

# Late-Breaking News

## An In-Depth Investigation of the Lyme Art Colony

**Grades:** 9-12

**Time:** over the course of a week

**Grouping:** whole class, small groups, individual

**Materials:** access to Museum's website, writing paper, craft supplies, video/digital recorder, video/digital player, television, and video tape or DVDs

### Description

---

The Lyme Art Colony was a group of artists who were drawn to Old Lyme, Connecticut, as early as 1900. They stayed at the Griswold boardinghouse that was owned and operated by Florence Griswold. Through their interaction, the artists and other members of the boardinghouse impacted the art and history of the nation. The original boardinghouse is now a public museum that teaches the public about the history and art of the Lyme Art Colony through five major themes. The themes include *The American Art Colony at Lyme; Daily Life in a Boardinghouse, c. 1910; Making the Most of Limited Choices: The Life and Times of Florence Griswold; A Sense of Place: The Artistic Rediscovery of New England;* and *Connecticut and American Impressionism.*

This lesson introduces students to the art and history of the Lyme Art Colony by having them create a television news report that incorporates information from the five interpretive themes. Students use the Museum's on-line resources to gather information (both in words and pictures) about the five themes before creating a news show that incorporates the material. The various news programs can be performed for fellow classmates as well as other students in the school.

### Objectives

---

- To learn about the Lyme Art Colony from several theme areas
- To think about the content conveyed in contemporary news media
- To use the Museum's website as a source of information
- To work as a group to develop a mock news program
- To view historic photographs and paintings of people
- To work alone to research, write, and perform a news story
- To work as a group to perform the news program in front of the class

## Curriculum Connections

---

### **Social Studies educational experiences in Grades 9-12 will ensure that students:**

- Formulate historical questions and hypotheses from multiple perspectives, using multiple sources
- Gather, analyze and reconcile historical information, including contradictory data, from primary and secondary sources to support or reject hypotheses
- Use primary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives
- Initiate questions and hypotheses about historic events they are studying
- Be active learners at cultural institutions such as museums and historical exhibitions
- Describe relationships between historical subject matter and other subjects they study, current issues, and personal concerns
- Explain why places and regions are important to human and cultural identity and stand as symbols for unifying society

### **Visual Art educational experiences in Grades 9-12 will ensure that students:**

- Analyze and interpret art works in terms of form, cultural and historical context, and purpose
- Analyze and compare characteristics of the visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues or themes of that period
- Compare the creative processes used in the visual arts with the creative processes used in the other arts and non-arts disciplines
- Create and solve interdisciplinary problems using multimedia
- Apply visual arts skills and understandings to solve problems relevant to a variety of careers
- Use subject matter, symbols, ideas and themes that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, and cultural and aesthetic values to communicate intended meaning
- Research and analyze historic meaning and purpose in varied works of art
- Reflect critically on various interpretations to better understand specific works of art
- Defend personal interpretations using reasoned argument

### **Language Arts educational experiences in Grades 9-12 will ensure that students:**

- Will apply collaborative skills to elaborate on concepts being addressed and to describe processes used in achieving results
- Will select from the complete variety of text structures (essay, short story, poetry, academic essay, report, research paper, response to literature, documentary, etc.) the appropriate organizational pattern for addressing audience, purpose, and point of view
- Will identify and use effectively the salient features of all appropriate oral, visual, and written discourse

- Will determine which primary and secondary sources are appropriate to the task (research paper, fiction, school newspaper, video) and will integrate and elaborate upon information effectively in the final product
- Will identify and use the most effective process for them to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece
- Will use the spoken and written syntax made standard by television announcers and newspaper editorialists and will use the diction of skilled writers and orators
- Will evaluate the language they use in written and oral tasks for its suitability for the audience being addressed

The above goals align with this lesson and were selected from *The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards* (adopted in March 1998, published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, Division of Teaching and Learning). Go to: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/site/default.asp> to download a copy of the entire publication *The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards*.

#### **Inclusion Activity (Engaging Prior Knowledge)**

---

Begin the lesson with a Student Grouping Activity that places students into unique pairs or trios to discuss a question designed to stimulate their prior knowledge on a subject or idea related to the lesson. Several activities that will help organize students into unexpected groups are listed below. Of course, other methods of pairing up students may be substituted for these activities.

## **Student Grouping Activities**

### ***Musical Pairs***

---

Use a portable CD player or simple instrument to play music/sound. Explain to the students that when the music/sound starts they are to walk around the room silently in a safe but random pattern (nodding friendly hellos to their fellow students). When the music stops, the students should pair up with the nearest person to discuss the question read aloud. After each question is discussed, start the music again. Repeat until all three questions have been discussed.

