

RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

OVERVIEW

Paintings & Poets

Title: *Paintings & Poets*

Grade Level: 7-8 Grades

Purpose:

To engage students in the reading strategies of determining importance and synthesizing; and to develop an appreciation of the power of words to convey particular ideas, feelings, and images through an exploration of visual art and poetry.

Description of the Unit:

In this Unit, students write a descriptive poem about one of Charlie Russell's paintings based on their personal reactions to the work or by imagining the voice of the artist or subjects in the work. They observe many paintings by Charles Russell while learning visual art strategies and vocabulary. Students will listen, read, and analyze various poems by Montana authors. Throughout the process, students engage in their own poetry writing, building their capacity to carefully observe, critically discuss, and analyze visual art. As a culminating event, students present their work and reflect on the process.

Primary Standards Addressed:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (*e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot*).
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (*e.g., alliteration*) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (*e.g., soliloquy, sonnet*) contributes to its meaning.
- Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (*e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film*).
- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

VISUAL ART STANDARDS

- Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Analyze ways that visual components and cultural associations suggested by images influence ideas, emotions, and actions.
- Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses.



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Paintings & Poets

Russell for Learning Unit: *Paintings and Poets* *A literacy based unit utilizing the arts*

PRE-TEACH LESSON: *Introduce Charlie Russell and the Russell for Learning Unit.*

LESSON OBJECTIVE: By the end of this lesson, students will gain valuable background knowledge about the life and times of Charles M. Russell and be able to describe the qualities that made Charlie Russell such an important figure in Montana and the American West.

Time: 50 minutes

Materials/Resources:

- C.M. Russell and the American West an Unfinished Work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxSgyk91DdM>
- Paper
- Pencil

Step 1: INTRODUCE THE UNIT (10 min)

Process:

Start the unit by explaining the purpose and activities of the unit.

Suggested Dialogue:

We are beginning a Russell for Learning unit called Paintings and Poets. In this unit, you combine reading and writing with the arts to gain skills in both. In this unit, we'll figure out what qualities made Charlie Russell so important to the American West and why he is still important today. We will use the art of Charlie Russell to generate vocabulary and ideas for our writing.

Step 2: INTRODUCE THE PRE-TEACH LESSON

Process:

Give an overview of the lesson objective: Explore the qualities that made Charlie Russell an important figure in Montana and the American West.

Suggested Dialogue:

Today we are going to explore the qualities and characteristics which shaped Charlie Russell into such an important figure in Montana's History. By the end of today's lesson, you will be able to say, *"I can use words and phrases to describe the qualities of Charlie Russell."*

Step 3: INTRODUCE CHARLIE RUSSELL AS AN IMPORTANT HISTORICAL FIGURE (30 min)

Process:

Play *C.M. Russell and the American West an Unfinished Work*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxSgyk91DdM> and take notes to gather evidence of Charlie's life and work as an artist. Refer to the *Evidence Chart* in the student notebook as a graphic organizer.



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RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

Guide students through a process in which they use evidence from the video and make inferences about **(a)** the values of the American West and Montana as a newly formed state and **(b)** Charlie Russell as a person and artist. With each piece of information, follow the steps below:

1. Periodically stop and record what students learn about Charlie or Montana. Ask the question, “What have you learned?” Use chart paper to record.
2. Use what students have learned to draw conclusions about connecting Charlie to the values of Montana. Ask the questions, “Based on what you just learned, what more questions do you have? What can you conclude about the values of either Montana or Charlie as a person?” Create a list of qualities about Charlie. Decide which qualities help to confirm him as an important historical figure.
3. Record definitions for each quality so that students can use the words independently as the unit progresses. As students develop more nuanced understandings, feel free to add to the definitions.

Suggested Dialogue:

Introduce the video.

About ten years before Montana became a state, over 100 years ago, a young man named Charles (*Charlie*) Russell came here at the age of 16 from St. Louis, Missouri. He wasn’t doing well in school; in fact, he disliked school so much that he started skipping. Today, some people think he may have had a learning disability because he struggled so much. Although he wasn’t doing well in core subject areas, he was constantly doing creative things. He would take beeswax from his sister and create little figures of animals. He liked to sketch and draw the people and landscapes around him. One day his father decided he needed to be set straight and so he put Charlie on a train with a family friend to go work on a ranch in Montana for the summer. He never came home to Missouri. As we learn more about Charlie in this brief documentary, I’ll pause and we’ll talk about what we are learning about Montana at this time in history as well as Charlie as a person and artist. After the video, we’ll talk about what makes him important to Montana.

