

# Words and Images: Art of Iran

## Unit Plan

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Content Area:** Visual Art

**Unit Duration:** Five one-hour lessons

### Unit Overview:

This art unit is intended to be taught collaboratively with a concurrent social studies unit, so that students are gaining understandings of Iranian history and culture as they explore works made by artists of Iranian descent. Lessons 1-3 will introduce students Iranian visual art, and in lessons 4-5, students will use words and images to succinctly communicate about their own culture and/or values.

### Essential Questions:

- ~ How do artists communicate?
- ~ How can art be a powerful tool of communication?
- ~ Who are you and what do you want to say?

### Unit Understanding:

Students will understand the critical role that visual art can play in reflecting and shaping societies. They will understand that Iranian artists, like all artists, blend styles and influences to develop work that communicates their own unique vision.

### Preparation:

Arrange the room to reflect the topic of the unit. Gather and display images of Iranian art from ancient to present times. Display posters, maps and timelines of events in Iran's history. Coordinate these materials with the social studies teacher.



Shirin Neshat  
*Untitled*, 1996  
B&W Photograph with Ink

### Standards:

<b>AR.CM.HC.02</b>	Describe and distinguish works of art from different societies, time periods, and cultures, <i>emphasizing</i> their common and unique characteristics.
<b>AR.CM.HC.03</b>	Explain how works of art reflect the artist's personal experience, environment, society and culture and apply this knowledge to one's own work.
<b>AR.CM.AC.01</b>	Use knowledge of essential elements, organizational principles and aesthetic criteria to explain the artistic merit and aesthetic effect of a work of art.
<b>AR.CM.AC.03</b>	Explain the roles of essential elements and organizational principles from various arts disciplines in an integrated work of art and identify how they contribute to the aesthetic effect, overall idea and impact of the work.
<b>AR.CM.CP.03</b>	Create, present and/or perform a work of art by controlling essential elements and organizational principles and describe how well the work expresses an intended idea, mood or feeling.

# Words and Images: Art of Iran

## Lesson One

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Content Area:** Visual Art

**Lesson Duration:** One-hour

### Lesson Overview:

This first lesson introduces students to the traditional arts of Iran, which use words as a design element, focusing on the importance of poetry and calligraphy. The representations of these will be related to arts in other cultures, and students will practice designing with text.

### Materials:

- ~ PowerPoint- Iranian Poetry and Calligraphy
- ~ Ink, pen, brush and paper to demonstrate calligraphy
- ~ Pens, paper, colored pencils, rulers

### Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- ~ Develop awareness of the importance of poetry and calligraphic arts in Iran.
- ~ Distinguish examples of Persian calligraphy, Asian calligraphy and European illuminations.
- ~ Demonstrate their understandings by creating a uniquely and symbolically designed letter or word.
- ~ Begin to formulate an answer to the questions: Who are you and what do you want to say?

Syed Soraya



### Procedures:

In the first 5 minutes of class, students will begin by silently writing a description of the image of Shah Mosque in Isfahan. We will discuss their observations, concentrating on the use of text as a visual element. The class will be presented with a PowerPoint overview of traditional Iranian calligraphy and poetry, which will compare and contrast with examples of Asian calligraphy and European illuminations. Ask and discuss: Why do artists use words? Why do artists use images? Demonstrate the use of calligraphic inks and pens. Introduce activity.

### Activity:

Using pen, pencil, colored pencil students will choose a word or initial to become the basis for a design. The letters may be repeated, distorted, flipped, etc, and must be decorated in a unique way that communicates something about the word or what the initials stand for. (35 minutes)

### Homework:

By next class, complete the design using standards of craftsmanship and meeting criteria. In journals, begin to answer the question, "Who am I, and what do I want to say?"

### Assessments:

Observe students':

- Participation in group activity.
- Contribution of ideas.
- Progress on text design.

Evaluate students':

- Completed designs
- Journal writing

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## Lesson Two

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Content Area:** Visual Art

**Lesson Duration:** One-hour

### Lesson Overview:

This second lesson introduces students to the traditional Persian Miniature, comparing and contrasting this with modern poster designs. Students develop symbols that communicate their cultures and personal values.

### Materials:

- ~ PowerPoint- Persian Miniatures to Revolutionary Posters
- ~ Pencils, erasers, paper, colored pencils, gouache watercolors, rulers

### Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- ~ Develop awareness of miniatures' role in communicating.
- ~ Distinguish between imagined and mathematical perspective systems.
- ~ Demonstrate their understanding of abstraction and symbolism by creating personal symbols.
- ~ Further develop an answer to the questions: Who are you and what do you want to say?, adding visual symbols.

### Procedures:

In the first 5 minutes of class, students will silently write an answer to the question: How can artists function as agents of change in society?

Discuss students' ideas. View PowerPoint- Persian Miniatures to Revolutionary posters. Discuss differing methods of representing spatial perspective. Contrast density of miniatures to simplicity of posters.

Compare use of symbols, image and text in both.

### Activity:

Using ideas from their journaling, students will choose a personal symbol to develop into a design. The symbol should show a degree of abstraction and omission of details, but retain its communicative function. Using pen, pencil, colored pencil, and/or water-based paint, students will develop the symbol(s) into a finished design. (35 minutes)

### Homework:

By next class, complete the symbol using standards of craftsmanship and meeting criteria. In journals, continue to answer the question: Who am I, and what do I want to say?, sketching at least 3 new symbols.

### Assessments:

Observe students':

- Participation in group activity.
- Contribution of ideas.
- Progress on symbol design.

