

1. Background and Biography: Gathering information

Note: At this point, it is hoped that students have decided upon an artwork that they particularly like. For the following activity students should gather biographical information about the artist who created their chosen artwork.

Aim:

To gather biographical information on the artist and reflect on what information might be important

Activity:

Students read texts and exchange information on artists' backgrounds and biography

Instructions:

Preclass: Ask the students to research biographical information about the artist of their chosen artwork before the lesson.

In class: Students bring in the image of their chosen artwork to show their classmates.

Using Worksheet 13, students ask and answer questions and fill in chart about artists.

This can be done as whole group/small groups/pairs

Students can be given questions/ write questions using prompts/ or invent own questions according to the information they want to know.

Ask them to highlight ONE other piece of information that intrigues or surprises them that isn't covered by the questions in Worksheet 13. Worksheet 14 continues this class discussion activity.

Material to hand out:

Copies of worksheet 13 (alternatively paste the questions into the powerpoint presentation and students read from the board).

Blank out as many of the questions as you want and encourage students to think of them/all.

Optional: If students have not yet selected an artwork, provide copies of artists' biographies (use as many/few as required by size of class/time available).

Worksheet 13: Exchange biographical information on artists to fill in the table below.

Questions	Artist 1	Artist 2	Artist 3
What's his/her name?			
Where were they born? Is this where they grew up?			
Have they received any awards? What other kind of recognition have they had?			
What exhibitions/projects have they worked on?			
Does the bio mention any particular influences on their work?			
Are there any publications by them/about them?			
YOUR QUESTION			
YOUR QUESTION			

2. Background and Biography: Selecting information

Aim:

To get students to reflect on what information is most relevant to include in a presentation.

Activities:

Speaking: Follow on from Worksheet 13, speaking activity.

When students have finished the information exchange, introduce the discussion points in Worksheet 14.

Listening: Worksheet 15 Extract from video: Jodie/Zoe/Antonia/Molly

Students watch listen and note which biographical details Jodie/Zoe/Antonia/Molly chose to include and why.

Material to hand out:

Worksheet 14 (or paste the questions into a new slide).

Worksheet 15 (reasons for selecting biographical detail) to accompany videos

Homework/extra class activity:

Students do further work on biographies of artist

Students select and listen to *another* video of a presentation other than those already used (Worksheet 15) to see how presenter selects and presents biographical detail

Worksheet 14: Follow up discussion on artists' bios.

Is there any information in the biographies (bios) that you find intriguing/surprising/inspiring? Why?

Which aspects of these biographies do you think may throw most light on the artist's work? Why?

How many pieces of biographical information do you think would be appropriate to include in presenting their work? Why?

Do you think biography illuminates or detracts from your appreciation of the work? Why?

How would you evaluate these artists' success/achievement? Why?

Worksheet 15: Selecting Biographical details

What biographical detail did the presenter select?	Why was it selected? What can you infer from its selection?
Jodie 00.00-01.52	
Artist was brought up during war	
Father worked with planes	
Zoe Lakota-Baldwin 01.33-02.00	
Awarded a trip to Zimbabwe	
Antonia 05.40-06.07	
A depressing period of his life Divorce and fight for custody of his child	
Molly	
Moore's regular visits to British museum	

Answers to Worksheet 15: Selecting Biographical details

What biographical detail did the presenter select	Why was it selected? Inferring
Jodie 00.00-01.52	
Artist was brought up during war	To illustrate theme of negative view of war
Father worked with planes	To illustrate themes of flight and freedom
Zoe Lakota-Baldwin 01.33-02.00	
Awarded a trip to Zimbabwe	It is in Africa and although Ofili is of African origin he had never visited Africa
	It is an important influence on choice of material and theme (although Zoe does not make this explicit)
Antonia 05.40-06.07	
A depressing period of his life Divorce and fight for custody of his child	How this illuminates her understanding of the work
Molly	
Moore's regular visits to British museum	To support her comparison to the figures chosen from the British Museum collection

3. Exploring Themes

Aim:

To encourage exploration of relationship between ideas and their representation in visual form

Activity:

Free discussion on themes

Instructions:

Students are asked to discuss in pairs or small groups to the meanings of words in worksheet 16

They are asked:

To discuss the meanings of these words

To imagine how they could be represented visually e.g. can they draw “envy”?

To put them into categories of their own choosing (if they have no ideas they can be prompted: for example, political/social/intellectual, nature, issues of no interest to me whatsoever, boring/fascinating/heavy etc.)

Extra Activity:

Have fun with themes.

Put pictures of works of artists on screen and students imagine the themes behind the work (the more preposterous the better)

Note: Actual themes that artists may have are summarized in Worksheet 15, which is for Teacher Guidance and can be used to prompt student discussion or give feedback.

Material to hand out: Worksheet 16 on Themes

Homework/extra activity:

By now the students will have seen and read a lot about various artists and it is hoped they have already chosen the artist and artwork they prefer to present. If not, NOW is the time for them to decide. They are asked to write a short piece - 100 words, summarizing the artist with key biographical points.