Watch video. Pause at the following points:

(1:37 pause) What have we learned about Charlie so far? Why do they refer to Montana as “territories?” *(Students respond. Share with students a little about the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. A map may be helpful.)* What is a quality about Charlie that we can infer? *(If students give a quality like “brave,” prompt them to provide evidence, and record.)*

(2:37 pause) Let’s pause and write down these four important points about Montana during this time. We’ll come back to these again throughout this unit. Is there anything we can infer about the changing west and the values of Charlie or Montanans? *(Students respond.)*

- Disappearance of the buffalo
- Conquering of the native tribes
- Barbed-wire fencing of the open range
- End of the “Old West” as it was

(3:53 pause) Why were artists painting “history in the making?” Why does she say that they wanted to “capture it before it’s gone?” *(Students respond. Share with students that photography was still new and not available to everyone. The average price of a black and white camera was from \$600-\$2,000 and the average monthly wage for a cowboy in 1880 was \$30 a month.)* What is a quality that we can infer about



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The Art and Soul of the American West

RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

everyone. The average price of a black and white camera was from \$600-\$2,000 and the average monthly wage for a cowboy in 1880 was \$30 a month.) What is a quality that we can infer about Charlie based on this new information? What about the changing world of Montanans? *(Students respond. If students give a quality like “brave,” prompt them to provide evidence, and record on chart.)*

(6:22 pause) What does he mean when he says, “Whether it’s all real or not”? Does anyone have any idea about what it means to “romanticize” something? *(Students respond. Share that romanticism means to think not just factually about something or someone, but also to think with feelings.)*

(11:25 pause) What are we learning about the opinions and values of Charlie? How did he feel about the drilling for oil? *(Students respond. Record.)*

(15:27 pause) Why does Kathryn Red Corn say that Charlie’s painting showed her that he “understood Indians”? What does it say about the importance of the buffalo? *(Students respond. Record.)*

(18:19 pause) What are we learning about the landscape of Montana *(as a “stage”)*? What does “foil” in this context mean? *(Share that foil in this context means to serve as a contrast. Make note of this as it will be helpful in analyzing Charlie’s painting in future lessons.)*

(end of video) What else did we learn about Charlie? What do you notice about the way he signed his name at the bottom of his paintings? What could be the meaning of that? *(Students respond. Record.)*

STEP 4: STUDENTS MOVE INTO CREATIVE COMMUNITIES (10 min)

Process:

Guide students to sit in small groups of 4-6. Students will support each other as they discuss which qualities best represent Charlie Russell.



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RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

LESSON 1: Introduce Descriptive Poetry; Apply Characteristics of Descriptive Poetry to Selected Paintings

LESSON OBJECTIVE: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to describe the narrative components of a piece of artwork.

Time: 50 minutes

Materials/Resources:

- *His Heart Sleeps*, poem by Charlie Russell
- *Beautiful Existence*, poem by Minerva Allen (Sunk Pa)
- *Laugh Kills Lonesome*, poem by Mike Logan
- *His Heart Sleeps*, painting by C.M. Russell
- *Her Heart is on the Ground*, The Mourner, painting by C.M. Russell
- *Laugh Kills Lonesome*, painting by C.M. Russell
- *His Heart Sleeps*, with music by Norbert Rossi is used by permission of Swan River Press, Inc., Kalispell, Montana, performed by Great Falls College – Montana State University Choir under the direction of Cynthia Stevens.

STEP 1: INTRODUCE LESSON 1 (5 minutes)

Process:

Give an overview of the lesson objective: To use descriptive poetry to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of a painting.

Suggested Dialogue:

Today we are going to look more closely at some Charlie Russell paintings by using descriptive poetry. By the end of today's lesson you will be able to say, ***"I can use my imagination to describe my experience and understanding of a painting through poetry."***

STEP 2: INTRODUCE DESCRIPTIVE POETRY (5 minutes)

Process:

Invite students to share their background knowledge of poetry. Have them discuss various forms and then introduce an example of a descriptive poem.

Suggested Dialogue:

We are going to begin by reading a poem about a piece of artwork. Let's talk for a moment about how a poem is different from a story. In what ways do you think a poem is different from a story? Pair-share with a partner. (*Students pair-share. Students may respond with "poems are shorter," "poems rhyme," "poems describe something," etc.*) Let's share. (*2-3 students share.*)

Poets pay close attention to words and phrases—choosing them very carefully to help readers imagine how something looks, sounds, smells, tastes, feels to the touch or even to create empathy for a human experience. A form of poetry called "ekphrastic" poems specifically uses artwork as the primary inspiration (*ekphrasis means "description" in Greek*). For this lesson however, we will just be focusing on descriptive poetry. Let's begin with one of Charlie's paintings that you may not have seen before.



