

Cultural Infusion: the Public Art of Philadelphia's Chinatown

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Abstract

Using Philadelphia's Chinatown as a model, this unit investigates many forms of public art and how their iconography identifies community culture. The unit crosses lessons of social studies and art and covers the history behind the art in Chinatown: immigration to the United States, Chinese New Year traditions, Chinese symbolism, and Asian-American cultural infusion. This curriculum was based on the Philadelphia School District's Core Curriculum. It addresses Pennsylvania State Standards, 9.1 and 9.2 for 6th grade, middle school visual- art classes. The unit also challenges students to create and display their own interpretations of Chinatown's art and history, to interact in a positive manner with the school community and to develop models of effective cultural communication within the school and the neighborhood.