

The National Visual Arts Standards

Grades K-4 Visual Arts

These standards provide a framework for helping students learn the characteristics of the visual arts by using a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions, to reflect their ideas, feelings, and emotions; and to evaluate the merits of their efforts. The standards address these objectives in ways that promote acquisition of and fluency in new ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating. They emphasize student acquisition of the most important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge offered by the visual arts. They develop new techniques, approaches, and habits for applying knowledge and skills in the visual arts to the world beyond school.

The visual arts are extremely rich. They range from drawing, painting, sculpture, and design, to architecture, film, video, and folk arts. They involve a wide variety of tools, techniques, and processes. The standards are structured to recognize that many elements from this broad array can be used to accomplish specific educational objectives. For example, drawing can be used as the basis for creative activity, historical and cultural investigation, or analysis, as can any other fields within the visual arts. The standards present educational goals. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose appropriately from this rich array of content and processes to fulfill these goals in specific circumstances and to develop the curriculum.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts and must exhibit their competence at various levels in visual, oral, and written form.

In Kindergarten–Grade 4, young children experiment enthusiastically with art materials and investigate the ideas presented to them through visual arts instruction. They exhibit a sense of joy and excitement as they make and share their artwork with others. Creation is at the heart of this instruction. Students learn to work with various tools, processes, and media. They learn to coordinate their hands and minds in explorations of the visual world. They learn to make choices that enhance communication of their ideas. Their natural inquisitiveness is promoted, and they learn the value of perseverance.

As they move from kindergarten through the early grades, students develop skills of observation, and they learn to examine the objects and events of their lives. At the same time, they grow in their ability to describe, interpret, evaluate, and respond to work in the visual arts. Through examination of their own work and that of other people, times, and places, students learn to unravel the essence of artwork and to appraise its purpose and value. Through these efforts, students begin to understand the meaning and impact of the visual world in which they live.

1. Content Standard: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

Achievement Standard:

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

2. Content Standard: Using knowledge of *structures and functions

Achievement Standard:

Students

- a. know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas
- b. describe how different *expressive features and *organizational principles cause different responses
- c. use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas

3. Content Standard: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

Achievement Standard:

Students

- a. explore and understand prospective content for works of art
- b. select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning

4. Content Standard: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Achievement Standard:

Students

- a. know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures
- b. identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places
- c. demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art

5. Content Standard: Reflecting upon and *assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

Achievement Standard:

Students

- a. understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art
- b. describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks
- c. understand there are different responses to specific artworks

6. Content Standard: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Achievement Standard:

Students

- a. understand and use similarities and differences between characteristics of the visual arts and other arts disciplines
- b. identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum