

## LESSON PLAN

# PRESIDENT KENNEDY THROUGH THE EYES OF AN ARTIST



Bernadine Stetzel Collection / The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza.

### GRADE

3rd–7th

### TIME

15–30 minutes

### BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Using the selected paintings from the [Bernadine Stetzel Collection](#) provided through The Sixth Floor Museum's online collections, students will analyze and interpret artwork that shows scenes of President Kennedy's life. There are three activity options below; please select the one(s) that will best fit your classroom needs.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to compare artwork content for purposes of reflecting on life, telling stories, or documenting history.
2. Students will be able to compose informational writing using genre specific characteristics.
3. Students will be able to integrate ideas drawn from life experiences to create original works.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How can artwork be used to tell the stories of history?
2. How can artwork be interpreted and used as the foundation for other types of stories? How has technology developed since the 1960s regarding the profession of journalism?
3. How can artwork be analyzed and applied to previous life experiences?

## MATERIALS

- [Bernadine Stetzel Paintings](#)
- Technology device that you or your students can access the [E-museum link](#) and look at the painting

## TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TEKS)

- [TEKS on pg. 4-5](#)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bernadine Stetzel was a self-taught artist who painted over 1,000 pieces on subjects ranging from her personal childhood memories to significant historical milestones. As a self-taught artist, she used painting to connect with the minds of a younger audience. Throughout her life, Stetzel was an enthusiastic supporter of President Kennedy and was devastated by the assassination of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963. In 1968, she visited the President's gravesite in Arlington Cemetery and was inspired to depict the late leader's life through a series of paintings. From 1968 through 1985, Stetzel completed 71 paintings depicting Kennedy from his childhood christening ceremony to the eternal flame at his gravesite. Through her paintings, Stetzel highlighted significant moments in American history as well as personal moments in the life of President Kennedy.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### Activity Option 1: You're the Artist

1. Divide students into small groups of 2-3 per group.
2. Assign one painting to each small group.
3. Give students a few minutes to study the painting.
4. As a group, have the students think, write and share what they observe in the painting.
5. Ask students to share any connections they can make between the painting and their own lives.
6. Students will draw a picture highlighting an important person, place or event in their lives.
7. After completing the drawing, if comfortable, students will share what they drew, and why they selected their topic and what connection they have with it.

**Optional extension:** Rotate the images and have groups can repeat this process for multiple paintings

### **Activity Option 2: Time Traveler**

1. Divide students up into small groups of 2-3 students per group.
2. Assign one painting to each small group.
3. Give students a few minutes to observe and analyze the painting they have been assigned and write down what they notice.
4. Students will pretend they have travelled back in time and are in the moment the painting depicts. They will write a letter to a family member or friend describing what is happening.
  - a. Encourage students to tell a story and be creative. It is okay to add some embellishment if the basis of their letter is about the painting's subject.

**Optional extension 1:** Rotate the assigned paintings and have students repeat this activity for multiple images.

**Optional extension 2:** As a small or large group, ask the students to place the images in chronological order. Have students explain their thinking behind placing these paintings in this order.

### **Optional Activity: What is the Story?**

1. Divide the students into small groups of 2-3 students per group.
2. Assign one image to each of the small groups.
3. Give students time to, as a small group, study and analyze the painting they were given and write down what they see.
4. Individually, students will put themselves in the shoes of a journalist and draft a news story describing the event occurring in the painting. It is okay to add some extra details but stick as close to the image subject matter as possible.
5. Have students share their story with their stories with the other members of their group and/or the whole class.

**Optional extension 1:** Rotate the assigned paintings so students can repeat the activity for multiple images.

**Optional extension 2:** Have students share their mini-news stories and select 4-5 to create a short magazine detailing Kennedy's life through the paintings and their stories.

# TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### ELEMENTARY

**§113.14 (b) (15) (B)** create and interpret timelines.

**§113.14 (b) (15) (D)** express ideas orally based on knowledge and experiences.

**§113.15 (b) (19) (C)** organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps.

**§113.15 (b) (21) (D)** create written and visual material such as journal entries, reports, graphic organizers, outlines, and bibliographies.

**§113.16 (b) (18) (B)** identify leadership qualities of national leaders, past and present.

**§113.16 (b) (23) (E)** identify the historical context of an event.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

**§113.18 (b) (16) (A)** explain relationships that exist between societies and their architecture, art, music, and literature.

**§113.19 (b) (20) (E)** support a point of view on a social issue or event.

**§113.20 (b) (29) (B)** analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology through sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.

## ART

**§117.114 (b) (3) (A)** compare content in artworks for various purposes such as the role art plays in reflecting life, expressing emotions, telling stories, or documenting history and traditions.

**§117.117 (b) (2) (A)** integrate ideas drawn from life experiences to create original works of art.

**§117.202 (c) (2) (A)** create original works based on direct observations, original sources, personal experiences, and the community.

**§117.203 (b) (4) (B)** analyze artworks using a method of critique such as describing the artwork, analyzing the way it is organized, interpreting the artist's intention, and evaluating the success of the artwork.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

### ELEMENTARY

**§110.5 (b) (7) (A)** describe personal connections to a variety of sources, including self-selected texts

**§110.5 (b) (6) (E)** make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society.

**§110.6 (b) (1) (D)** work collaboratively with others to develop a plan of shared responsibilities.

**§110.6 (b) (7) (D)** retell, paraphrase, or summarize texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order.

**§110.7 (b) (6) (H)** synthesize new information to create new understanding.

**§110.7 (b) (7) (E)** interact with sources in meaningful ways such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

**§110.22 (b) (1) (D)** participate in student-led discussions by eliciting and considering suggestions from other group members, taking notes, and identifying points of agreement and disagreement.

**§110.22 (b) (6) (G)** discuss and write about the explicit or implicit meaning.

**§110.23 (b) (5) (F)** make inferences and use evidence to support understanding.

**§110.23 (b) (9) (C)** analyze the author’s use of print and graphic features to achieve specific purposes.

**§110.24 (b) (5) (D)** create mental images to deepen understanding.

**§110.24 (b) (11) (A)** compose literary texts such as personal narratives, fiction, and poetry using genre characteristics and craft.

**§110.25 (b) (6) (C)** understand and interpret visual representations.

**§110.26 (b) (1) (E)** identify the importance of using appropriate nonverbal communication.

**§110.26 (b) (6) (A)** use imagination to plan, organize, and tell stories.

**§110.26 (b) (6) (B)** use appropriate verbal and nonverbal skills to share stories.