

Art and Other Subjects¹

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Like FRENCH or SPANISH, ART is a language that can be learned and understood. It is a form of communication that one can learn to read and speak through study and practice. Reading art means understanding a visual statement. Speaking art means creating a visual statement. When art seems strange or meaningless, it is only that this language is yet to be understood.

Like ENGLISH, ART has an established vocabulary and grammar (the elements and principles of design). These fundamentals of composition are the basis for appreciating and producing works of art. All creativity must be channeled through these rules of construction in order to make a clear statement. To comprehend how art is put together is to be visually literate.

Like SCIENCE, ART is based on a natural order and relationship of elements. These elements, such as line and color, have unique properties and can be explored in lab-like projects and exercises that reveal individual characteristics, as well as how these qualities can be manipulated and how these elements can work together. Through experimentation, one can discover the nature and potential of art.

Like MATHEMATICS, ART possesses certain principles that are logical, time-proven, and constant guidelines to pictorial organization. An effective composition requires thought, planning, and order. All parts must be considered toward the whole. Concepts such as linear perspective and color theory are specific examples of how art is as analytical as it is emotional.

Like PHYSICAL EDUCATION, ART can require a sort of visual toning—exercising one's eyes earnestly and regularly. With conscientious practice, one's abilities can be recognized, developed, and mastered. Through perseverance, a faithful routine can lead to significant accomplishment. A lazy or sporadic approach limits potential. Gradual progress prevails over instant achievement.

Like SOCIAL STUDIES, ART promotes an awareness and understanding of people and cultures. Art reflects the ideas and ideals of societies, governments, and religions. Art has been influenced by geography, war, and commerce. Art can help us understand past civilizations and define our identity for future generations. Art is a visual record of people and their world.

Like MUSIC, ART is based on the refinement of one of our senses. As music relates to how one listens and hears, art focuses on looking and seeing—on visual sensitivity. In both areas, the perception of subtlety is essential to grasping variation and innovation. In music and art, the greatest accomplishments are those in which subtlety and sensitivity are balanced with skill and creativity.

Like RELIGION, ART can be a vehicle through which to tap one's soul. Art can be a mirror of one's beliefs, one's feelings, one's identity, one's relationship to others. Art can express our secular and spiritual quality, our orientation toward life. In exploring and exposing aspects of people's souls, art can communicate that which is universal and that for which there are no words.

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