It is for this reason, among several others, that the benefits of building my own curriculum far outweigh the drawbacks. After working in the same position for four years, I can confidently say that I know my kids. Again, although it takes time, I am able to build lessons and units that meet their needs and, simply stated, “work” for them. Furthermore, my students truly know what to expect from me; they seem to trust that I keep them in mind when planning for them—not just in terms of content, but also in terms of level of difficulty. I have spent the past four years in this position working diligently to grow and expand the art program; when I began, we seemed to have very full entry-level classes and very sparse advanced-level classes. I encouraged many students who had me as an instructor for their first art class to continue and take 3D Design classes with me—and many of them did. So, this being my fourth year in my current position, many of the freshmen that I had four years ago comprise the fullest advanced-level class that I have ever seen, while previous years produced advanced-level classes that were canceled or condensed due to low enrollment.

## Demographics

---

Glasgow High School is one of three high schools within the Christina School District and population mainly comprised of African American, white, and Hispanic students; nearly 50% of the student population is African American, while 26% is white and 20% is Hispanic.<sup>1</sup> Nearly 40% of the student population at Glasgow is considered “low income” and 20% of the students have special needs.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the school suffers from a rather infamous reputation due to several factors, including the proportion of student body bussed in from the crime-ridden city of Wilmington, an ever-rotating staff and administration, and its consistent failure to meet state standards with regards to high-stakes test scores. The school is steadily decreasing in population not only due to the “choice” application process, but also due to the increasing appeal of vocational-technical schools and the recent expansion of a local desirable charter school. Within the past five years, Glasgow’s enrollment has dropped from 1,200 students to under 1,000.<sup>3</sup>

I am one of two teachers at Glasgow High School; both of us teach the beginning-level art class, Art Fundamentals, but then we each teach different successive classes; I teach 3D Design I and II while the other art teacher is responsible for 2D Design I and II. Students who take art (among other electives) are likely to be placed in classes that have students from mixed grade levels and extremely diverse academic abilities. Students taking 3D Design II, an advanced art course, range in age from grades 11 to 12 and in academic ability from honors-level to “High School Certificate of Completion” (as opposed to earning an actual diploma). Student population in 3D Design II classes is relatively unpredictable (as there are several choices for art classes beyond the first year, and as students are required to pass two pre-requisite courses to be allowed entry into 3D Design II), but class sizes are generally under 30 students. Furthermore, because I am the only teacher for both 3D Design II and 3D Design I, unless a student has transferred from another school, I have probably taught him or her for at least one year prior.

It is also possible that students enrolled in 3D Design II are fulfilling the final class within their Career Pathway; every student graduating from a secondary school in Delaware must have a Career Pathway, which means that he or she must successfully complete three chronologically successive electives. At Glasgow High School, this may mean that a student completes Art Fundamentals, 3D Design I, and then 3D Design II in order to fulfill his or her Career Pathway. It is critical for students who are utilizing this specific Career Pathway to successfully pass 3D Design II.

## Objectives

---

By the end of this instructional unit, students will have an in-depth understanding of Delaware's role in segregation, the history of desegregation within their own school district and school building, and public art (both within the city of Wilmington and outside of it). These three different objectives are married by the idea that public history and public art are often interwoven concepts; traditionally, one does not exist without the other. Four of the new Common Core Literacy Standards heavily influence student objectives, in addition to Delaware's Visual Arts Standards and Delaware's History Standards (Appendix A).

Common Core standards addressing informational text are addressed in this unit, as students will be reading informational articles on both public art and Delaware's segregation history. The following are Common Core standards this unit addresses regarding informational text:

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.*

Students will read various informational texts in addition to viewing sketches, photographs, and other images of various pieces of public art. Students will use this textual and visual information to analyze works of art, justify their meanings and locations, and to help them develop their own ideas for the original work of art that they will ultimately create.

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.*

Students will read a specific article from *The Morning News* (Delaware's primary newspaper in the late 1800's-early 1900's) regarding the unveiling of the James A. Garfield Monument in Wilmington Delaware on May 31, 1895. The article describes this occasion as an extraordinary social and political event and also effectively describes the prominent location of the monument, in addition to the reasons behind why this location was chosen. The article's persuasive tone merely gains power as students learn that the monument was later relocated to drastically different surroundings.

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.*

Discussion will play an active role in this unit as students gradually understand how desegregation in Delaware led to the busing between the city and the suburbs that still continues today; students will use discussion to inform and share their opinions on the district's busing policies. Students will also discuss multiple aspects of public art, including policies, processes, and meanings, in order to forge their own opinions about particular works of art and their histories.

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.*

Students will be asked to choose both a local and a global piece of public art on which they must craft a presentation to share with their peers. Because the umbrella of “public art” is so broad, the number of pieces that we can focus on in class is quite limited; however, there will still be several pieces within Wilmington and outside of the city that are worthy of attention and analyses.

*DE Grades 9-12 History Standard 4A: Students will develop an understanding of modern United States history, its connections to both Delaware and world history, including:*

*Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877); Development of an industrialized nation (1870-1900); Emergence of modern America (1890-1930); Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945); Postwar United States (1945-early 1970s); Contemporary United States (1968-present).*

Although most of the historical information related to desegregation and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) refers to the postwar and contemporary United States time periods, some works of public art explored during this unit will provide historical insight into the civil war and reconstruction era, the development of an industrialized nation era, and the emergence of modern America era.

Through the creation of their final project, students will exercise an understanding of applying media, techniques, and processes (*Delaware Visual Art Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes*) and will choose a range of content, symbols, and ideas that they will integrate into their designs (*Delaware Visual Art Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas*). Through the exploration of various pieces of public art, students will demonstrate an understanding of the visual arts in relation to history and cultures (*Delaware Visual Art Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures*) and will also reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of others' work (*Delaware Visual Art Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others*).