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RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

STEP 3: OBSERVE & ANALYZE “HIS HEART SLEEPS,” BY CHARLIE RUSSELL; READ & ANALYZE “HIS HEART SLEEPS,” BY CHARLIE RUSSELL (15 minutes)

Process:

First show the painting, “*His Heart Sleeps*,” by Charlie Russell. Model observing the artwork and analyzing it using descriptive poetry guiding questions. Discuss how the guiding questions and shared observations could inform a direction for writing a descriptive poem. Share the poem, “*His Heart Sleeps*,” by Charlie Russell. Discuss his choices as a writer.

Suggested Dialogue:

This is a painting by Charlie Russell. He painted this in 1911.

Show “His Heart Sleeps.” (Color copied or projected)

Let’s first begin by observing his choices in painting. I’ll give you 90 seconds to observe in silence. *(Wait 90 seconds.)* What did you notice about color? What kinds of color did he use? Where do you see contrasting colors *(warm and cool)*? *(Students respond.)* What about texture? *(Students respond.)* Based on what you noticed about color, contrast, or texture, do you have any guesses as to the title of this painting? What is the main subject or focus of the painting? *(Students respond.)* It is called, “*His Heart Sleeps*.” What is the mood of the artwork? What sounds, smells, or tastes could you associate with it? How does this painting make you feel? *(Students respond.)* Overall, how would you summarize the main idea of this painting? What story is being told? I’ll give you a minute or so to pair-share. *(Allow sufficient time for students to share with their neighbors. Then have them share out. Scribe their words on the board.)*

Based on the deep observation we have done and the words we have generated in association with this painting, let’s brainstorm possible directions for an descriptive poem. What could we write about? *(Gather ideas in a list. Make the list to include ideas from all steps in the observation process such as colors, texture, mood, senses and possible story.)*

Now we’ll look at a poem that was Charlie Russell wrote about this painting, “*His Heart Sleeps*.”

Hand out copies of “*His Heart Sleeps*,” by Charlie Russell. Read the poem aloud several times.

This poem is by Charlie Russell. We’ll read it three times.

The first time, just listen to the poem. *(Read poem.)*

The second time, close your eyes and see what kind of feelings or images, sounds, smells, or tastes come into your mind. *(Read the poem again.)*

The third time, follow along in your text as I read. Notice words and phrases that stand out because they evoke a strong visual image or feeling. *(Read the poem again, play music of the same title.)*

*No flowers deck his resting place,
No marble marks the spot,
But nature loves her children-
Her child is not forgot.*



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RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

*Oft times she rocks his cradle
Which hangs at river's brink,
Her waters hum his lullaby
Where great herds come to drink.*

*His God, the sun, rides guard for him
And throws his golden light,
The moon with all her children
Watches o'er him through the night.*

What words or phrase stood out for you and why? What is the mood or tone of his poem? Pair-share with your neighbor. (*Student pair-share.*) Tell us about it. (*Students share out. Note: Connected to tone and mood, be sure to point out the use of imagination and metaphor in Charlie Russell's poem. There is no explicitly painted "cradle" in Russell's painting, but his interpretation leads to the idea of a child in a cradle.*)

STEP 4: OBSERVE & ANALYZE "HER HEART IS ON THE GROUND, THE MOURNER," BY CHARLIE RUSSELL; READ & ANALYZE "BEAUTIFUL EXISTENCE," BY MINERVA ALLEN. (15 minutes)

Process:

Repeat process of previous step, only with a different piece of artwork and correlating poem.

Suggested Dialogue:

Let's look at another painting by C.M. Russell. It was painted in 1895.

Show "Her Heart is on the Ground, The Mourner." (color copied or projected)

Let's begin by observing his choices in painting. I'll give you 90 seconds to observe in silence. (*Wait 90 seconds.*) What do you notice about color? What kinds of color did he use? Where do you see contrasting colors (*warm and cool*)? (*Students respond.*) What about texture? (*Students respond.*) Based on what you noticed about color, contrast, or texture, do you have any guesses as to the title of this painting? What is the main subject or focus of the painting? (*Students respond.*) It is called, "*Her Heart is on the Ground, The Mourner.*" What is the mood of the artwork? What sounds, smells, or tastes could you associate with it? How does this painting make you feel? (*Students respond.*) Overall, how would you summarize the main idea of this painting? What story is being told? I'll give you a minute or so to pair-share. (Allow sufficient time for students to share with their neighbors. Then have them share out. Scribe their words on the board.)

Based on the deep observation we have done and the words we have generated in association with this painting, let's brainstorm possible directions for a descriptive poem. What could we write about? (*Gather ideas in a list. Make the list to include ideas from all steps in the observation process such as colors, texture, mood, senses and possible story.*)

Now we'll look at another poem.

Hand out copies of "*Beautiful Existence*," by Minerva Allen. Read the poem aloud several times.

This poem is by Minerva Allen. We'll read it three times.



