

What is Folk Art?

Grade level: 3rd-8th grade

Kansas Standards: Visual Arts; English Language Arts; History, Government, and Social Studies

Estimated time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Students will learn about the significance of folk art, its varied forms, and the reasons it has historically been created. They will use analytical skills to interpret and compare works of American folk art from the Mulvane Art Museum collection. They will create a sculpture that has personal meaning and is inspired by folk art.

Materials

- Found objects and assorted materials: dried leaves and flowers, pinecones, sticks, cedar, buttons, ribbons, beads, cardboard, colored paper scraps
- Hot glue guns, tacky glue, scissors
- Acrylic paint and brushes

Procedure

1. Introduce the lesson by discussing the history and meaning of folk art, and then read Walt Whitman's poem "I Hear America Singing."
2. Show [three examples of American folk art](#) from the Mulvane collection. Have students analyze them individually and then comparatively.
4. Note that folk artists often depict objects, animals, and stories that inspire them or make them happy. Have students choose one thing that makes them happy and write a statement about how it brings them joy.
5. Using provided materials, students will assemble a small folk art-inspired sculpture that represents the thing that makes them happy. Cardboard can be painted and used as a base for the sculpture, or students can choose to make a free-standing sculpture.
6. Have students each present their art and read their statement.

Read a [detailed version](#) of this lesson plan with background information, prompts, and resources.