

LESSON PLAN: SILHOUETTES

Author: Maple Ridge Museum

Subject and Grade Level: Social Studies (Grade 2?)

Objectives: Make historical activities more relevant and less abstract. Understand how people in the past got likenesses of themselves without a camera.

Materials:

Lamp/light fixtures, large white paper, black paper, pencils, scissors

For detailed instructions and pictures:

<https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/how-to-make-a-silhouette-drawing-2504807>

Additional Notes:

More info:

<http://www.silhouettesbyhand.com/history>

POSSIBLE OPENING QUESTIONS:

What do you use to take pictures? Why do you take pictures? What do you think people did before cameras?

PROCEDURE/STEPS:

1. Ask questions about how the students get pictures of themselves. Segway into the fact that people often did not have access to a camera or they could not afford to have their portrait painted.
2. Give step by step instructions on how to make a silhouette portrait (in link above). In whatever way you believe would suit the students.
3. Put the children in groups of 2. Have the children attempt to create portraits of their partner.
4. When done, move onto the discussion.

DISCUSSION AND REVIEW:

Discussion question ideas: Why do people want likenesses of themselves? Why did some people not have access to a camera? Why couldn't everyone get a portrait painted?

ASSESSMENT:

ENRICHMENT:

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Photography was not commonly used until the mid 1800's so this type of portrait was incredibly popular up until then.
- One of the first instances of making portraits in this way dates back to c. 500 CE.
- The name "silhouette" comes from a well-known french penny pincher Etienne de Silhouette from the 1700's. He was known for cutting profiles in his spare time.
- When photography became more affordable in the 1880's, silhouettes fell out of favour.
- In the 21st century, there are still a few places that practice the art of silhouette making including certain Disney parks, at state fairs, and on online stores.