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RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

The first time, just listen to the poem. (*Read poem.*)

The second time, close your eyes and see what kind of feelings or images, sounds, smells, or tastes come into your mind. (*Read the poem again.*)

The third time, follow along in your text as I read. Notice words and phrases that stand out because they evoke a strong visual image or feeling. (*Read the poem again, play music of the same title.*)

*Death my friend is not long.
Wrapped in a tanned buffalo robe,
painfully I sank to the floor,
forcing my aching knee joint to bend.
I sat cross-legged.
Fumbling for my ceremonial pipe,
filling it with tobacco from a
small pouch; lit it.
Smoke wreathed around my head.
I felt for my drum and began a faint
Tapping on the taut rawhide.
The voice that once rang from mountain
tops, echoing along beaver streams.
Softly I sang a chant of death.
All is quiet*

What words or phrase stood out for you and why? What is the mood or tone of his poem? Pair-share with your neighbor. (*Student pair-share.*) Tell us about it. (*Students share out.*)

STEP 5: OBSERVE & ANALYZE “LAUGH KILLS LONESOME,” BY C.M. RUSSELL; READ & ANALYZE “LAUGH KILLS LONESOME,” BY MIKE LOGAN. (15 minutes)

Process:

Repeat process of previous step, only with a different piece of artwork and correlating poem.

Suggested Dialogue:

Let's look at another painting by C.M. Russell. It was painted in 1925.

Show “Laughter Kills Lonesome.” (color copied or projected)

Let's begin by observing his choices in painting. I'll give you 90 seconds to observe in silence. (*Wait 90 seconds.*) What do you notice about color? What kinds of color did he use? Where do you see contrasting colors (*warm and cool*)? (*Students respond.*) What about texture? (*Students respond.*) Based on what you noticed about color, contrast, or texture, do you have any guesses as to the title of this painting? What is the main subject or focus of the painting? (*Students respond.*) It is called, “*The Death Song, in a Blackfoot Camp.*” What is the mood of the artwork? What sounds, smells, or tastes could you associate with it? How does this painting make you feel? (*Students respond.*) Overall, how would you summarize the main idea of this painting? What story is being told? I'll give you a minute or so to pair-share. (*Allow sufficient time for students to share with their neighbors. Then have them share out. Scribe*



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The Art and Soul of the American West

RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

their words on the board.)

Based on the deep observation we have done and the words we have generated in association with this painting, let's brainstorm possible directions for a descriptive poem. What could we write about? *(Gather ideas in a list. Make the list to include ideas from all steps in the observation process such as colors, texture, mood, senses and possible story.)*

Now we'll look at another poem.

Hand out copies of "Laugh Kills Lonesome," by Mike Logan. Read the poem aloud several times.

This poem is by Mike Logan. We'll read it three times.

The first time, just listen to the poem. *(Read poem.)*

The second time, close your eyes and see what kind of feelings or images, sounds, smells, or tastes come into your mind. *(Read the poem again.)*

The third time, follow along in your text as I read. Notice words and phrases that stand out because they evoke a strong visual image or feeling. *(Read the poem again, play music of the same title.)*

He called it LAUGH KILLS LONESOME.

*Shows old friends around the fire
An' them boys is swappin' windys
Long before they savvied wire.*

*Charlie stands there in the firelight.
He's the nighthawk who's rode in.
He, mostly, talked to hosses.
Sang night songs to the wind.*

*That paintin' shows another time
When men rode all alone
An' yarnin' by the cookfire
Made a wagon seem like home.*

*You can feel ol' Charlie mournin'.
He'd 'a give up wealth an' fame
To ride back down them old trails
Before the land was tame.*

*LAUGH KILLS LONESOME, Charlie loved it,
That time now long ago,
When the wind still blew, unfettered,
From the Milk to Mexico.*

What words or phrase stood out for you and why? What is the mood or tone of his poem? Pair-share with your neighbor. *(Student pair-share.)* Tell us about it. *(Students share out.)*

STEP 6: Instruct students that they will be hearing a few more poems tomorrow and writing their own descriptive poems of the course over the next two days.



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RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

LESSON 2: *Instruct on Point-Of-View in Descriptive Poetry; Write Descriptive Poem Based On Selected Charlie Russell Painting; Introduce Descriptive Poetry Rubric & Extend Poetry Writing As Free Choice*

LESSON OBJECTIVE: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify the character(s) and possible points of view in a painting.

Time: 50 minutes

Materials/Resources:

- *Just Wrinkles*, poem by Jennifer Greene
- *September Song*, poem by Margaret P. Kraenzel
- *Three Generations*, painting by C.M. Russell
- *Deer Grazing*, painting by C.M. Russell
- *The Exalted Ruler*, painting by C.M. Russell
- Descriptive Poem Graphic Organizer
- Paper
- Pencils

STEP 1: INTRODUCE LESSON 2 (5 minutes)

Process:

Give an overview of the lesson objective: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify the character(s) and possible points of view in a painting.