#### A Circle of Friends

---

Ask your students to get into a circle facing the center. Ask every other student to step into the circle facing out. Have the inner circle rotate to the right until they are face to face with a partner. Ask the first question. After the question is discussed, have the outer circle move three or four people to the right to line up with a new partner. After the question is discussed, have both the inner circle and outer circle move three to four people to the right to line up with a final partner.

#### Enjoying a Little Tete-A-Tete

---

The term “tete-a-tete” refers to a private conversation between two people (as well as a short sofa intended to accommodate two persons). Ask your students to put their chairs into pairs (side by side, but facing in opposite directions) and take a seat. After each question is discussed, have students move to another seat and partner up with a new person.

#### Find Two Like You

---

Ask your students to find two other students who match a certain criterion like: *Find two other students with your hair color*; or *Find two other students with birthdays close to yours*; or *Find two other students who have same kinds of pets*; or *Find two other students who like your favorite ice cream flavor*. Students usually begin to call out their answers and cluster with those whose answers match. Once they have three people, their group is complete. Teachers may have to make a cluster of non-matching students.

Once the students are in their pairs or trios, have them discuss one of the following questions read aloud by the teacher. After a minute of discussion passes, remix the groups and continue with next question. Repeat until all questions have been discussed.

#### Discussion Questions

---

- Which method of news media (television, radio, internet) do you like best for finding out about current events?
- What do you think the name “the information age” really means?
- If you could time travel only long enough to take one digital photograph, where, when, and why would you go?

## Instructions

---

1. Divide the class into working groups of five (one for each theme) and have them read *The Story of Miss Florence and the Lyme Art Colony* to introduce them to the Lyme Art Colony. Have them formulate a series of questions they have about the Lyme Art Colony after reading the background information (i.e. what more do they want to know?).
2. Introduce the assignment of creating a news program that covers the five interpretive themes related to the Lyme Art Colony. Have the students research the five themes (and more) via their computer by going to *The Scholar Essays* section of the Museum's on-line learning sites. They should use the five essays for their main content source material but can elaborate on these themes by surfing the pages of *The Fox Chase* and *In Situ: The Painted Panels* looking for information that can be incorporated into their news report.
3. Ask the groups to identify and describe the characteristics of the different types of news programs they see on television. The students should decide how to share their brainstorming with the class. If time allows, perhaps student could follow up by bringing into class recordings of the various news reporting options (evening news, morning shows, talk shows, entertainment shows, fake news, etc.). Review the recordings as a class to prompt discussion about the different approaches, styles, and audience. The working groups will have to decide on an approach for their news show.
4. In preparation for the students to write their reports about the five interpretive themes and the Lyme Art Colony, have them use a computer to gather information about their themes and topics at [www.FlorenceGriswoldMuseum.org/learning](http://www.FlorenceGriswoldMuseum.org/learning). Each of the five themes are fully described in the Scholar Essays accessed via the top navigation bar on both *The Fox Chase* and *In Situ: The Painted Panels* sites. Information related to each theme is available throughout these two sites.
5. Encourage your students to be creative in their presentation of the material. If feasible, encourage multimedia presentations with Powerpoint, staging, and graphic images.
6. During the draft stage, have students work together to turn their web findings into engaging news reports. Encourage students to make suggestions to enhance each other's writing and plan for smooth transitions between their reports.
7. For the final presentations encourage the students to prepare a professional final draft of their news copy as well as a performance for the class. If possible, videotape the news reports and burn onto DVDs for each student to share at home.

### **A Time for Reflection**

---

Have students reflect on the following questions in their own journals.

#### **Content/Thinking:**

- Do you think your group's approach to the news report would be a good tool to teach people about the Lyme Art Colony?
- How did you decide which facts to include in your news report?

#### **Social:**

- How did your group decide which type of news show to create?
- Was your group good at tying the different reports together?

#### **Personal:**

- What part of your report did you like the best?
- Do you think it would be fun to work as a television reporter? Why or why not?

### **Appreciations**

---

Before concluding the lesson, be sure to invite appreciations from the group (e.g. thank group partners for good brainstorming or suggestions for better writing). To help students begin making statements of appreciation, use such sentence starters as these:

- I liked it when ... (describe the situation)
- I was amazed when ...

### **Follow-Up Activity**

---

Consider planning a field trip to the Museum in Old Lyme with your students. Information about a visit can be found on the [Planning A Visit](#) page.

### **Feedback**

---

Please share your suggestions for making the lesson better. Let the Museum know how this lesson worked for you and your students by sending your comments and suggestions to [david@flogris.org](mailto:david@flogris.org). Educators are encouraged to submit copies of final products and/or digital images to be shared on our website.