

Unit Title: *The Art of Ecology***Grade Level:** 7th and 8th**Materials:**

Computers or smart devices with internet (at least one per student work table/group)

Overhead projector

Clean, recycled objects

Craft roll paper

Markers

Colored Pencils

Paint (acrylic or tempera)

Cardboard

Papier mache paste

Newspaper

Found materials

Wallpaper samples

Fabric samples

Visual references

Handouts

Vocabulary:

Ecology

Eco Art

Repurpose

Recycle

Impact

Environment

WHERE

This is an interdisciplinary unit between science and art, focusing on the relationships between humans and their environment. Students will explore their initial conceptions about ecology, and eco arts. By the end of the unit, students will have acquired the basic skills required to create two, and three-dimensional artwork using natural materials and found/recycled objects. This unit fits nicely with the introduction to a course.

LESSON ONE**(Word Cloud and Intro)****ESSENTIAL QUESTION:**

“What does ecology mean to me?”

OBJECTIVE/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will be able to explore their relationship to the world around them, and analyze their initial conceptions about ecology and eco arts by listing personal interpretations of eco art and their surrounding for use in a word cloud, and building a personal understanding and definition of ecology, and ecology-based art. Students will demonstrate their understandings of eco art through both written work and art production.

STANDARDS**State Standard:**

9-12.6. Content Standard: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

National Standard:

Achievement Standard:

1: Students:

- a. compare the characteristics of works in two or more art forms that share similar subject matter, historical periods, or cultural context

- b. describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts

HOOK

Upon entering the classroom, students will find a brainstorming sheet at their seats. Through written and verbal instruction, students will be prompted to write any words that come to mind (at least three) when considering *ecology* and *eco art*. The video *Recycled Art & Trash Art Exhibit* will be playing on the overhead while students write.

EXPLORE

The teacher will instruct students to pair and share their words with the tables, and further research the two terms. Under teacher supervision, students will work in groups on the classroom computers and smart devices with internet capabilities, in order to gather more information about ecology, and eco art on their brainstorming handout. Groups will compile lists of important words defining both terms. Together, the class will create a mural word cloud on ecology and eco art, using markers and paint on large craft paper. Students will emphasize important words through scale, color, and design. While students work, a digitally constructed word cloud will be shown on the overhead projector.

REFLECT

In a teacher-lead discussion, students will reflect on their interpretations of ecology-based art and the constructed mural. With student input, the teacher will post the class' definitions of both *ecology* and *eco art*.



ASSESSMENT

Task	Assessment
Students write any words that come to mind when considering <i>ecology</i> and <i>eco art</i> , while the video <i>Recycled Art & Trash Art Exhibit</i> plays (“Eco Art Brainstorming” handout)	Informal assessment: Teacher checks for (criteria) list of at least 3 words
Students pair and share words, and work in groups on the internet to compile lists of important words defining both terms. (“Eco Art Brainstorming” handout)	
The class creates a mural word cloud on ecology and eco art, using markers and paint on large craft paper.	Informal Assessment: Teacher checks for citizenship, that each student participates in discussion, lists found words, and adds to the mural
In a class discussion, students reflect on interpretations of ecology-based art and the mural	

The class settles on a definition of both *ecology* and *eco art*

Formal assessment:
Student write the class' new definitions on their
brainstorming handout

LESSON TWO

(Recycled Sketchbooks)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: “How can artists adapt and repurpose everyday objects in their art making?”

OBJECTIVE/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will learn to adapt and repurpose nontraditional art objects in the creation of two-dimensional art, through recycled-materials sketchbooks.

STANDARDS

National Standards

1: Students:

- a. know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes
- b. describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses
- c. use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
- d. use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

State Standards

9.1.12A: Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.

HOOK

Upon entering the classroom, students are presented with an image of found object artwork, and asked to list any, and every material they recognize on a piece of paper. The teacher will instruct students to use careful looking techniques in this exercise (instruct students to focus on the “Look” category from the “Art Critique” handout). Students will pair and share their responses, and the class will discuss how the materials were transformed.



Figure 1: Sample of found object art that could be used

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EXPLORE

Students will create sketchbooks using found objects and recycled materials. Wallpaper and fabric samples from local businesses can be used, along with recycled film, etc. Students will transform and repurpose materials, and explore new possibilities for nontraditional art materials. Two-dimensional and relief collages on the face of their cardboard, or recycled binder sketchbooks will be created. Students will be instructed to stock their finished sketchbooks with a cover page and sketch paper.

**REFLECT**

Students will use their newly created sketchbooks to reflect to the prompts following: "How did you adapt and repurpose everyday materials today? Is there anything else we could make with these materials?"

ASSESSMENT

Task	Assessment
Students list recognizable everyday materials in artwork	Informal assessment: The teacher will use a checklist to track student participation
Students create sketchbooks from recycled materials	Informal Assessment: Teacher checks for citizenship, that each student creates a sketchbook
Students will reflect in their newly-created sketchbooks	Formal Assessment: Teacher checks off that students have reflected on their collage and sketchbook construction (exit ticket)

LESSON THREE**(Recycled and Found Object Sculpture)**

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: “How do I impact the world around me?”

OBJECTIVE/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will be able to better understand their impact on their surroundings. Students will understand how artists can use recycled materials as a sustainable art practice. Following completion of the lesson, students will have the skills required to create three-dimensional sculptures from found materials.

STANDARDS***National Standards***

1: Students:

- a.** know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes
- b.** describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses
- c.** use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
- d.** use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

State Standards

9.1.12A: Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.

9.3.12A: Explain and apply the critical examination processes of works in the arts and humanities

HOOK

As students enter and bring their sketchbooks to their seats, a short video on found object and recycled art will play. With instruction written on the board, and given verbally by the teachers, students will open their sketchbooks to a blank page where they will jot notes while they watch the video. They will list any common materials that they use, that are seen being repurposed in the video as art materials.

EXPLORE

Students will pair and share their responses to the video and brainstorm any additional materials they use throughout the day that could be repurposed into art. Over the course of two class periods, students will experiment with everyday recycled objects provided by the teacher from a school-wide collection (see “Materials Requested” handout. They will sketch a plan for their own recycled art sculptures. As they plan, a YouTube playlist of videos demonstrating various



methods of altering everyday materials for the use in art will play to help inspire students. Students will create sculptures using everyday objects collected personally, and by classmates. Following completion of their projects, the teacher will lead a class critique and analysis of student production.

REFLECT

At the end of each work period, students will respond to the following prompts: “What materials did I transform today? How do I normally use these items? What might have been done with these materials if I hadn’t used them in my art?” Following completion of their sculptures, students will reflect on their construction methods and design choices through a class critique (use “Art Critique” handout). Students will better understand their own use of disposable

materials and everyday objects. Encourage students to consider where they would display their piece, and how the setting of the installation could impact meaning. Show Maya Lin’s *Recycled Landscapes* exhibit as a reference.



ASSESSMENT

Task	Assessment
Students list recognizable materials that they use	Informal assessment: The teacher will use a checklist to track student participation
Students create found object sculptures	Informal Assessment: Teacher checks for citizenship, that each student is actively engaged in creating a three-dimensional piece of art
Students will reflect on their use of materials in their piece, and in daily life in written reflections, and during a final class critique	Formal Assessment: Teacher checks off that students have reflected on their work with found objects in sculpture, and their use of materials throughout their life (exit ticket)