

## Landscapes and Language Arts: Dr. Seuss

- The Places You Will Go
- Landscape Techniques - Foreground, Middle Ground, Background

### LESSON OVERVIEW/OBJECTIVES

March 2nd marks the birthday of Dr. Seuss. In line with his birthday, the photograph of Park City's iconic McPolin Barn, students will utilize language art to envision an imaginary landscape and learn landscape techniques to realize their vision. Teachers will read all or part of Seuss' book to students to prompt discussions about real and imagined places. Using a photograph of McPolin barn, students will add their imagined ideas to the image using learned landscape skills. Their art will tell the story.

### KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO VISUAL ARTS CORE CURRICULUM:

Based on Utah State Visual Arts Core Curriculum Requirements (3rd Grade)

**Strand: CREATE (3.V.CR.) Students will generate artistic work by conceptualizing, organizing, and completing their artistic ideas. They will refine original work through persistence, reflection, and evaluation.**

**Standard 3.V.CR.1:** Elaborate on an imaginative idea and apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies to investigate personal ideas through the art-making process.

**Standard 3.V.CR.2:** Create a personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.

**Standard 3.V.CR.3:** Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and proficient use of materials, tools and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.

**Standard 3.V.CR.5:** Elaborate visual information by adding details in an artwork to enhance meaning.

**Strand: RESPOND (3.V.R.) Students will understand, evaluate, and articulate how works of art convey meaning for the observer as well as the creator.**

**Standard 3.V.R.1:** Contemplate about the processes an artist uses to create a work of art, and determine messages communicated by an image.

**Standard 3.V.R.2:** Analyze use of media to create subject matter, characteristics of form and mood.

**Standard 3.V.R.3:** Evaluate an artwork based on given criteria.

**Strand: CONNECT (3.V.CO.) Students will relate artistic skills, ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.**

**Standard 3.V.CO.2:** Recognize that responses to art change, depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made.

## INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Learn about Dr. Seuss.
- Learn landscape art techniques to include foreground, middle ground, background.
- Create imagined places and ideas on a photograph image.

## SUPPLIES

- Images and art samples of landscapes.
- McPolin barn images.
- Art pencils, erasers, markers and sharpies of varying colors and sizes.
- Paint and paint brushes (optional).
- White paper to sketch out ideas.
- White art paper.
- Rulers (optional).
- Dr. Seuss' book Oh The Places You Will Go.

## VOCABULARY

**Background** - A term in visual arts that describes the part of a composition that appears to be farthest from the viewer. The background is one of the three zones of recession in linear perspective – foreground, middle ground, and background.

**Balance** - The distribution of objects, colors, textures, and space within a composition. Balance can be symmetrical, in which the elements on each side of a median line are similar, or asymmetrical, in which each side differs. With radial balance, elements are arranged around a center point.

**Cultural landscape** - A term referring to the human-modified environment. There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: historic sites, designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes. Cultural landscapes express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment.

**Foreground** - A term in visual arts that describes the part of a composition that appears closest to the viewer. The foreground is one of the three zones of recession in linear perspective – foreground, middle ground, and background.

**Emphasis** - The part of the design that catches the viewer's attention. Usually the artist will make one area stand out by contrasting it with other areas. The area will be different in size, color, texture, shape, etc.

**Horizon line** - The division line between earth and sky in a picture.

**Landscape** - A term used to classify a painting, drawing, or other depiction of natural scenery. Although figures and manmade objects may be included in a landscape, they are of secondary importance to the composition and incidental to the content.

**Landscape architecture** - Is the art, planning, design, management, preservation and rehabilitation of the land and the design of man-made constructs within it. The scope of the profession includes architectural design, site planning, town or urban planning, parks and recreation planning, regional planning, and historic preservation.

**Middle ground** A term in visual arts that describes the part of a composition between the foreground and background. It is one of the three zones of recession in linear perspective – foreground, middle ground, and background.

**Overlapping** The placement in a composition of one object in front of another in order to create the illusion of depth.

