

**Joslyn Art Museum**  
**Comprehensive Study Lesson Plan**

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**Theme: Connecting Art and the Written Word**

**Focus:** Thomas Moran and his *The Pearl of Venice*

**Objectives:**

- Understand how artists can persuade people through the images they create, and the words they use.
- Discover how art and poetry inspire each other.
- Learn how the advent of photography helped artists.

**Instructional Strategies that Strongly Affect Student Achievement – Robert J. Marzano**

_____ 01 Identifying similarities and differences	_____ 06 Cooperative learning
_____ 02 Summarizing and note taking	_____ 07 Setting goals and providing feedback
_____ 03 Reinforcing effort and providing recognition	_____ 08 Generating and testing hypotheses
_____ 04 Homework and practice	_____ 09 Activating prior knowledge
_____ 05 Nonlinguistic representations	

**Resources:**

Check out the **Teacher Support Materials** online for additional resources.

**Suggested Materials:** Thomas Moran's framed reproduction or teaching poster, art supplies, large world map, stickers or pins, Venetian architecture images, 1871 U.S. Geological Survey map, W.H. Jackson photographs, Moran's images, National Parks timeline, thick garbage bags, duct tape, metal washer

**Vocabulary:** artist-explorer, artistic license, camera obscura, diagram, documenting, expedition, exploration, field sketch, geological survey, illustrator, national park, scale

**Procedure:**

- **Engage:** Show students a map of the world. Have them think about a place they would like to visit. Depending on grade level, hand out stickers or pins, and have students show where they would like to visit on the map. They also should talk about why they would like to go there.
- **Art Talk:** Gather students around Moran's *The Pearl of Venice*. Talk about how Moran would often anchor paintings with well-known architecture, and using his artistic license he would create elements in the foreground. With older students discuss the buildings shown in the artwork. Using *The Pearl of Venice*, discuss foreground, middle ground and background. You may even compliment this activity with a drawing exercise <http://ow.ly/1tNKG>
- **History:** Who is Thomas Moran? Refer to the **Bibliography** and **Webology** in **Teacher Support Materials** for additional information.
- **Aesthetics:** Also on the 1871 U.S. Geological Survey with Moran was photographer William H. Jackson. Show students both images of Moran's paintings and of Jackson's photographs. Explain to students that Moran would sometimes use photographs in addition to his sketches when he was back in his studio. Have students debate Moran's "artistic license" with the reality/details presented in Jackson's photographs. Moran studied William Turner and learned that is what he did – give the "impression" of the landscape. Does a painting have to be realistic in detail or is an impression okay?

- **Production:** Using their research notes and loose/rough sketches, students should draw this place based on the descriptions they read. Younger students should create a postcard of the place, and write a descriptive paragraph or words about the place. Older students should create a brochure with illustrations.
- **Other:** Have students research their place they declared in the **Engage** activity. Encourage them to focus on written documents. If they find photographs of the place, they may create some basic sketches. Explain that before Moran visited Yellowstone, he had to create illustrations of it based on an explorer's notes and loose sketches. This is a precursor to **Production**.
- **Close:** Hang up the postcards or brochures. Have students talk about their place of choice. Take a vote after each presentation to see if students are now convinced they would like to visit that place as well.

### Extensions:

- **Cultural Connections 1:** Study W.H. Jackson and his connection to Omaha. Then talk about the importance of both Moran's paintings and Jackson's photographs to making Yellowstone the first national park. Study the National Parks system and its timeline. Answer the question: what would the United States be like without National Parks?
- **Cultural Connections 2:** Moran was part of a family of artists, including his brothers and his wife. Have students discuss a talent that is predominant in their family, a family business of which they are familiar or something like that. Think about what their parents do for a living – ask students if they would like to follow in their footsteps or if they would like to do something else when they grow up.
- **Fine Arts:** Come up with a list of words (possible ideas are spelling test words) and a list of shapes. Assign each student a word and a shape (or could have them randomly drawn from a hat) – Older students could be assigned more than one word and or shape. Students should create a sculpture that expresses those words using the shape at least once. Then have an art exhibition. Students have to try to figure out what word and perhaps shape is used in the artwork.
- **Language Arts:** Refer to the Poetry activity lead by Michael Catherwood at the March 2010 Thursdays for Teachers event.
- **Math:** Scale. Ask the question - Why did Moran add figures to his painting? Why did Jackson have a person in his photographs? See the Moran teaching poster for images. Talk about why scale is important in drawings. Create some problems for the students, for example go the Grand Canyon and study how deep it is. Now talk about how deep it is in different terms, for example, how many elephants high is it? Students may also want to sketch a diagram.
- **Science:** Refer to the Camera Obscura lesson presented Ellie Greenspoon at the April 2010 Thursdays for Teachers.

**Selected References:** Go online to **Teacher Support Materials** and review the **Bibliography, Webology** and **Videos**.