The Naked Truth

George Catlin’s view:

“The Discovery Dance has been given here, amongst various others, and pleased the bystanders very much; it was exceedingly droll and picturesque, and acted out with a great deal of pantomimic effect—without music, or any other noise than the patting of their feet, which all came simultaneously on the ground, in perfect exact time, whilst they were dancing forward two or four at a time, in a skulking posture, overlooking the country, and professing to announce the approach of animals or enemies which they have discovered, by giving the signals back to the leader of the dance” (Letters and Notes, vol. 2, p. 214, pl. 295).

Discovery Dance, George Catlin 1835
Nonfiction Study

Primary Sources

Visual Representations

THE BOY'S CATLIN
MY LIFE AMONG THE INDIANS

GEORGE CATLIN

EDITED WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BY
MARY GAY HUMPHREYS

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE
AUTHOR'S ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1827
In this nonfiction unit, sixth grade students will develop skills and concepts in visual and language arts to allow them to effectively investigate primary source and secondary source documents, visual representations, and artifacts. Students will be looking into and analyzing representations of Native American life in the Northeast Woodlands in the early part of the 19th century.
Essential Questions

• 1. How can you analyze a portrait or other visual representation as a historical document?

• 2. How is history recorded? (How is your social studies book created?)

• 3. Do primary sources agree on descriptions of the same events?

• 4. What are the pros and cons versus using either a primary source or a secondary source?

• 5. How do the eyewitness accounts compare and differ in visual representations and written accounts?
Objectives

Students will be able to:

• 1. Analyze a work of art to discover information about the subject.

• 2. Ask questions about works of art to promote critical thinking skills and cultivate visual literacy.

• 3. Discover connections between visual art and language arts through analyzing artworks and primary and secondary sources.

• 4. Determine importance of facts by organizing information into the appropriate graphic organizer.
• 5. Visualize facts based on nonfiction excerpts by illustrating events.

• 6. Organize information into a clear, detailed multi-paragraph essay about the connection between a work of art and a primary source.

• 7. Compare and contrast a portrait and a biography or autobiography.

• 8. Examine the importance of the context in which the artwork or text was created in.
Massachusetts English Language Arts Standards

• 1.4: Know and apply rules for formal discussions.
• 2.4: Integrate relevant information gathered from group discussions and interviews for reports.
• 4.17: Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues
• 8.15: Locate facts that answer the reader’s questions
• 8.17: Distinguish fact from opinion or fiction.
• 8.21: Recognize organizational structures (chronological order, logical order, cause and effect, classification schemes).
• 8.22: Identify and analyze main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details.
Massachusetts English Language Arts Standards

- 9.5: Relate a literary work to artifacts, artistic creations, or historical sites of the period of its setting.
- 9.6: Relate a literary work to primary source documents of its literary period or historical setting.
Lesson 1: Meet Black Hawk

Overview
• Students will be introduced to not only Black Hawk, but the technique of “reading” a portrait. Students will then read excerpts from Black Hawk’s autobiography.

Essential Questions
• What information can we gain by treating portraits as historical documents?
• How do the visual and written representations of the subject support each other?
“The Black Hawk is the man to whom I have alluded, as the leader of the ‘Black Hawk war’ who was defeated by General Atkinson, and held a prisoner of war, and sent through Washington and other Eastern cities, with a number of others, to be gazed at.

“This man, whose name has carried a sort of terror through the country where it has been sounded, has been distinguished as a speaker or counselor rather than as a warrior; and I believe it has been pretty generally admitted that ‘Nahpope’ and the ‘Prophet’ were, in fact, the instigators of the war, and either of them with much higher claims for the name of warrior than Black Hawk ever had.

“When I painted this chief, he was dressed in a plain suit of buckskin, with a string of wampum in his ears and on his neck, and held in his hand his medicine-bag, which was the skin of a black hawk, from which he had taken his name, and the tail of which made him a fan, which he was almost constantly using” (Letters and Notes, vol. 2, p. 211, pl. 283).
Black Hawk’s start as a warrior

The Foxes abandoned their village, and joined the Sac. This arrangement being mutually obligatory upon both parties, as neither were sufficiently strong to meet their enemies with any hope of success, they soon became as one band or nation of people. They were driven, however, by the combined forces of their enemies, to the Wisconsin. They remained here some time, until a party of their young men, (who had descended Rock river to its mouth,) returned, and made a favorable report of the country. They all descended Rock river – drove the Kas-ka-s-kias from the country, and commenced the erection of their village, determined never to leave it.