Worksheet 16: Exploring Themes

1. Discuss the meanings of the following terms which describe concepts, issues or themes.

Colonialism	Protestant tradition of inquiry	Identity
Touch	Criticism and dissent	Environment
Nature	Modern work practices	Slavery
Ritual	Acculturation	Greed
Gender	Re-appropriation	Envy
Place	Relationship of human body to space	Vision

2. How could you represent visually the ideas above? Discuss this with a partner.

3. Can you categorise the vocabulary? Choose your own headings in the table below and add a few examples, including your own ideas.

Category 1:	Category 2:	Category 3:	Category 4:

4. Are there any artworks that you know that relate to a particular theme?

4: Titles

Aim:

To explore the significance of titles

Activity/Instructions:

Lead-in discussion

1. Draw attention to the quotation displayed on screen:

“Giving something a title is almost like giving it a punchline”

Source: artist Helen Marten.

(Ref: interview with Helen Marten on http://chisenhale.org.uk/archive/chisenhale_interviews.php)

2. Ask the students if they know what a punchline is and if not tell them it is connected to telling jokes, to see if they can guess with some context.

A punchline is the final sentence in a joke that completes the story and makes you laugh.

3. Ask the students:

What does the artist mean by this declaration?

What are the purposes, benefits, and drawbacks of titles?

Listening:

Video extract: Listen to Molly Nickson talking about the title of Henry Moore’s “Knife Edge: Standing Figure” (01.38-02.40) <https://vimeo.com/63324687> (link on slide).

Here Molly explicitly explores the significance of the title.

Students listen and answer the question: **What did Molly need to research to produce this section?**

Tip! Allow the students to listen 2 – 3 times including without watching the images which can be a distraction.

Class discussion: Students discuss whether the titles of their chosen artwork help them understand the work better or not.

Note: the artwork in the slide is part of an exhibition entitled “Borrowed Light” so artists’ exhibitions also have titles.

Homework Extra activity:

1. Students research the reason why the artwork is entitled as it is.

2. “Works of art should not have titles”. Discuss.

Students write a short essay (max. 200 words) defending or opposing this statement. They should choose examples of works and titles from different periods.

3. Students research the Biennale di Venezia and the British Pavilion and present their findings in the following lesson.

5: Curating an exhibition

Aim:

To prepare students to compare and contrast other works of art with the one they have chosen and in so doing deepen their understanding of their chosen artwork.

Activity:

A simulation of curating an exhibition – students are encouraged to be creative in their choices and explanations.

Instructions:

Students are asked to curate a small room containing three works in an exhibition. They will be asked to:

- Pick three artworks to show by 3 different artists.
- Discuss credible reasons why these artworks should be displayed together and then
- Make decisions about the display in the room.

They will then be given Worksheet 17 with the task.

Teacher's role is to monitor language (Worksheet 4.1 from Section 1) and the exchange of ideas and to support and suggest if necessary.

Some groups may finish before others so ask them to start organizing their decisions into presentation form.

Students can then give a very short presentation of their decisions

Feedback on work done in other sessions (repetition, compare and contrast, in threes, and evaluation of presentation in general)

Material to hand out:

Worksheet 17

Homework/Extra activity:

Students research other images that can help better understand their chosen artwork – by the same artist or by other artists.

Students write the introduction to their catalogue.

Worksheet 17: Curating an exhibition

You have been asked to create a small one-room exhibition for a gallery with three works. Nominate one person to play secretary and keep a record of your decisions. Discuss each question together, Exchange your opinions **on all** points, Encourage the views of others, to reach decisions. Please refer to your notes at any time.

1. Look at the pictures of these works. Does one work stand out? Should this be the driving force, with the others revolving around it? If so, Why?	6. Do THE ARTISTS have anything in common? Or interesting contrasts?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first work • the second work • The third work • they are all on an equal footing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age (or when they did the work) • place of origin • race or sex • Other?
2. What about the MEDIUM used? can you find connections or contrasts?	7. You should have now reached some decisions about what links your works. Summarise them here:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Static or active? • Traditional or unusual? • The same or different? • Other? 	
3. Do the works share any REFERENCES or influences?	8. How are you going to DISPLAY them? Take into consideration the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • historical • cultural • political • other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • position of work in given space • How do you direct the viewer through the space to experience the works in such a way that emphasise your uniting idea? • How to highlight your message • other?
4. How are you going to find a unifying idea for your display? Eg.COLOURS	9. What is the title of your exhibition? Summarise your suggestions here, then decide.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colours in common • Use of one particular colour • Juxtaposition of colours • Anything else? 	
5. Do the works share any THEMES?	10. Galleries expect a short catalogue. What in it research will you need to do to complete it? Summarise your ideas below:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identity • culture • religion • other? If so, what? 	

When you have finished the activity prepare a short presentation giving and explaining your decisions. Remember to include features from your “What makes a good presentation” checklist