## Content

---

### **Delaware's Role in Desegregation as a Means to Inform Current Views**

A thorough and honest investigation of the justification behind busing resident students of Wilmington out of the city and into the suburbs in order to attend public high school involves going backwards in time to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the civil war (in which Delaware was technically a part of the union, but very much divided in terms of morals and opinions between the northern and southern halves), schools for African American students existed, but paled in comparison to schools for white students.<sup>4</sup> White schools operated for twice as many months as “colored” schools and by 1920, approximately 20 percent of all African Americans in Delaware were illiterate (as opposed to 1.8 percent for whites).<sup>5</sup> The physical conditions of the schools certainly reflected the inequality amongst both races, as well; schools for African American students were dilapidated, over-crowded, and had despicable sanitary facilities (if they had any at all).<sup>6</sup>

In 1917, Delaware's leading industrialist, Pierre S. du Pont, contributed \$2.6 million to promote public education as the key to societal progress.<sup>7</sup> Aspiring for a fully funded, state-supported educational system, du Pont took preventative action toward naysayers by offering to donate all of the necessary funding to build new

schools for African American students.<sup>8</sup> In 1921, Delaware's education law underwent revisions that required an equivalent education for the state's African American and white students.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, the educational system in Delaware was not exactly reflective of the laws for several years; a large majority of African American students still attended schools staffed by one teacher scattered throughout the state and very few of these schools were high schools.<sup>10</sup> In fact, a study conducted in 1923 determined that the number of African American high school students and African American high schools was so minute that the author completely omitted tables with attendance and absence records for those school pupils within the study.<sup>11</sup>

By 1940, more than a third of African American Delawareans over the age of twenty-five had less than five years of formal education.<sup>12</sup> Inequities proved to be prolific, despite the fact that the city of Wilmington began the construction of its own public high school for African American students: Howard High School.<sup>13</sup> Built to accommodate 750 students, 1,039 were enrolled there in 1946.<sup>14</sup> Considerably low teacher salaries, insufficient curricula, facilities, and materials continued to separate the African American schools from the white schools.<sup>15</sup> Although the state of education in Delaware improved following du Pont's famous donation, it was certainly far from equal.

The streets of Wilmington and its neighboring suburban communities in the northern part of the state, however, told a different story than that of the educational system in Delaware. Neighborhoods were fairly mixed with immigrants of various nationalities and also included African Americans.<sup>16</sup> Children of all races and nationalities often played together, despite the fact that they had to attend different schools. Wilmington Friends School set the precedent in 1943 when they scheduled a basketball game against Wilmington's African American high school, Howard High—and Salesianum (the city's leading Catholic school) and other schools were quick to follow suit.<sup>17</sup> This social progression was very different from that of the law.

Post-secondary education in Delaware was very much a reflection of its own public school system; the University of Delaware in Newark served white students, which the substantially smaller and underprivileged Delaware State College for Negroes (DSCN) now Delaware State University served African American students in Dover.<sup>18</sup> However, in 1949, a group of 30 students from DSCN applied for admission to the University of Delaware...only to be vehemently rejected.<sup>19</sup> Seeking a college education that was more than that of the glorified high school setting of Delaware State, the group of students took their case to Louis Redding, Wilmington native and first African American admitted to the practice of law as a member of the Delaware bar.<sup>20</sup> After Redding's letter to Delaware judge Hugh H. Morris, president of the university's board of trustees, proved unsuccessful in attempting to urge the board to change its admissions policies, Redding partnered with a young white lawyer named Jack Greenberg and took the case to the Delaware Court of Chancery.

The judge on the case, Collins Jacques Seitz, was remarkably perspicacious for the age of 36. A Wilmington native, Seitz had a reputation for his progressive mindset and the fact that his motivation seemed unchanged by the prospect of making money.<sup>21</sup> Nationally recognized for his ability to balance vigorously conflicting interests between prominent companies, he served as a model arbiter of corporate law. Seitz found DSCN "grossly inferior" to that of the University of Delaware and ordered the African American plaintiffs to be admitted to the white university. In recognition of the severe nature of the inequity between the two colleges, the state did not appeal the judge's decision and the University of Delaware became the first state-financed institution in America to be desegregated at the undergraduate level via court order.<sup>22</sup>

In 1951, Louis Redding's work proved to be far from done when eight African-American parents residing in



Claymont came to him regarding the inequity they, too, were experiencing with Delaware's education system.<sup>23</sup> Suburban Claymont, about nine miles north of Wilmington, was equipped with a prestigious combination grade school and high school nestled on a beautifully landscaped and manicured fourteen-acre site.<sup>24</sup> African American children were not permitted to attend, and instead had to take the bus downtown to Howard High School, a much less attractive and well-kempt building surrounded by dilapidated factories, warehouses, and other deteriorating buildings. Claymont students traveled nearly an hour to get to the overcrowded school, which had significantly less course offerings than its white counterpart.<sup>25</sup>

That same year, Louis Redding was approached by Sarah Bulah of Hockessin, who couldn't help but feel it unjust that a bus would drive past her house on a daily basis to take white children to a beautiful neighborhood school while she had to drive her daughter, Shirley, two miles to an old one-room schoolhouse for "colored children."<sup>26</sup> Not only were there significant differences between the schools, but Shirley was provided with absolutely no transportation.<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Bulah wrote a letter to the Department of Public Instruction in received a response from Elbert N. Carvel, Delaware's Governor; he simply told her that transportation services for her daughter were not offered.<sup>28</sup> After being turned down so quickly and so harshly, Mrs. Bulah brought her case to Louis Redding, as well.

These two separate court cases— *Belton v. Gebhard* and *Bulah v. Gebhart* (Francis B. Gebhart being the first alphabetical member of the State Board of Education, ultimately became incorporated into the larger U.S. Supreme Court Case of *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, in 1955, the courts ordered schools in Delaware to desegregate and "white" and "Negro" schools slowly began to become a notion of the past. However, in 1971, parents of children who attended public schools in Wilmington asked the federal court to rule that Wilmington schools were never appropriately or entirely desegregated, as around 85 percent of the students were African American.<sup>30</sup> A decade long court battle, *Evans v. Buchanan*, ensued, ultimately leading to the nation's first metropolitan, multi-district school desegregation court order.<sup>31</sup> The large percentage of African American students in Wilmington schools is directly related to Delaware's city and suburban demographics, as nearly half of the city of Wilmington's population was African American, whereas merely 5 percent of the outlying suburban population was African American.<sup>32</sup> The nation's first metropolitan, multi-district school desegregation court order was born out of a decade long court battle involving ten suburban school districts.<sup>33</sup>