At this village I was born, being a regular descendant of the first chief, Na-na-ma-kee, or Thunder. Few, if any, events of note, transpired within my recollection, until about my fifteenth year. I was not allowed to paint, or wear feathers; but distinguished myself, at that early age, by wounding an enemy; consequently, I was placed in the ranks of the Braves!

Soon after this, a leading chief of the Muskow nation, came to our village for recruits to go to war against the Osages, our common enemy. I volunteered my services to go, as my father had joined him; and was proud to have an opportunity to prove to him that I was not an unworthy son, and that I had courage and bravery. It was not long before we met the enemy, when a battle immediately ensued. Standing by my father’s side, I saw him kill his antagonist, and tear the scalp from his head. Fired with valor and ambition, I rushed furiously upon another, smote him to the earth with my tomahawk – run my lance through his body – took off his scalp, and returned in triumph to my father! He said nothing, but looked pleased. This was the first man I killed! The enemy’s loss in this engagement having been great, they immediately retreated, which put an end to the war for the present. Our party then returned to our village, and danced over the scalps we had taken. This was the first time that I was permitted to join in a scalp-dance.

After a few moons had passed, (having acquired considerable fame as a brave,) I led a party of seven, and attacked one hundred Osages! I killed one man, and left him for my comrades to scalp, whilst I was taking an observation of the strength and preparations of the enemy; and finding that they were all equally well armed with ourselves, I ordered a retreat, and came off without losing a man! This excursion gained for me great applause, and enabled me, before a great while, to raise a party of one hundred and eighty, to go against the Osages. We left our village in high spirits, and marched over a rugged country, until we reached that of the Osages, on the Missouri. We followed their trail until we arrived at their village, which we approached with great caution, expecting that they were all there; but found, to our sorrow, that they had deserted it! The party became dissatisfied, in consequence of this disappointment, — and all, with the exception of five, dispersed and returned home. I then placed myself at the head of this brave little band, and thanked the Great Spirit, that so many remained, — and took up the trail of our enemies, with a full determination never to return without some trophy of victory! We followed on for several days — killed one man and a boy, and then returned with their scalps.

In consequence of this mutiny in my camp, I was not again en-
"Reading" Portraiture at a Glance

The two key elements to reading portraits are looking and analyzing.

**Looking**

Sitter
Describe the sitter's pose.

Symbols
What objects are seen in the portrait?

Adjectives
Use adjectives to describe sitter:

Clothing
What clothing is the sitter wearing?

Media
What media was used to create the portrait?

Setting
What is the setting of the portrait?

**Analyzing**

Sitter
Who is the sitter?

Symbols
What do the objects tell us about the sitter?

Artist
Who is the artist?

Date
When was the portrait created?

History
What was going on in history when the portrait was created?

Biography
What is the sitter’s contribution?

Produced by the National Portrait Gallery Education Department © 2008 Smithsonian Institution

Visual Representations of Black Hawk

*Black Hawk, Charles Bird King 1837*

*Black Hawk and His Son, Whirling Thunder, John Wesley Jarvis 1833*
Visual Representations of Black Hawk