Suggested Dialogue:

Today, we are going to return to descriptive poetry and learn another approach for writing about artwork. By the end of today's lesson you will be able to say, *"I can use my imagination to illuminate a character's point of view in a painting through poetry."*

STEP 2: OBSERVE & ANALYZE "THREE GENERATIONS," BY C.M. RUSSELL; READ & ANALYZE "JUST WRINKLES," BY JENNIFER GREENE (15 minutes)

Process:

Revisit students' understanding of descriptive poetry. Introduce point of view through the discussion of a painting and a poem.

Suggested Dialogue:

When we first discussed descriptive poetry, we began by carefully observing a painting and then we expressed our ideas of the place or the painter's intent. An additional approach to descriptive poetry can be through the point of view of a subject in a painting.

Show "Three Generations." (Color copied or projected)



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RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

This was painted in 1897 by Charlie Russell. Let's first begin by observing the choices in his painting. I'll give you 90 seconds to observe in silence. (*Wait 90 seconds.*) What did you notice about color? What kinds of color did he use? Where do you see contrasting colors (*warm and cool?*) (*Students respond.*) What do you notice about layering and perspective? Where is our eye drawn? (*Students respond.*) What about texture? (*Students respond.*) Based on what you noticed about color, contrast, or texture, do you have any guesses as to the title of this painting? What or who is the main subject or focus of the painting? (*Students respond.*) It is called, "Three Generations." What is the mood of the artwork? What sounds, smells, or tastes could you associate with it? How does this painting make you feel? (*Students respond.*) Overall, how would you summarize the main idea of this painting? What story is being told? I'll give you a minute or so to pair-share. (*Allow sufficient time for students to share with their neighbors. Then have them share out. Scribe their words on the board.*)

Based on the deep observation we have done and the words we have generated in association with this painting, let's brainstorm possible directions for a descriptive poem. What could we write about? (*Gather ideas in a list. Make the list to include ideas from all steps in the observation process such as colors, texture, mood, senses and possible story.*)

Now we'll look at a descriptive poem that could have been inspired by this painting.

Hand out copies of "Just Wrinkles" by Jennifer Greene. Read the poem aloud several times.

This is a poem by Jennifer Greene. We'll read it three times.

The first time, just listen to the poem. (*Read poem.*)

The second time, close your eyes and see what kind of feelings or images, sounds, smells, or tastes come into your mind. (*Read the poem again.*)

The third time, follow along in your text as I read. Notice words and phrases that stand out because they evoke a strong visual image or feeling. (*Read the poem again, play music of the same title.*)

*Her face remembers things she can't. The skin
around her mouth and on her cheeks hangs down
weighed down with smiles and laughs forever stored
inside a pouch so full it had to stretch
and curve. She never paced herself when she
was young. She let her face and skin express
her joy and sadness flowing, flowing fast
through sharp new rocks becoming worn with life
so smoothed and grooved into comfort, routine
that now routine is all she has and grooves.*

What words or phrase stood out for you and why? What is the mood or tone of his poem? Pair-share with your neighbor. (*Student pair-share.*) Tell us about it. (*Students share out.*)



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The Art and Soul of the American West

RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

STEP 3: OBSERVE & ANALYZE “DEER GRAZING,” BY C.M. RUSSELL; READ & ANALYZE “SEPTEMBER SONG,” BY MARGARET P. KRAENZEL. (15 minutes)

Process:

Repeat process of previous step, only with a different piece of artwork and correlating poem.

Suggested Dialogue:

Let's look at another painting that has many possible characters (*or subjects.*)

Show “Deer Grazing.” (color copied or projected)

Let's begin by observing his choices in the painting. I'll give you 90 seconds to observe in silence. (*Wait 90 seconds.*) What do you notice about color? What kinds of color did he use? Where do you see contrasting colors (*warm and cool*)? (*Students respond.*) What about texture? (*Students respond.*) What do you notice about layering and perspective? Where is our eye drawn? (*Students respond.*) Based on what you noticed about color, contrast, or texture, do you have any guesses as to the title of this painting? What or who is the main subject or focus of the painting? (*Students respond.*) It is called, “*Deer Grazing.*” What is the mood of the artwork? What sounds, smells, or tastes could you associate with it? How does this painting make you feel? (*Students respond.*) Overall, how would you summarize the main idea of this painting? What story is being told? I'll give you a minute or so to pair-share. (*Allow sufficient time for students to share with their neighbors. Then have them share out. Scribe their words on the board.*)

Based on the deep observation we have done and the words we have generated in association with this painting, let's brainstorm possible directions for a descriptive poem. What or who could we write about? From what perspective? (*Gather ideas in a list. Make the list to include ideas from all steps in the observation process such as colors, texture, mood, senses, and possible story.*)

Now we'll look at a descriptive poem that could have been inspired by this painting.

