

## Objectives

Students will

- Define the meaning of community
- Discuss an artwork in-depth that deals with themes of community and belonging
- Brainstorm words and metaphors to describe the artwork
- Write a collaborative cinquain poem in response to an artwork about community and belonging
- Create a collage in response to a cinquain poem
- Investigate the relationship among the original artwork about community, the cinquain response poem, and the response collage

## Introduction

This lesson will focus specifically on the importance of belonging to a community and how we can express that basic human need in art and poetry. Some of the questions you will explore with your class in this lesson include:

- How do we express our deepest need as human beings to belong to a tribe or community?
- How can writing a poetic response to an artwork about belonging enrich our understanding of the artwork, ourselves, and our broader community?
- How can creating art from a poem enrich our understanding of the poem and the universal beliefs or truths about community expressed in that poem?

## Learning Activity Part 1: Create!

Look at the painting *Tamalada* by Carmen Lomas Garza with your class and discuss what you see and how you feel when you look at the piece. Pay special attention to elements of community and belonging expressed in the piece. What symbols, colors, text, etc. are used in the artwork to communicate ideas of belonging or, conversely, loneliness? In addition to looking at themes of community in the artwork, explore your students' own ideas about belonging and encourage them to share examples of when they felt like they did or didn't belong and why.

After your discussion, ask students to choose one word (noun, verb, adjective) or metaphorical phrase to describe the artwork. Review or introduce metaphors to your students if



Nicholas Britsky, *New Americans*, 1974

## Materials

- Images from Springville Museum of Art (see below)
- Pencils
- Paper
- Paint
- Paintbrushes
- Glue
- Collage materials with text (e.g. magazines, old books, posters, etc.)
  - Alphabet Stamps
  - Black Ink

## Images from the Museum

- Nicholas Britsky, *New Americans*

## Other Images

- Carmen Lomas Garza, *Tamalada*
- Faith Ringgold, *Tar Beach 2*

## Utah Core Standards

Language Arts

Reading: Standard 7

Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

Visual Arts:

Standard 1: Objective 2

a. Make thumbnail sketches, storyboards, or verbal descriptions to help organize art ideas before beginning the actual piece

Standard 3: Objective 1

Explore possible content in art prints or works of art

1a. Determine the context by examining the subject matter, themes, symbols, ideas, and meanings in significant works of art.

Standard 3: Objective 2

Discuss, evaluate, and choose symbols, ideas, subject matter, meanings, and purposes for students' own artworks

your class is unsure about this poetic devices. Ask each student to write their word or metaphor on a post-it note, and stick all of the post-its on the board at the front of the room. Explain that you will be writing a cinquain (five line) poem together using some of the words and metaphors posted on the board. Go through each line of the poem structure and have students help you choose which words or phrases from the post-it board to insert into the poem:

- Line 1: One word, a general noun to describe the work of art
- Line 2: Two adjectives to describe the work of art
- Line 3: Three “-ing” action verbs to describe the work of art
- Line 4: A four-word phrase that describes the work of art
- Line 5: One specific word that describes the more general word from line 1

Read the poem aloud and talk with the class about their experience writing a poem in response to art. Suggest that writing creatively about a work of art forces us to look closely at the artwork, reflect on its meaning, make personal connections, and engage our empathy.

### Learning Activity Part 2: Collaborate!

Divide students into groups of four or five, and give them a work of art that addresses themes of community and belonging--give half the class the painting *New Americans* by Nicholas Britsky and the other half *Tar Beach 2* by Faith Ringgold. Give them as much contextual information about the artwork and artist as you feel is appropriate. Encourage each group to employ the same creative process you just modeled by first verbally discussing the piece as a small group, second, encouraging each group member to write



Carmen Lomas Garza, *Tamalada*, 1990. Smithsonian American Art Gallery

down one word or metaphor to describe the piece, and third, writing a collaborative cinquain poem about the artwork using some or all of their chosen words and phrases.

### Learning Activity Part 3: Collage!

Once each small group has written their cinquain poem, have them exchange their poem with another group. Ask the small groups to create a collage in response to the poem they've received. Encourage students to include symbols, colors, and text in their collage that will visually communicate the ideas expressed in the poem. Feel free to have students create a collaborative work of art or have each member of the group create their own artwork in response to the poem.

### Assessment

Have students present their collages to the class along with the cinquain poem they responded to as well as the original work of art that inspired the poem. Ask students to reflect on the choices they made in their poems and collages and any challenges they faced. As a class, explore the relationship among the original works of art, the cinquain poems, and the collages.

Assessment questions you may want to ask students: Can you tell me the three biggest choices you made in creating your collage? Why do you feel these choices were important to your final creation? Can you tell me the three biggest choices you made in writing your cinquain poem? Why do you feel these choices were important to your poem? How did your poem help you better understand the original work of art and its themes? How did your collage help you better understand the cinquain poem and its themes? Have your ideas about community and belonging changed since the beginning of this lesson? Why or why not?



