

VISIT TO THE OLSON HOUSE

Cushing, Maine

The Olson House is affiliated with the Farnsworth Art Museum. By contacting the education department at the museum, teachers can arrange a visit.

Interdisciplinary Lesson: Visual Arts and Language Arts

In the best interest of student achievement this lesson should be done with an art teacher and a language arts teacher collaborating.

Maine Learning Results Alignment

Visual Arts, grade level 6-8

Standard A: Disciplinary Literacy – Visual Arts

Performance Indicator: Students explain and compare different purposes of artists and their artwork, in the context of time and place.

Standard B: Creation, Performance, and Expression

Performance Indicator: B3- Making Meaning Students create art works that communicate an individual point of view.

English Language Arts: Reading

A2 - f. Analyze how meaning is conveyed in poetry through diction, figurative language, repetition, and rhyme.

Goals

- 1) Students will visit the Olson House in Cushing and see the actual locations where Andrew Wyeth painted many of his works.
- 2) Students will create a drawing and poem at the Olson House that captures the sense of place.

Background Information

Andrew Wyeth combines a realistic style with an element of abstraction. Wyeth's favorite media is watercolor and egg tempera. He liked to paint the landscape in winter and early spring when colors are subtle and trees are bare. The colors suit his tempera palette, low-key and subdued. In many paintings the space around the objects or people becomes an important element of the composition. Wyeth does not want people to look at his paintings just to see how well he has painted the fine details. He prefers, that, through his paintings, people be reminded of memories of their own past or experience new feelings in the present. Not shallow nostalgia but depth of emotion is his goal.

Process

- 1) Discuss with students how an artist selects the subject for their artwork.
- 2) Students will walk through the Olson House and notice the paintings, location and subject. Students think about the feelings that the painting portrays to them and the emotions they have. If they are working where another student is they might wish to discuss this with them.
- 3) Students will select a location in or outside the Olson House thinking about the sense of place. In this situation sense of place is defined as what feeling or

perception comes when thinking about the space or what one sees or senses. Students should ask themselves: How does the view make you feel? What sense of place comes forward in your thinking? What do you notice in this space, close up/in the distance? What do you see in and around the objects in your view?

- 4) Once these questions are answered students should determine what they wish to draw and include in their drawing and begin.
- 5) While drawing students should think about words that identify the sense of space.
- 6) Students need to determine where they wish to put the poem on the drawing. They may write simultaneously or after the drawing is complete.
- 7) Individual critiques, discussing artwork with teacher. Group critique, can be small group or with entire class.