In 1978, a strategy to desegregate not only Wilmington schools, but schools within the ten surrounding suburban school districts as well, was formulated. An elaborate plan was executed in September of 1978, when 20,000 of the 65,000 students in the affected areas were bused across city-suburban lines in order to better balance the racial makeup of schools.<sup>34</sup> At the time of the court order, Wilmington had three high schools, one of which was what used to be Howard High School but was incorporated into the New Castle County Vocational-Technical School District in 1978 and became Howard High School of Technology.<sup>35</sup> Pierre S. DuPont High School became a middle school and then an elementary school, and Wilmington High School was left to become the major battleground of racial antagonism.<sup>36</sup>

Many people were greatly upset by the new busing procedures, and students at Christina School District high schools remember protests and walkouts. Suburban families were extremely uncomfortable with the idea of busing their children into Wilmington and enrollment in private schools skyrocketed.<sup>37</sup> As a result of "white flight," enrollment in Wilmington High School dwindled, and it graduated its last class in 1999 before it was transformed into an arts magnet school, leaving the city of Wilmington totally devoid of a public high school.<sup>38</sup>

## Public Art as it Relates to Civil Rights

Artist Maya Lin's Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama, is an obvious paragon of public art dedicated to civil rights. Maya Lin earned an astounding reputation as both an architect and designer with her Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C., and was sought after by the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery to design the memorial.<sup>39</sup> The memorial's design is centered largely on a quote from Martin Luther King, Jr., "we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down *like waters and righteousness from a mighty stream.*"<sup>40</sup> The quote itself is carved into a black granite wall that sits behind a table-like structure, and the names of important people and events of the civil rights movement are chronicled on the table, giving it the appearance of a clock. Water emerges from the center of the table and flows gently and evenly across its surface, providing both a tactile and visual experience for the viewer.

While Maya Lin's design is just one of many works of public art dedicated to civil rights, it provides an alternative way of thinking to the more traditional statue to which Wilmington is accustomed. There are certainly more civil rights monuments worth exploring, including, but not limited to: "I Had a Dream" by Robert H. Miller in Selma, Alabama; "A Monument: The Birmingham Jail" by Joe Minter in Birmingham, Alabama; "Civil Rights Garden" in Atlantic City, New Jersey; "Testament" in Little Rock, Arkansas; Three "Freedom Walk" sculptures by James Drake in Kelly Ingram Park in Birmingham, Alabama. Furthermore, Maya Lin's Civil Rights Monument begs conversation regarding its similarities to what is arguably her most famous work of public art, the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, D.C.

While northern Delaware made significant contributions to *Brown v. Board of Education*, this history is not exactly well known. Therefore, it is no surprise that Wilmington's public art ignores this compelling piece of history, as well; unfortunately, none of Wilmington's public art is in tribute to northern Delaware's role in nationwide desegregation or civil rights as a whole. Pierre S. du Pont, despite his financial contribution to equal rights in education, is not recognized in any of Wilmington's public art, and the fact that his grandson, Admiral Samuel Francis du Pont, has his own memorial is totally unrelated to the contributions Pierre S. du Pont made towards increasing equity within Delaware's education system (Samuel Francis du Pont's monument is due to his contributions to naval warfare).<sup>41</sup> The fact that the subject matter of Wilmington's public art is mainly dominated by wars, presidents, and other political figures is not necessarily surprising given Delaware's history as one of the original thirteen colonies, but the disregard for such an important piece of Delaware's history is a bit more unanticipated.

Wilmington's closest nod to civil rights through public art is in two war-related statues, the first of which is its Vietnam memorial by Charles Cropper Parks. The memorial consists of two nine-foot-tall soldiers, one carrying the other, while crossing over a Vietnamese hillock in search of refuge. The statue is very much a modern day pieta in its composition, with an African American soldier carrying a shirtless wounded white soldier. The monument is meant to not only depict the loss suffered from the Vietnam war, but also to remind the public that in the field of war, there was no segregation; death was shared equally amongst black and white.<sup>42</sup> In fact, in order to ensure the receipt and interpretation of this message, the artist exaggerated the face of the African American man with "unquestionably Negroid features."<sup>43</sup> The memorial was sponsored by New Castle County and was unveiled in 1983 in a large ceremony with several prominent attendees, including government officials and Vietnam veterans and their families.<sup>44</sup>

Wilmington's second war-related monument that references civil rights is its 1998 Monument to African American Medal of Honor Recipients. The monument is actually said to be the only one in existence, which is



strange considering the fact that none of the names on the monument belong to Delawareans.<sup>45</sup> The initial voice of the project proposal belonged to Wilson K. Smith, a decorated and disabled African American Vietnam veteran from Wilmington.<sup>46</sup> Smith questioned why more African Americans were not recognized and led the massive effort to erect the statue—the only of its kind—in Wilmington.<sup>47</sup> This particular piece of public art is an excellent example of how one voice can gain the support of many others over time and become a collectively powerful influence that gains the support of state lawmakers.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, Wilmington’s most recent piece of public art that alludes to the important role of African Americans in history is the Tilton Park Mural, installed and dedicated in 2012. The primary goal of the mural... “was to depict the historic themes...and industries intrinsic to Wilmington and to Delaware.”<sup>49</sup> The mural features a wide range of themes from and chemical inventions to banking and finance. Scenes from the Underground Railroad are also featured on the mural, which acts as this mural’s acknowledgement to African-American history. Unfortunately, though, the publicity surrounding the mural is nowhere near as vast as its content; in fact, a database search of Delaware’s newspaper does not uncover a single article about the mural; sadly, the mural is only mentioned as a landmark to describe the location of nearby crimes. Like much of Wilmington’s public art, the Tilton Park mural seems to provide nothing more than a background to the city’s endless problem with crime and violence.

It is impossible to ignore the irony created by the combination of Wilmington’s notorious reputation for its crime and violence and the fact that many of its memorials and monuments are war-themed. However, war and loss certainly have their places both in history and in public art, and it takes a particularly skilled artist to be able to successfully represent both within a single work of art.

### **Popular National Works of Public Art**

Maya Lin began her career as a famed architect and designer as a student at Yale University. Her participation in a seminar on Funereal Architecture led to her original design for the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial in Washington D.C. that was unanimously chosen as the winner of a design contest.<sup>50</sup> Lin defined a memorial as a place that allows people affected by a tragedy to mourn and recognize their grief to bring closure and move on, and her unique and sentimental view helped lead her design to stand out from the rest.<sup>51</sup> In fact, Lin’s preliminary sketches that were submitted along with her proposal serve as an artistic prophesy to the deep thought and meaning behind her idea. Lin used soft pastels to create an abstract rendering of the memorial—a much different approach than the harsh, graphic, high-contrast line drawings that usually accompany an architectural idea. To Lin’s supporters, the sketches were an ideal representation of the thoughtful memorial she had designed, but to her protesters, the drawings spurred a series of negative epithets, such as “the gash” or “the boomerang.”

The Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial was as controversial as it was groundbreaking. Many people disputed the boomerang-like shape of the memorial, its dark color, and the fact that its designer was the daughter of Chinese immigrants.<sup>52</sup> Veterans who were dissatisfied with the memorial’s design proposed multiple changes and additions, a few of which were accepted by the committee overseeing the monument (but not condoned by Maya Lin).<sup>53</sup> The most prominent part of the memorial is also its greatest likeness to its successor, the Civil Rights Memorial. Both works of art include a unique visceral quality that invites viewers to touch the names (in the case of the Civil Rights Memorial, the names and the events) that are etched into the stone. In the case of the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial, the act of looking up a name to determine its chronological location on the wall and then physically touching the name can give viewers a kinesthetic connection with the loved one

whom they have lost. This connection, of course, is what fueled Lin’s design, and what makes this memorial so unique and admirable.

In the classroom, discussing the plans and construction of the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial leads to insightful conversation about the items left behind to commemorate visitor’s loved ones. The way in which these objects, ranging from the expected bouquet of flowers to small toys, letters, and other sentimental objects, become a piece of public art both alone and in conjunction with the wall itself, can easily provide a transition into conversations about public art which is more defined by the actual public’s interaction with it. *Magic Carpet*, a unique installation by a Philadelphia artist named Candy Coated, is a primary example of interactive public art in which the public’s contribution is just as notable and meaningful as the art itself. During a one-month span in the summer of 2014, the artist transformed the oval in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art into a whimsical environment of color, pattern, illusion and movement.<sup>54</sup> The ebullient design included inviting brightly colored sandboxes, three-dimensional optical illusion art, and decorative vinyl floor coverings reminiscent of a rug or carpet. <sup>55</sup> The artist aims to evoke feelings of community with the piece, referring to the “gathering” that typically takes place on a carpet within one’s home.<sup>56</sup> Although this piece has a drastically different look and feel from most memorials, the way in which it beckons to its audience to come and interact with it is not entirely different from the level of interaction one can experience with the works of Maya Lin, despite the fact that each interaction potentially leads to very different emotional experiences.

The role of public interaction in the overall effectiveness of *Magic Carpet* is not unlike the murals of Chicano Park in San Diego, California. Chicano Park is a 7.4-acre park located in San Diego city’s Barrio Logan.<sup>57</sup> Barrio residents who use the space for social and political events created the park in 1970. <sup>58</sup> Its most distinguishing feature is also one that can be easily overlooked; forty murals are painted on twenty-four concrete pillars that support the San Diego end of the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge.<sup>59</sup> Although the murals cannot be seen from the bridge and highways above, their depictions of Mexican icons, events, achievements, and other cultural images serve as a prominent backdrop to the events that are held in the park itself. Chicano Park’s murals are a perfect example of how two-dimensional public art, together with prominent public spaces, can easily take an otherwise flat image and transform it into a three-dimensional space and experience. Furthermore, while the Chicano Park murals began as a guerilla effort, they serve as an example of how community-based art can transcend the realm of high art over a period of time based on the community interactions they encourage.

Although these are just a few examples of more famous or well-known public art projects, there are obviously several more worthy of discussion. Other pieces of public art worth deserving of analysis include: Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota; the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri; Robert Indiana’s LOVE in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., Florentijn Hofman’s famous traveling Rubber Duck sculpture, and Project Row Houses in Houston, Texas. Naturally, the possibilities only expand more once expanding one’s possibilities to an international level, but introducing students to these three specific works forms a diverse, yet sturdy, foundation for discussing the interaction between public art and public history.

## Prominent Public Art within Wilmington

---

Conversely, when narrowing one's view, the public art within the city of Wilmington can provide some major insight into the decisions around and behind public art. As previously stated, Wilmington's public art largely consists of war-themed memorials and figurative statues of political figures. However, some of these works of art are worth exploring not necessarily for their subject matter, but for the stories behind them—stories that also apply to multiple works of art beyond Wilmington.

One of Wilmington's least known public art work is the statue of President James A. Garfield, currently located in what is laughably called "Garfield Triangle Park," a small patch of grass that serves as the side yard to an adjacent row home. Unveiled in 1895, over 5,000 proud Wilmington residents gathered to pay tribute to their president who was assassinated just four months after taking office.<sup>60</sup> Job H. Jackson, founder of a major shipbuilding firm, took the lead on raising the appropriate funds for the statue's construction and installation. The Garfield monument was very purposefully placed in a prominent location outside of Jackson's sprawling mansion (now the downtown YMCA) in "one of the most conspicuous and beautiful sites for a monument of national significance in this city," as quoted by *The Morning News* on May 31, 1895. Unfortunately, the widening of Delaware Avenue (where the Garfield statue resided) in 1918 prompted the relocation of the monument, to what was then a pleasant residential area "to which the statue lent a bit of prestige."<sup>61</sup> Today, however, the area has deteriorated to a point where the location of the statue is practically insulting to its late nineteenth-century enthusiasts, prompting enough concern about the statue's surroundings that "Garfield Triangle Park" was a specific piece of a revitalization plan written by a team from the University of Delaware; the plan called for the installation and maintenance of several decorative planters around the monument and a plan to attempt to reduce police service calls within a four-block radius.<sup>62</sup> Obviously, the story of Garfield's unfortunate relocation is not the only one of its kind; a more recent monument to pop culture icon, Rocky, placed at the Philadelphia Art Museum and then moved to another location on the museum's property after much controversy, provides similar testimony to the importance of location when it comes to public art.<sup>63</sup>