**Repetition** - This principle works with pattern to make an artwork seem active. The repetition of elements of design creates unity within the artwork.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

### 15 Facts About the Artist

#### Theodor Seuss Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss (March 2nd, 1904)

1. Never a Doctor - Seuss was not a doctor of anything and in fact did not have a doctorate until an honorary one was granted to him by his alma mater, Dartmouth, in 1956. He added the "Dr." to his penname because his father had always wanted him to practice medicine.
2. Didn't always have last name of Seuss - While the name Seuss (which is also his mother's maiden name) was always his, between his first and last names, he didn't use it until he was in college.
3. Not a fan of kids - Even though kids are fans of his work, the king of children's books didn't think much of rugrats. He is reported to have once said, "You have 'em, I'll amuse 'em."
4. His books were not always a success - Seuss' first book 'And to Think I Saw It on Mulberry Street,' which was inspired by the rhythm of the ship's engines on a return trip from Europe, was rejected by 27 publishers. He almost burned it, but finally found a publisher for it in 1937. The title comes from the name of the street on which his grandmother lived.
5. He drew advertising cartoons - To support himself and his wife during the Great Depression, Seuss made money drawing cartoons for advertisements. He became a household name for his cartoons for an insecticide called Flit by coining the catchphrase "Quick, Henry, the Flit!"
6. He coined the word Nerd - Dr. Seuss has an even bigger impact on pop culture than you might think. The first recorded instance of the word "nerd" is in Seuss' 'If I Ran the Zoo' published in 1950.
7. He is an academy award winning filmmaker - Not only was Seuss a Pulitzer-prize winning author, he won two Academy Awards. He won his first Oscar for writing an animated short called 'Gerald McBoing-Boing' in 1951. He also won an Academy Award for a documentary called 'Design for Death' about Japanese culture.
8. He made propaganda cartoons during the war - During WWII, Theodor Seuss Geisel joined the army. While serving during the war, he was commander of the Animation Department of the First Motion Picture Unit of the United States Army Air Forces. His job was to create war propaganda cartoons, as well as write promotional films for the troops and American citizens at home. He also created a series of training films for soldiers called 'Private Snafu.' Animated at Warner Bros. Studios, these films about a bumbling soldier used the voice talent of Mel Blanc and the musical talent of Carl Stalling. Seem familiar? They were some of the geniuses behind 'Looney Tunes.'
9. He teamed up with an animation legend to create How the Grinch Stole Christmas - Under the name Ted Geisel, Seuss teamed up with pal and 'Looney Tunes' legend Chuck Jones in 1966 for an animated adaptation of 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas.' A holiday classic now, the special wasn't particularly well-received at the time of its debut. (Variety dubbed it a costly flop.) But annual TV showings have made it one of the most popular Christmas specials of all time.
10. Horton Hears A Who is about Japan - Like many of Seuss' books, 'Horton Hears a Who' was not just about an elephant hearing tiny voices, but an allegory for America's treatment of post-war Japan. The small country needed the support of a large country to get back on its feet after the devastation of WWII, and Seuss wrote about Horton's plight with the Who after a trip to war torn Hiroshima. The book was dedicated to a friend of his in Japan.
11. He Wrote 'Yertle the Turtle' About Hitler - After some speculation, Seuss admitted that he did base the story of 'Yertle the Turtle' on Hitler. (The power-hungry turtle was a direct representation of the dictator.) But that wasn't the big controversy of the book. What ended up being controversial was the burp a turtle lets out at the end. That had never happened in a children's book before and the publisher argued for Seuss to take it out.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN CONTINUED

### 15 Facts About the Artist continued

**Theodor Seuss Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss** (March 2nd, 1904)

12. He's Had a Book Pulled From the Shelves - Seuss' rare 'The Butter Battle Book,' published in 1984, actually dealt with the nuclear arms race. It was pulled from the shelves after six months because of its underlying references to the Cold War and the arms race then taking place between Russia and the United States. Interestingly enough, the story was actually made into a short video piece and broadcast in Russia. (An TNT animated special, above, was produced by 'Fritz the Cat' director Ralph Bakshi in 1989.)