Hand out copies of “*September Song,*” by Margaret P. Kraenzel. Read the poem aloud several times.

This poem is by Margaret P. Kraenzel. We'll read it three times.

The first time, just listen to the poem. (*Read poem.*)

The second time, close your eyes and see what kind of feelings or images, sounds, smells, or tastes come into your mind. (*Read the poem again.*)

The third time, follow along in your text as I read. Notice words and phrases that stand out because they evoke a strong visual image or feeling. (*Read the poem again, play music of the same title.*)

*When I see autumn in the unexpected sight
Of long clouds flung out white
On the blue heaven's slope
And a hawk hangs black
Above slack brown water
Moving to a slower beat,*



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RUSSELL FOR LEARNING

Paintings & Poets

*While in among the yet green leaves
One branch hangs palid gold,
One bough is tipped with red,
Then dread
Sends me wandering every sun path
Frantic, to plead
Lest it be thought
I have not loved the summer enough—
September must not end!*

From what perspective did this poet write from? What words or phrase stood out for you and why? What is the mood or tone of her poem? Pair-share with your neighbor. (*Student pair-share.*) Tell us about it.

STEP 4: STUDENTS WRITE A SHORT DESCRIPTIVE POEM FOR “THE EXALTED RULER” BY CHARLIE RUSSELL (15 minutes)

Process:

Just as in the previous two lessons, guide students through a deep observation of “The Exalted Ruler” and then have them begin their own descriptive poem. This first start can be short, aiming for between 5-8 lines. Students may use the **Descriptive Poetry Graphic Organizer** during this time.

Suggested Dialogue:

Now let’s look at another Charlie Russell painting.

Show “Deer Grazing.” (color copied or projected)

Let’s begin by observing Charlie’s choices in painting. I’ll give you 90 seconds to observe in silence. (Wait 90 seconds.) What do you notice about color? What kinds of color did he use? Where do you see contrasting colors (warm and cool)? (Students respond.) What about texture? (Students respond.) Based on what you noticed about color, contrast, or texture, do you have any guesses as to the title of this painting? What or who is the main subject or focus of the painting? (Students respond.) It is called, “The Exalted Ruler.” What is the mood of the artwork? What sounds, smells, or tastes could you associate with it? How does this painting make you feel? (Students respond.) Overall, how would you summarize the main idea of this painting? What story is being told? I’ll give you a minute or so to pair-share. (Allow sufficient time for students to share with their neighbors. Then have them share out. Scribe their words on the board.)

You will now have the rest of the time to start your own descriptive poem based on Charlie Russell’s “Exalted Ruler.” Remember to think about how the painting makes you feel, what you might see, hear, smell, taste. From what perspective will you write it? You may use your **Descriptive Poetry Graphic Organizer** to help you develop and arrange your ideas for your poem. (*Whether you choose to use the enclosed rubric or your own, now is the time to go over it.*) (Allow the rest of class time for writing.)

STEP 5: If students do not finish, instruct them that they will be given some time in class tomorrow to complete their poem.



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LESSON 3: *Continue To Write Descriptive Poem Based On Selected Charlie Russell Painting; Instruct on Peer Editing & Discuss Descriptive Poetry Rubric*

LESSON OBJECTIVE: By the end of this lesson, students will have written a descriptive poem from a character's point of view and taken time to revise and polish that poem.

Time: 50 minutes

Materials/Resources:

- Pencils
- Paper
- **Peer Editing Checklist**

STEP 1: INTRODUCE LESSON 3 (5 minutes)

Process:

Give an overview of the lesson objective: By the end of this lesson students will have written a descriptive poem from a character's point of view and taken time to revise and polish that poem.

Suggested Dialogue:

Today we are going to continue writing our poems from yesterday. We will then peer edit our poems and polish them up for presentation tomorrow. *(Give students about 15 minutes to finish their poems.)*

STEP 2: PEER EDIT POEMS (15 minutes)

Process:

Guide students into creative communities of 4-6. Introduce the **Peer Editing Checklist**.

Suggested Dialogue:

Now that we have finished a first draft of our poems, we will be taking some time to edit each other's poems. First you will each read your poems aloud in your group. Each of you will receive a Peer Editing Checklist. Send it with your poem to a member of your group; that person will check your poem according to the list and will then give you feedback at the bottom. When you have finished editing a classmate's poem, return the poem and editing checklist to the poet. The poet will then find one more person in their group to edit their poem. Once two people have edited your poem, you may begin revising it. Remember, when giving feedback, try to be positive.

STEP 3: REVISE AND POLISH POEMS (15 minutes)

Process:

Instruct students to take their **Peer Editing Checklist** and use it to revise their poems. Remind students what you will be looking for in a finished product.