Just as location is a crucial area of importance when it comes to public art, so is content. In Wilmington, two works – the William McKinley Coffee Break Monument and the Josephine Tatnall Smith Memorial Fountain—present opportunities for students to examine artists' choices of what to represent to the public. The William McKinley Coffee Break Monument in Wilmington is another presidential monument that is not without its own controversy. President William McKinley had a lifetime of notable achievements, making the scene depicted on this monument seem like a rather unconventional choice.<sup>64</sup> The bronze bas-relief sculpture was created by James Edward Kelly and unveiled in 1908; it depicts a teenaged McKinley serving coffee to his tired comrades during the 1862 battle of Antietam. Despite the fact that this story of McKinley's brave hospitality became a powerful political asset during election times, it is still rather curious as to why this specific moment was chosen for immortalization and in this particular location. Another war monument, this time to Revolutionary War traitor Benedict Arnold (more accurately, to his injured foot), spurs further questions about content and why a particular object or moment is depicted over another.<sup>65</sup>

It is not unusual that the actual content or subject matter of a piece of public art is found so important or desirable that it is simply appropriated (or outright copied) from an existing piece. While the Josephine Tatnall Smith Memorial Fountain in Brandywine Park is a well-known and well-liked piece of public art, it is far from original. An octagonal base with carved cupids, lion heads, garlands, and grotesque masks supports a chiaroscuro figure of a scantily clad woman holding a cornucopia. Created in 1931 and dedicated in 1933, it

bears an incredible resemblance to The Fountain of the Labyrinth, carved in 1533 for the Medici family in Florence by artist Niccolo Tribolo. Only subtle differences separate the two; Wilmington's fountain figure is clothed in an effort to adapt to the modesty of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and aside from the addition of the cornucopia (which was not a part of Tribolo's fountain), the two are incredibly similar.<sup>66</sup> Although this Wilmington example ties two works together that are separated by centuries, modern day pop artists like Jeff Koons and Claes Oldenburg who create public outdoor sculptures often find themselves in a whirlwind of controversy and copyright laws for what they deem "appropriation." Comparing the Josephine Tatnall Smith Memorial Fountain with its obvious inspiration, the Fountain of the Labyrinth, creates the perfect opportunity in the classroom to discuss artistic appropriation.

While location and subject matter are of obvious importance, the concept of internal structure and mechanics is an unavoidable topic in any three-dimensional art class. Students are constantly faced with structural issues, whether working with wire, clay, or papier-mâché; concerns with adequate structural support and durability are always critical to keep in mind when designing any type of sculpture. The Caesar Rodney Equestrian Statue in Wilmington's well-known Rodney Square is a rarity for its time in that it displays Caesar Rodney astride a horse in a full gallop with its two front legs in the air. James Edward Kelly (also the artist of the McKinley Coffee Break Monument) sculpted the monument in 1923 and was one of very few artists who were able to achieve this exact composition; by moving the center of gravity forward, in front of where the legs are affixed to the base, and by significantly weighting the tail, the artist was able to achieve this much sought-after depiction of a horse in gallop. Similar successes include Clark Mills' depiction of Andrew Jackson on horseback in Washington, D.C., and controversial "Mustang" in Denver, Colorado. Other non-equestrian related works of public art that seemingly defy gravity with their structural prowess include various works by German artist, Cornelia Konrads and works by New Zealand based sculptor Neil Dawson who constructs sculptures made from aluminum and stainless steel that appear to be floating in mid-air.

The examples listed thus far are merely a tiny drop from the seemingly bottomless pool of public art, and while the analysis of specific pieces is understatedly meaningful, it is essential to place these examples within the greater context of public art. Because "public art" is an incredibly broad category, studying various examples can help one break it down into smaller categories or genres. Furthermore, examining the actual definition of public art: what falls within it and which characteristics may exclude certain works, can help contextualize specific examples.

## Public Art

---

Public art is generally defined as various forms of art (both two-dimensional and three-dimensional) that is free and accessible to everyone.<sup>67</sup> Public art can include, but is not limited to, memorials, monuments, murals, sculpture, integrated architectural or landscape architectural work, community art, digital media, and performance art.<sup>68</sup> Many forms of public art are site-specific, meaning they have a direct and meaningful tie with the location or community in which they are placed, potentially heightening awareness in the viewers of the site and its surroundings.<sup>69</sup> Not only can a public art recreate a landscape, but it often serves as a major part of the larger public landscape in that its accessibility encourages interaction to its interpretation of past events.<sup>70</sup> Public art can also be described as an interactive process involving artists, architects, designers, community residents, civic and political leaders, and funding agencies.<sup>71</sup>

For the purposes of this unit and the particular course designed to focus on three-dimensional art, public art will be broken down into four main categories: memorials, monuments, murals, and functional public art (including “street furniture,” transit stations, and other “usable” architectural work). Murals will not play a large role in the content of this unit, but adjustments to include more information on murals could certainly be made relatively easily.

A public memorial seems to inspire remembrance of a person, group of people, or a specific event, whereas a monument seems to pay tribute to an important person, group of people, or specific event. At first glance, the differences seem minimal, and it is fairly unexpected that resources on public art seem to avoid blatantly addressing the distinction between the two. Therefore, hashing out the differences and similarities between memorials and monuments will prove to be a beneficial activity for students.

Murals, on the other hand, are a much more self-explanatory form of public art...but it is their interaction with and formation of the community surrounding them that can take a mural out of the context of being nothing more than a flat, two-dimensional painting which creates a relatively short and shallow experience of a viewer looking and then moving on. Furthermore, murals tend to serve two radically different purposes: social protest and civic boosterism.<sup>72</sup> These two different emergences of public murals are certainly worth exploring with students as they not only further demonstrate the versatility and power of public art, but they also provide a connection with guerilla art and the notion of placemaking.

“Functional” public art, for the purposes of this unit, includes many different types of art, from furniture to transit stations and other art installations. Gateways, benches, streetlights, and fences can all fall within this category, as well. These types of works serve a dual role in that possess an aesthetic presence but they also serve a practical purpose; the audience is both viewer and user.