Faith Ringgold, *Tar Beach 2*, 1990. Philadelphia Museum of Art



## SOURCES

How to Write a Cinquain Poem

<http://writeshop.com/writing-a-cinquain-poem/>

Ekphrasis

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/resources/learning/glossary-terms/detail/ekphrasis>

*Looking to Write: Students Writing Through the Visual Arts* by Mary Ehrenworth

*Third Mind: Creative Writing through Visual Art* edited by Tonya Foster and Kristin Prevallet

*Tar Beach 2* by Faith Ringgold

<http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/86892.html>

*Tamalada* by Carmen Lomas Garza

<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=35507>

*The New Americans* by Nicholas Britsky lesson plan

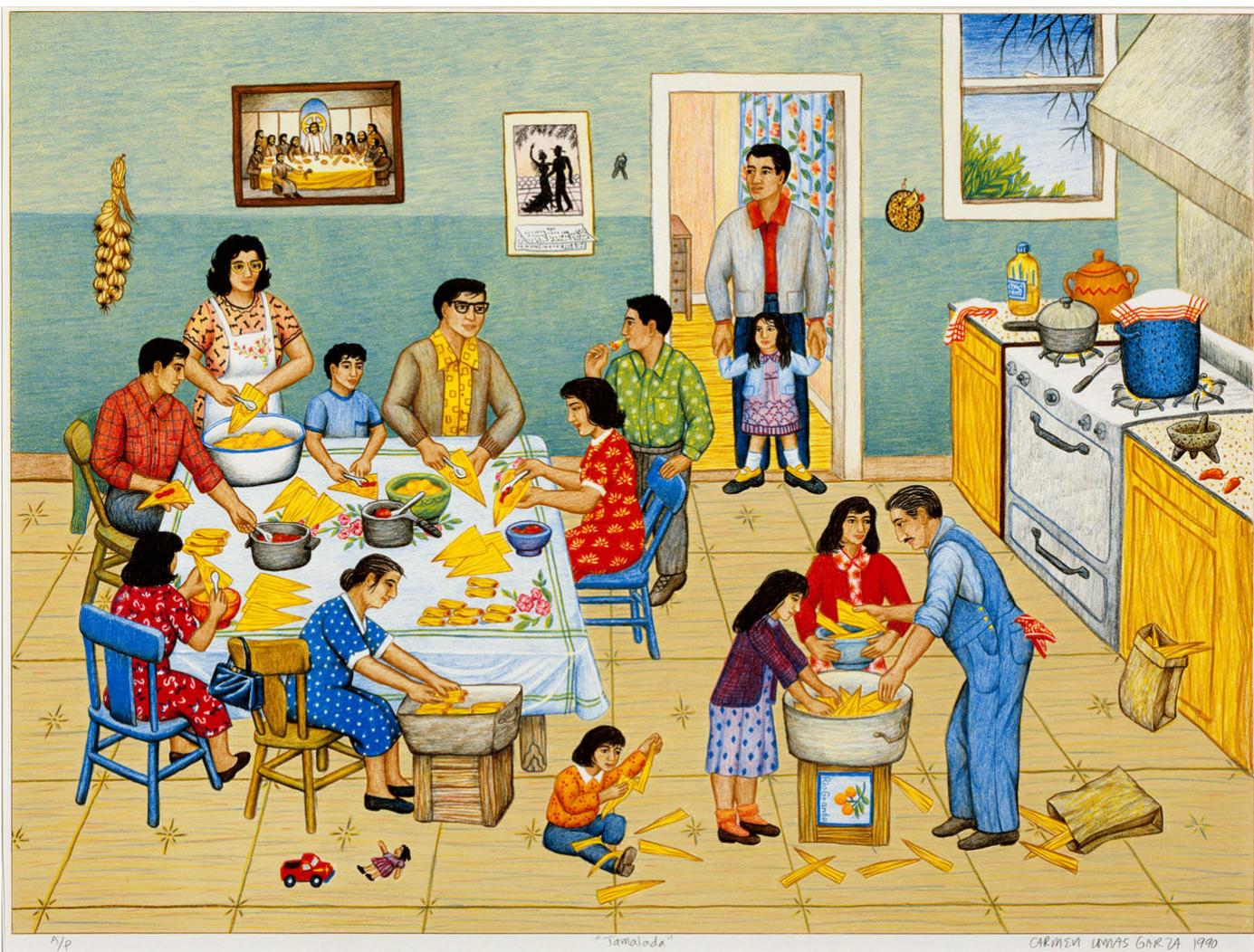
[http://www.smofa.org/files/fck\\_uploaded\\_files/SMA%20Sixth%20Grade%20Lesson%20Plans\(1\).pdf](http://www.smofa.org/files/fck_uploaded_files/SMA%20Sixth%20Grade%20Lesson%20Plans(1).pdf)

*Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold

<https://www.amazon.com/Tar-Beach-Faith-Ringgold/dp/0517885441>



Nicholas Britsky, *New Americans*, 1974



Carmen Lomas Garza, *Tamalada*, 1990. Smithsonian American Art Gallery