Evaluate students':

- Completed designs
- Journal writing and sketches



Taken from, *My Name Is Red*

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## Lesson Three

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Content Area:** Visual Art

**Lesson Duration:** One-hour

### Lesson Overview:

The third lesson deals with the medium of photography and its role in shaping and documenting history. We will view the photojournalistic work of Iranian photographer, Abbas and the fine art work of Shirin Neshat. Students will consider the editorial aspect versus the expected verisimilitude of photographs, and the further effect of text and captioning.

### Materials:

- ~ PowerPoint- Documentary Photographs by Abbas and Shirin Neshat
- ~ Pencils, erasers, paper, colored pencils, rulers, magazine photographs, scissors.

### Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- ~ View and discuss the work of two Iranian photographers.
- ~ Understand the role of text in art and photojournalism.
- ~ Demonstrate knowledge of subjective editing and presentation in a “photo extension”.
- ~ Edit and refine their answers to the questions: Who are you and what do you want to say?



Abbas

### Procedures:

In the first 5 minutes of class, students will silently complete a visual analysis of Abbas’ photograph of the building falling, and develop a caption for the photo. Discuss the different interpretations of the event in the photo and the various captions. View the PowerPoint, discussing the possible roles of a photographer. Ask about: point of view, objectivity, editing, and the effect of including captions or other text. Ask: What has the photographer left out? What is beyond the frame, and how might that change the meaning?

### Activity:

Each student will choose a photograph to remove from a magazine. S/he is to imagine what lies beyond the borders of the image, and to extend the image with drawing in a way that changes the intended meaning of the photograph. Supporting text should be included as captioning or as part of the image. (35 minutes)

### Homework:

By next class, complete the photo extension and text, using standards of craftsmanship and meeting criteria. In journals, edit the answer the question: Who am I, and what do I want to say?, by focusing and refining one of the aspects of culture or values the student has written about previously.

### Assessments:

Observe students’:

- Participation in group activity.
- Contribution of ideas.
- Progress on photo extension.

Evaluate students’:

- Completed photo extension.
- Journal writing.

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## Lesson Four

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Content Area:** Visual Art

**Lesson Duration:** One-hour

### Lesson Overview:

The fourth lesson is built around further exploration of the graphic arts (begun with political posters in lesson 2), now focusing on simplification of images and text for maximum readability and impact.

### Materials:

- ~ PowerPoint- Persuasive Design
- ~ Pencils, erasers, paper, colored pencils, rulers, water-based paints and brushes.

### Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- ~ View and discuss various poster and ad designs.
- ~ Understand some of the characteristics of a successful persuasive graphic design.
- ~ Demonstrate this understanding by creating posters that communicate an aspect of culture, or a personal value or belief.



Osilaan Group

### Procedures:

In the first 5 minutes of class, students will silently write a short description of the topic that will become their poster's theme. Students may share if they wish. View the PowerPoint, discussing the graphic designs as examples of successful persuasion, simplification, clarity of message, use of symbols, irony, dual meaning, and strong composition. Explore how text is incorporated.

### Activity:

Students will use the personal ideas and sketches they have been developing in their journals to begin composing a poster design, which should effectively communicate their ideas. Image and text should be combined, and symbolism should be employed to deliver a message that is rich, yet pointed, easily understood, but powerful. Students will demonstrate craftsmanship, knowledge of color theory, and compositional strategies.(30 minutes). In the last 10 minutes, conduct an in-progress critique.

### Homework:

Work further on the poster design if this is possible at home. If not, make a journal entry critique of your progress, including plans for the following class.

### Assessments:

Observe students':

- Participation in group activity.
- Contribution of ideas.
- Progress on poster.



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## Lesson Five

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Content Area:** Visual Art

**Lesson Duration:** One-hour

**Lesson Overview:**

The final lesson allows students to complete their poster designs, and participate in a critique.

**Materials:**

- ~ Display boards for posters
- ~ Pencils, erasers, paper, colored pencils, rulers, water-based paints and brushes.

**Lesson Objectives:**

Students will:

- ~ Complete studio work on posters, following criteria.
- ~ Demonstrate understanding of art elements and principles, using art vocabulary while participating in a class critique,.
- ~ Answer essential questions in writing.

**Procedures:**

In the first 3 minutes of class, students will silently copy the three essential questions. These are to be answered in writing, as homework. Students may continue their independent studio work on posters (35 minutes). Critique will encompass the remainder of class.

**Homework:**

By next class, answer the three essential questions, using writing standards.

**Assessments:**

Observe students':

- Progress on poster.
- Contributions to critique.

Evaluate students':

- Completed poster.
- Journal writing and sketches.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Graphic Design – Poster Criteria

✓ & score 6 points each	✓	Standards
<b>Specifications</b> 6 points  _____ points	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<b>The Artist has:</b> Used an image(s) to support the theme Used text to support the theme Used text as a design element Used symbols to communicate Used an effective color scheme Created a focal point within the composition Communicated clearly and effectively
<b>Creativity</b> 6 points _____ points	_____ 	<b>The Artist has:</b> Created a <i>unique</i> work, including details and finish work, that reflects the artist's <i>own</i> style and ideas (no generic or copied imagery)
<b>Craftsmanship</b> 6 points _____ points	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<b>The Artist has:</b> Used a straight edge when necessary Painted/drawn clean lines, without gaps between shapes Completely filled the compositional space Considered elements and principles in design Created a work that appears complete in all aspects.
<b>Effort</b> 6 points _____ points	_____ _____	<b>The Artist:</b> Always made good use of class time, from the start of the period to the finish, including clean-up. Always worked to the best of her or his ability and took on challenges of skill and creativity.

Project Points\_\_\_\_ + Completed Self-Assessment\_\_\_\_ + Extra Credit\_\_\_\_ = Total

/ 25

# *Extra Credit*

5 possible points, which raises your project one *whole* grade!

Write a reflection about your process and product, using elements and principles vocabulary.