## Strategies

---

When I meet students for the first time, I almost immediately encounter challenging assumptions or expectations that exist about what my class is and what it will be like to be a student in it. Unfortunately, many of these assumptions come from students’ experiences in what I refer to as “old school” art classes—the kind of art classes I participated in when I was a kid during which I was basically instructed to sit down and make something “nice.” Learning, unless it was learning about how to bend a pipe cleaner in just the right way or how to draw a perfectly round circle, really didn’t happen much. We may have looked at pictures of art once in a while, but we really weren’t expected to retain that knowledge, much less apply it to anything other than what we were doing on that one day.

My class, despite the fact that it is an art class, is a “real” class. What this means to both students and myself alike is that we do much more than simply “make pretty things.” In my class, we learn. We watch video clips, we review presentations, we look at pictures, we have meaningful discussion, we complete worksheets and other written work, we read informational text, and we take quizzes and tests. Frankly, not only do these truths about my class come as a shock to students, but also to parents and other educators. Despite five years of being an art teacher, I have yet to feel relief from the battle with this assumption of what an art class should be. So, I am very forthright with my students about the expectations in my class, but many are still surprised to see my claims actually come to fruition. Luckily, as previously stated, the students in the class for

which this unit is designed should already be familiar with both my expectations and myself. It is the consistent employment of the following strategies that makes my class “real” for my students.

### **Simultaneous “Learning” and “Doing”**

Class time is typically structured so that students learn during the first half of class and continue to work on an ongoing project that coincides with instruction for the second half of class. My reasons for organizing class time in this way are numerous. First of all, no teacher is stranger to the theories on adolescent attention spans; we all know that kids can focus on one task for only so much time before they become distracted or bored. I know that if I allotted students an hour and a half to work on a project, I would be lucky if students truly used half of that time effectively. Furthermore, I learned during my first year of teaching that students need constant reminders of what they are working on and why; it is my responsibility to provide them with daily connections between content and project.

My students promptly learn the expectation for how class time is to be used. Upon entering the room, they are handed a “do now” exercise that typically asks them brief questions reviewing a concept learned in the previous class. Following the “do now,” we learn. Perhaps we add onto concepts learned in the prior class; sometimes, we learn new concepts related to, but different from, what we learned before. We may watch video clips, see a PowerPoint presentation, read an article, view artwork, have a structured discussion, or answer questions. Regardless of what activity we do, each unit of instruction that I design and teach has instructional content that is broken up over the length it takes for students to complete a corresponding project. Students come to class every day not only with the expectation that they will create, but also that they will learn.

### **Collaborative Discussion and Critique**

Collaborative discussion and critique are things that happen often in my classroom, whether teacher-directed or not. Students in my class are well aware of the fact that they get “plenty of time to talk” (something I gently remind them of should they decide to do the unthinkable and talk while I’m talking). While students exhibit their fair share of gossiping or talking about topics irrelevant to the art world, I can proudly admit that they also spend a considerable amount of time talking about the task at hand. My students frequently view each other as a resource for friendly criticism; questions such as “what do you think of this” or “what color should I paint this” regularly drift around my classroom. In fact, students commonly revise their own ideas or consider other ideas based on what their peers are saying. It is imperative that my students are allowed this time to discuss, collaborate, and critique each other’s works—and, luckily, it tends to happen naturally in my classroom. There are certainly times when we will have a more structured critique, but typically, this is after the projects are completed. Therefore, the discussion that happens while projects are in-progress is essential to the actual process.

### **Independent Research**

Although this is not a strategy I admit to using often, I am excited about the idea of students being tasked with independent research in order to gain a broader knowledge of public art within the city of Wilmington. Ideally, there are many more monuments, memorials, and pieces of public art that I would like to spend class time teaching my students about; however, encouraging students to do their own research about the pieces of art I do not mention encourages some independence and reinforces both Common Core standards and college readiness skills that are so often discussed in education.



Students will be asked to choose their “top three” pieces of local public art in which they are interested in exploring (from a list that I will share with them) and will then be assigned one of their choices which they will subsequently research. Students will then compile their research into a class-directed presentation during which they will share what they have learned and how it relates to content we have already discussed in class, including topics such as subject matter, location, history of the art piece, and how it relates to the context of public art as a whole. This strategy of encouraging independent research and presentations not only gives students more ownership of their knowledge, but also allows the students to see each other as experts and learn from one another.

## Activities

---

### **Collaborative Public Art Piece for Glasgow High School**

Students will use information learned about Delaware’s desegregation history and newly-acquired knowledge about public art to devise a plan for a three-dimensional piece of art that they will then build and display somewhere on school grounds. Students will initially be divided into groups of four and will begin by brainstorming ideas for the public art; they will be instructed that it should represent the student population (both Wilmington students and local suburban students) and that all three-dimensional materials that they have worked with prior to this lesson will be available for the construction of the piece (these materials include papier-mâché, wood, clay, wire, paper, and cloth).

After each group has brainstormed various ideas, they will each construct a proposal for an idea that the group agrees upon. Each group will be given a sheet of poster board on which to draw a large sketch, and each group will designate one member as the spokesperson for the group. The groups will take turns showing their sketches and listening as each spokesperson explains the idea and its proposed location on campus. After all groups have presented their ideas, the class will vote on which idea they would like to build and display. At this point, I will discuss a timeline with the students to determine how much time will be necessary to build the artwork—and a portion of class time for the following classes will be dedicated to working on the project.

### **Class Proposal for New Public Art in Wilmington**

In addition to planning and creating a small-scale project that will be on display on school grounds, students will also collaboratively work on a proposal for a new piece of public art in Wilmington that will represent the prominent role that Delaware played in desegregation. “Students will explore *publicart.ie*’s “Advice for Artists on Preparing a Proposal” and use Duke University’s example public art proposal as a template for determining what information to include in the proposal. Students will be divided into teams, including an “objectives” team, a “visuals” team, and an “information” team. Students on the “objectives” team will work on the main objectives for the public art project: what is its purpose? What will it hopefully achieve? To what people or event will it bring recognition? Students on the “visuals” team will be responsible for developing sketches and drawings of the proposed monument; it is important to note that it is not necessary to settle on one specific design; due to the relative informality of this proposal, submitting more than one idea is acceptable, as long as they all share a common theme. Finally, students on the “information” team will work on writing the background information and the supporting details for why the class feels this piece of public art is necessary

for the city of Wilmington. When the final proposal is completed, it will be sent to city legislature for review.