Suggested Dialogue:

Now that two people have edited your poems, you may start revising them. Please remember what I will be looking for in your finished products. If you do not finish your poem during this class period, you will need to take it home for homework.



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LESSON 4: *Present & Reflect on Written Poems*

LESSON OBJECTIVE: By the end of this lesson, students will present and reflect on their poems with an audience.

Time: 50 minutes

Materials/Resources:

- Finished Poems
- Poetry Writing Group Reflection Process
- Poetry Rubric (*Optional*)

STEP 1: INTRODUCE LESSON 4 (5 minutes)

Process:

Give an overview of lesson objective: By the end of this lesson students will present and reflect on their poems with an audience.

Suggested Dialogue:

Over the last two days we have been working to write descriptive poems about “*The Exalted Ruler*” by Charlie Russell. Today you will present your poems to your group and reflect on them.

Suggested Dialogue:

Now let’s look at another Charlie Russell painting.

STEP 2: STUDENTS PRESENT AND SHARE POEMS IN A GROUP REFLECTION PROCESS (30 minutes)

Process:

Guide students to share their poems with their peers to elicit feedback on one or two selected words or phrases. Post the Poetry Writing Group Reflection Process (*shown below*) on the board as a reference. (*Guide students into creative communities of 4-6*)

Suggested Dialogue:

We are going to take turns reading our poems aloud in small groups. Decide who will read first. That poet will read their piece and everyone will listen. Then each group member will share one or two words or phrases that stood out to them. The criteria for what stands out should be based on our previous discussions such as images or words that create mood/tone or contain rich images, sounds, smells, or feelings. Then you will switch to a new poet to read their piece. You’ll repeat this until all have shared.

Poetry Writing Group Reflection Process:

Now let’s look at another Charlie Russell painting.

1. The poet reads his/her piece aloud.
2. Go around and each group member shares one or two words or a short phrase that stands out to them and why...
 - I like the phrase _____ because it made me imagine _____.
 - I like the word(s) _____ because they made me feel _____.
 - I like the word(s) _____ because it painted a picture in my mind of _____.
3. Switch to a new poet. Repeat steps.



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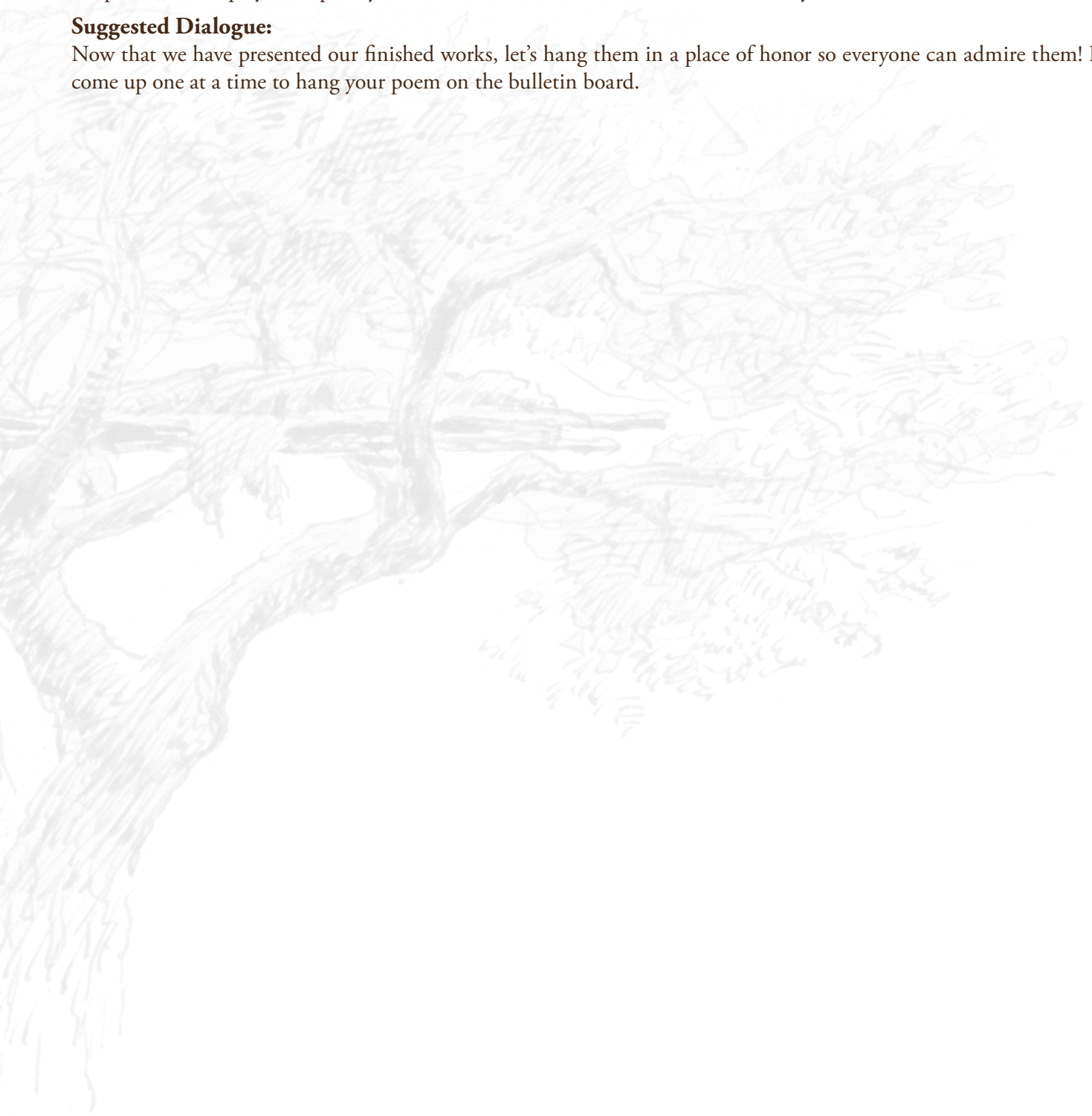
STEP 3: DISPLAY POETRY (15 minutes)