13. He Wanted Kids to Start Reading Early - The most popular book in the Dr. Seuss collection, 'Oh the Places You'll Go,' was meant to be read in utero. (Ok, we let one rhyme sneak in.) Seuss wrote it to introduce a child-to-be to all the Seuss characters. Coincidentally, it's now his best-selling book because so many people regularly give it as a graduation gift.

14. 'The Cat in the Hat' Killed Off Dick and Jane (<http://youtu.be/qtfCqv27HjE?t=50s>)

The Cat in the Hat' resulted from a theory Seuss had that the 'Dick and Jane' children's books were so boring, reading levels were down in schools because kids refused to read them. To fix this, a director at Houghton Mifflin sent Seuss a list of about 350 words kids should know and then challenged him to write a book kids couldn't put down with only 250 of those words in it. In the end, the book uses 220 of the words most used by children.

15. 'Green Eggs and Ham' Was the Result of a Bet - In 1960, Bennett Cerf, Seuss' editor, bet Seuss he couldn't write a book using only 50 words. The resulting story was 'Green Eggs and Ham' which uses exactly 50 words. Appearing in this order, they are: I am Sam; that; do not like; you green eggs and ham; them; would here or there; anywhere; in a house with mouse; eat box fox; car they; could; may will see tree; let me be; train on; say the dark; rain; goat; boat; so try may; if; good; thank. We could not say that five times fast. Would not, could not.

Read More: 15 Things You Probably Didn't Know About Dr. Seuss | <http://thefw.com/things-you-didnt-know-about-dr-seuss/?trackback=tsmclip>

### Lesson Plan Introduction

In advance of the lesson ask teachers to read all or part of Oh, The Places You'll Go!! by Dr. Seuss to students. Use the book to prompt discussions about dreams, places, accomplishments, life journeys, etc.. Discuss how his illustrations tell much of the story.

Introduce students to the idea that art can express their journeys, dreams, imaginations, ideas, places and more. Show some photographs of McPolin Barn as a place they know. Then ask how they would add their own personal imagination, place, dreams etc. to it. Chart student responses (optional).

### About The Book - Oh, The Places You'll Go!!

Dr. Seuss's wonderfully wise Oh, the Places You'll Go! is the perfect send-off for grads—from nursery school, high school, college, and beyond! From soaring to high heights and seeing great sights to being left in a Lurch on a prickly perch, Dr. Seuss addresses life's ups and downs with his trademark humorous verse and illustrations, while encouraging readers to find the success that lies within. In a starred review, Booklist notes, "Seuss's message is simple but never sappy: life may be a 'Great Balancing Act,' but through it all 'There's fun to be done.'"

The book evokes imaginary places, journeys and dreams, a perfect source of inspiration for creative visual expression. See quotes from the book at the end of this lesson.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN CONTINUED

### Lesson Plan

1. Show students images of McPolin barn, an iconic site in Park City, Utah. Ask them to describe what they see.
2. Introduce landscape technique ideas with the terms of foreground, middle ground and background. Show students where these areas are on the photograph or a large scale example. Teachers can even draw horizontal lines across the image to illustrate these areas.
3. Talk about how items appear larger in the foreground vs. smaller in the middle ground and smaller yet in the background.
4. Give students scratch paper and have them diagram out with horizontal lines their foreground, middle ground and background. Then have them think about their journey, dreams, imagined places and sketch some ideas out using the landscape techniques discussed.
5. When students are ready, give each a photograph of the McPolin barn. Ask them to map out the image with foreground, middle ground and background.
6. Using their art supplies, have students add in their visual ideas that they have sketched out about the places they will go and their personal journeys.
7. If time allows, have students share their ideas of places they will go and what they will do!

## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN CONTINUED

### Additional Resources:

<http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2125304-oh-the-places-you-ll-go>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oh,\\_the\\_Places\\_You'll\\_Go!](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oh,_the_Places_You'll_Go!)

[https://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom\\_resources/curricula/landscapes/lesson02.html](https://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/landscapes/lesson02.html)

<http://thefw.com/things-you-didnt-know-about-dr-seuss/>

## VISUALS

### McPolin Barn Images





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