## **Oral History Interviews with Christina School District Students from 1979**

Guest speakers who were students in the Christina School District when busing first began in 1979 will be invited to come into class; students will conduct oral history interviews with these guests to gain a deeper understanding of the students' perspective of busing as a desegregation effort. Students will be asked to develop a series of questions prior to the visit and a group discussion will help eliminate redundant questions and hopefully uncover new questions that students did not think of independently. Information gained during the interviews will help to shape and better inform students' understanding of the busing that they still participate in today.

## **Bibliography**

---

"Advice for Artists on Preparing a Proposal." Public Art. Accessed July 30, 2015.

<http://www.publicart.ie/main/commissioning/preparing-a-proposal/>.

Albarelli, Gerry, and Amy Starecheski. "The Telling Lives Oral History Curriculum Guide." The Telling Lives Oral History Curriculum Guide. April 1, 2005. Accessed August 7, 2015.

[http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/1448391/24079996/1387382411030/Telling\\_Lives\\_Curriculum\\_Guide.pdf?token=ONd0iDtuUAMC UEN4vofBm5uijr4=](http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/1448391/24079996/1387382411030/Telling_Lives_Curriculum_Guide.pdf?token=ONd0iDtuUAMC UEN4vofBm5uijr4=).

This is an excellent resource to use with the Oral History Interview activity.

Anderson - Baranger, Hannah, Gaby Benitez, Jen Lunde, Corinne Santoro, and Kevin Shenk. "Sustainable Art Proposal: Fitzpatrick Center." Public Art at Duke University. 2013. Accessed July 30, 2015.

<http://sites.duke.edu/dukepublicart/files/2013/04/Fitzpatrick-Sustainable-Art-Proposal.pdf>.

Brown, Robin. "Monument to Black Medal of Honor Recipients Often Overlooked." The News Journal. July 15, 2008. Accessed July 31, 2015.

Chase, Susan. "Josephine Fountain: Art and Memorial." *Friends of Wilmington Parks Newsletter*, Summer 2011. Accessed July 15, 2015. <http://www.friendsofwilmingtonparks.org/summer11.pdf>

"City of Wilmington Delaware." Tilton Park Mural. Accessed July 31, 2015. <http://www.ci.wilmington.de.us/residents/tiltonparkmural>.

"Civil Rights Movement: Civil Rights Memorial." Smithsonian American Art Museum. Accessed July 14, 2015.

[http://americanart.si.edu/education/pdf/civil\\_rights\\_memorial.pdf](http://americanart.si.edu/education/pdf/civil_rights_memorial.pdf).

Eccel, Josephine. "History of Public Education in Delaware During Past 50 Years." Delaware Today. April 1, 2012. Accessed July 12, 2015. <http://www.delawaretoday.com/Delaware-Today/April-2012/History-of-Public-Education-in-Delaware-During-Past-50-Years/>.

Farrier, John. "America's Monument to Its Most Infamous Traitor, Benedict Arnold." Neatorama. 2014. Accessed July 14, 2015.

<http://www.neatorama.com/2014/01/01/Americas-Monument-to-Its-Most-Infamous-Traitor-Benedict-Arnold/>.

Ken, Finkel. "Time For Rocky To Step Aside?" PhillyHistory Blog. September 1, 2011. Accessed July 31, 2015.

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2011/09/time-for-rocky-to-step-aside/>.

Fleming, Ronald Lee. *The Art of Placemaking: Interpreting Community through Public Art and Urban Design*. New York, New York: Merrell, 2007.

Grant, Daniel. "The Law Against Artists: Public Art Often Loses Out in Court." *Observer*. September 4, 2014. Accessed July 15, 2015.

Gutierrez, Jene. "Neil Dawson's Suspended Sculptures Appear To Defy Gravity." *Beautiful Decay*. August 13, 2014. Accessed July 15, 2015. <http://beautifuldecay.com/2014/08/13/neil-dawson/>.

Hayman, Robert L., and Leland Ware, eds. *Choosing Equality: Essays and Narratives on the Desegregation Experience*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009.

"In Honor of a Patriot: Dedication and Unveiling of the Garfield Monument." *The Morning News*, May 31, 1895.

This is the original article from 1895; no author is noted in the newspaper.

Kluger, Richard. *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality*. New York: Knopf, 1976.

"Magic Carpet." Association for Public Art. 2014. Accessed July 14, 2015. <http://associationforpublicart.org/magic-carpet/>.

*Maya Lin: A Strong, Clear Vision*. United States: Docurama, 2003. DVD.

Patrick, Willie, Thomas Baker, Nate Beasley, Michele Griffiths, Sophia Hanson, Traci Luckenbill, Catherine McCloskey, Olakunle Oludina, and Perry Price. "Second District Revitalization Plan." University of Delaware. Accessed July 31, 2015. <http://www.udel.edu/ccrs/blueprint/Data and Information Resources/Final Plans/Second District.pdf>.

Post, Chris. "Art, Scale, and the Memory of Tragedy: A Consideration of Public Art in Pleasant Hill, Missouri." *Material Culture* 43, no. 2 (2011): 43-58. Accessed July 11, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23145841>.

"Project Row Houses." Project Row Houses. Accessed July 14, 2015. <http://projectrowhouses.org/>.

"Public Art 101." Americans for the Arts. Accessed July 11, 2015. <http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/public-art>.

Raffel, Jeffrey. "After the Court Order: The Changing Faces of School Desegregation in the Wilmington Metropolitan Area." *Widener Law Symposium Journal* 9, no. 1 (2002). Accessed July 12, 2015.

Rosen, Martin, and James Fisher. "Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Murals: Barrio Logan, City of San Diego, California." *The Public Historian* 23, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 91-111. Accessed August 7, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/tph.2001.23.4.91>.