Process:

Help students display their poetry on a bulletin board in the classroom or hallway.

Suggested Dialogue:

Now that we have presented our finished works, let's hang them in a place of honor so everyone can admire them! Please come up one at a time to hang your poem on the bulletin board.



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His Heart Sleeps

*No flowers deck his resting place
No marble marks the spot,
But nature loves her children-
Her child is not forgot.*

*Oft times she rocks his cradle
Which hangs at river's brink,
Her waters hum his lullaby
Where great herds come to drink.*

*His God, the sun, rides guard for him
And throws his golden light,
The moon with all her children
Watches o'er him through the night.*

Charles M. Russell, *His Heart Sleeps*, 1913, pen & ink,
written in Josephine Trigg's Calligraphy, C.M. Russell Museum



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Beautiful Existence

*Death my friend is not long.
Wrapped in a tanned buffalo robe,
painfully I sank to the floor,
forcing my aching knee joints to bend.
I sat cross-legged.
Fumbling for my ceremonial pipe,
filling it with tobacco from a
small pouch; lit it.
Smoke wreathed around my head.
I felt for my drum and began a faint
Tapping on the taut rawhide.
The voice that once rang from mountain
tops, echoing along beaver streams.
Softly I sang a chant of death.
All is quiet.*

Minerva Allen, *Birthright: Born to Poetry- A Collection of Montana Indian Poetry*,
Compiled by Dorothea M. Susag, 2017



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Laugh Kills Lonesome

He called it LAUGH KILLS LONESOME.

*Shows old friends around the fire
An' them boys is swappin' windys
Long before they savvied wire..*

*Charlie stands there in the relight.
He's the nighthawk who's rode in.
He, mostly, talked to hosses.
Sang nightsongs to the wind.*

*That pain n' shows another me
When men rode all alone
An' yarnin' by the cook re
Made a wagon seem like home.*

*You can feel ol' Charlie mournin'.
He'd 'a give up wealth an' fame
To ride back down them old trails
Before the land was tame.*

*LAUGH KILLS LONESOME, Charlie loved it,
That me now long ago,
When the wind still blew, unfettered,
From the Milk to Mexico.*

Mike Logan, *Laugh Kills Lonesome & Other Poems*, 1991



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Just Wrinkles

*Her face remembers things she can't. The skin
around her mouth and on her cheeks hangs down
weighed down with smiles and laughs forever stored
inside a pouch so full it had to stretch
and curve. She never paced herself when she
was young. She let her face and skin express
her joy and sadness flowing, flowing fast
through sharp new rocks becoming worn with life
so smoothed and grooved into comfort, routine
that now routine is all she has and grooves.*

Jennifer Greene, *Birthright: Born to Poetry- A Collection of Montana Indian Poetry*,
Compiled by Dorothea M. Susag, 2017



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September Song

*When I see autumn in the unexpected sight
Of long clouds flung out white
On the blue heaven's slope
And a hawk hangs black
Above slack brown water
Moving to a slower beat,
While in among the yet green leaves
One branch hangs palid gold,
One bough is tipped with red,
Then dread
Sends me wandering every sun path
Frantic, to plead
Lest it be thought
I have not loved the summer enough—
September must not end!*

Margaret P. Kraenzel, *Seed in the Soil*, Poems by Poets of the Montana
Institute of the Arts, Edited by Ida Isabel Donohue, 1967



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