Silver, Robert T., and Leigh Frederick. *Outdoor Sculpture in Wilmington*. Wilmington, Delaware: Wilmington Arts Commission, 1987.

"State of Delaware." School Profiles: Glasgow High School. 2015. Accessed July 31, 2015. <http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolProfiles/School/Default.aspx?checkSchool=392&districtCode=33>.

"William McKinley Coffee Break Monument, Wilmington, Delaware." *RoadsideAmerica.com*. Accessed July 15, 2015. <http://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/32290>.

## Appendix A

---

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.*

Students will read various informational texts in addition to viewing sketches, photographs, and other images of various pieces of public art. Students will use this textual and visual information to analyze works of art, justify their meanings and locations, and to help them develop their own ideas for the original work of art that they will ultimately create.

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.*

Students will read a specific article from *The Morning News* (Delaware's primary newspaper in the late 1800's-early 1900's) regarding the unveiling of the James A. Garfield Monument in Wilmington Delaware on May 31, 1895. The article describes this occasion as an extraordinary social and political event and also effectively describes the prominent location of the monument, in addition to the reasons behind why this location was chosen. The article's persuasive tone merely gains power as students learn that the monument was later relocated to drastically different surroundings.

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.*

Discussion will play an active role in this unit as students gradually understand how desegregation in Delaware led to the busing between the city and the suburbs that still continues today; students will use discussion to inform and share their opinions on the district's busing policies. Students will also discuss multiple aspects of public art, including policies, processes, and meanings, in order to forge their own opinions about particular works of art and their histories.

*CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.*

Students will be asked to choose both a local and a global piece of public art on which they must craft a presentation to share with their peers. Because the umbrella of "public art" is so broad, the number of pieces that we can focus on in class is quite limited; however, there will still be several pieces within Wilmington and outside of the city that are worthy of attention and analyses.

*DE Grades 9-12 History Standard 4A: Students will develop an understanding of modern United States history, its connections to both Delaware and world history, including:*

*Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877); Development of an industrialized nation (1870-1900); Emergence of modern America (1890-1930); Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945); Postwar United States (1945-early 1970s); Contemporary United States (1968-present).*

Although most of the historical information related to desegregation and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) refers to the postwar and contemporary United States time periods, some works of public art explored during this unit will provide historical insight into the civil war and reconstruction era, the development of an industrialized nation era, and the emergence of modern America era.

Through the creation of their final project, students will exercise an understanding of applying media, techniques, and processes (*Delaware Visual Art Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes*) and will choose a range of content, symbols, and ideas that they will integrate into their designs (*Delaware Visual Art Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas*). Through the exploration of various pieces of public art, students will demonstrate an understanding of the visual arts in relation to history and cultures (*Delaware Visual Art Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures*) and will also reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of others' work (*Delaware Visual Art Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others*).

## Notes

---

1. "State of Delaware."
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Kluger, Richard, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality*, 427.
5. Ibid
6. Hayman, Robert L., and Leland Ware, eds. *Choosing Equality: Essays and Narratives on the Desegregation Experience*, 60.
7. Ibid, 61.
8. Ibid
9. Ibid
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. Ibid
13. Ibid
14. Ibid
15. Ibid
16. Ibid, 63.
17. Ibid
18. Kluger, Richard, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality*, 430.
19. Ibid
20. Ibid, 429.
21. Ibid, 431.
22. Ibid, 432.
23. Ibid, 434.
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. Ibid
27. Ibid

28. Ibid, 435.
29. Raffle, Jeffrey, "After the Court Order: The Changing Faces of School Desegregation in the Wilmington Metropolitan Area" in *Widener Law Symposium Journal*, 81.
30. Ibid, 83.
31. Ibid
32. Ibid, 84.
33. Ibid, 83.
34. Ibid, 86.
35. Ibid, 94.
36. Ibid, 95.
37. Eccel, Josephine, "History of Public Education in Delaware During Past 50 Years" on Delaware Online.
38. Ibid
39. "Civil Rights Movement: Civil Rights Memorial."
40. Ibid
41. Silver, Robert T., and Leigh Frederick, *Outdoor Sculpture in Wilmington*, 6.
42. Ibid, 59.
43. Ibid
44. Ibid
45. Brown, Robin, "Monument to Black Medal of Honor Recipients Often Overlooked" in The News Journal.
46. Ibid
47. Ibid
48. Ibid
49. "City of Wilmington Delaware," Tilton Park Mural.
50. *Maya Lin: A Strong, Clear Vision*.
51. Ibid
52. Ibid
53. Ibid
54. "Magic Carpet" on Association for Public Art.
55. Ibid
56. Ibid
57. Rosen, Martin, and James Fisher, "Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Murals: Barrio Logan, City of San Diego, California" in *The Public Historian*, 94.
58. Ibid
59. Ibid
60. "In Honor of a Patriot: Dedication and Unveiling of the Garfield Monument" in *The Morning News*.
61. Silver, Robert T., and Leigh Frederick in *Outdoor Sculpture in Wilmington*, 6.
62. Patrick, Willie, Thomas Baker, Nate Beasley, Michele Griffiths, Sophia Hanson, Traci Luckenbill, Catherine McCloskey, Olakunle Oludina, and Perry Price, "Second District Revitalization Plan."
63. Ken, Finkel, "Time For Rocky To Step Aside?" on PhillyHistory Blog
64. "William McKinley Coffee Break Monument, Wilmington, Delaware" on roadsideamerica.com
65. Farrier, John, "America's Monument to Its Most Infamous Traitor, Benedict Arnold."
66. Chase, Susan, "Josephine Fountain: Art and Memorial" in *Friends of Wilmington Parks Newsletter*.
67. "Public Art 101" in Americans for the Arts.
68. Ibid
69. Ibid
70. Post, Chris, "Art, Scale, and the Memory of Tragedy: A Consideration of Public Art in Pleasant Hill, Missouri" in *Material*



*Culture*, 47.

71. "Public Art 101" in *Americans for the Arts*.

72. Fleming, Ronald Lee, *The Art of Placemaking: Interpreting Community through Public Art and Urban Design*, 82.

---

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit [https://teachers.yale.edu/terms\\_of\\_use](https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use)