*Black Hawk*, Charles Bird King

*Black Hawk and Five Other Saukie Prisoners*, George Catlin 1861
The word wampum was a broad translation into English of an Algonquian expression for a string of white shell beads. Nothing is more controversial and misunderstood than wampum. The word itself can evoke charges of gross unlikeliness and racist breaking. Large quantities are no longer wanted to handle. Some courts have ruled in favor of the Indians demanding the return of sacred wampum belts from museum storerooms to Indian council houses. There are strong emotions about treaty belts, condolence and tribal mourning belts, removed from the graves of chiefs. The ownership of sacred wampum is a touchy subject. Many people are not really familiar with what wampum is or what it looks like. A variety of bone, shell, stone, and wooden beads and ornaments once offered in trade are often incorrectly labeled as wampum. Wampum was made from seashells. A piece of shell was broken off and carved into round or oblong shapes. It was then slipped through a hole with low tools. White wampum was made from the pearly shell and purple from the purple spot on the quahog clam shell. The tiny tubes were less than a quarter of an inch long and an eighth of an inch thick. They were strung on threads of doe sinews or hawk feathers. Wampum dates back to the origin of the Iroquois Confederacy and was first used as a way to record messages. It played a major role in the first two hundred years of commerce in the Northeast. As far back as 1600, when the first Dutch traders reached Manhatan, they saw Indians cutting clam shells, polishing them, and making rings. The beads were irregularly shaped, curved in shape, and varied in size up to an inch long. Because of the labor involved and the sacred significance, wampum was not only scarce but considered precious by the Indians. They showed little appreciation for the gold and silver of the new arrivals in exchange for trading power wampum. With steel tools, the Dutch improved and spin-drew wampum thread production and launched it into a medium of exchange. They made and offered twenty-three inches of white or twelve inches of the scarcer purple shells for an Indian’s beaver skin. Wampum became a convenient medium for money and one mutually agreeable to all.
Lesson 2: Step aside Matt Lauer, Catlin’s in the house.

Overview
• Students will look into the lives of the painters (Catlin, Bodmer, Miller) and determine the context in which they were painting.

Essential Question
• How does the background of the painter or his purpose for painting affect the eyewitness account?

George Catlin’s Indian Gallery
Catlin’s Eye-Witness “Reporting”  
Come to my Indian Gallery!
Indian Gallery continued

from Maximilian’s Travels in North America
Lesson 3: Little House on the Prairie

Overview
• Students will compare and contrast paintings and descriptions of Native American life from various primary and secondary sources.

Essential Question
• Before the days a photography and video, how did observers and historians record information to share with the masses?
Little House on the Prairie

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walked to the winter hunting grounds. The hunting party was kept together by guards in order to prevent unfair hunting advantages by individuals or small groups.

A common method of killing buffaloes was to surround the herd with a ring of fire by igniting the dry prairie grass. An unfired opening was left in the ring and as the buffalo stampeded through this opening they were shot down with bows and arrows. Using this method a band of Indians could kill as many as 200 buffaloes in one day. The animals thus obtained were divided among the individual families. The buffalo meat was dried by sun or fire and could be preserved for more than four months.

At other times of the year elk, deer, bear, and beaver were killed in the forests by small parties of hunters on relatively short trips from their villages. Twelve animals per day might be taken by a good hunter. A French visitor at one of the Miami villages in 1762 wrote that “it was a real pleasure to see the Miami occasionally bringing into their village some enormous bears, tame in the course of their hunting, and driven before them with switches, like sheep to the slaughter house.”

The villages of the Sauk, Fox, and Miami consisted of clusters of elongated wigwams (Fig. 67). These were made of saplings inserted in the ground and bent over and tied together in the middle of the house to form a dome-like roof. Over this framework were tied many mats woven of prepared rushes. In each village there was a council house, larger than the others, but otherwise similar. Some villages were fortified by means of log palisades. The villages were usually occupied from the end of April to October, the warmer half of the year. The remaining time was spent in temporary encampments during the winter hunt.

The Sauk, Fox, and Miami usually traveled from one place to another on foot. The women carried the burdens on their backs by means of headbands and packstraps. There was some use of dugout canoes, but by and large these tribes of Indians were not canoe people. The Sauk and Fox learned the use of birchbark canoes, snowshoes, and the toboggan from northern Great Lakes tribes, such as Ottawa and Chippewa, and made some use of them after their culture had changed in response to pressures of the fur trade. But only the wooden dugout canoe is typical of their original tribal culture.

The clothing of the Sauk, Fox, and Miami was similar. In the summertime men wore moccasins and breechcloths. In winter they added shirts and leggings made of deer or elk skin and buffalo skin robes with the fur left on.

In winter the women wore moccasins, leggings, and dresses of elk and deer skin and sometimes an outer skirt of cloth or skin. They also used robes of buffalo skin. Summer clothing probably consisted only of moccasins and some kind of skirt.

Robes were sometimes ornamented with painted designs or with porcupine-quill embroidery in red and white.

Women generally wore their hair long and gathered at the neck, whereas men had a variety of styles. Men had their bodies and faces painted in various ways and sometimes tattooed.

The political organization of the Sauk, Fox, and Miami was similar to that of the Ottawa and Potawatomi. The largest political unit was the band. The Miami, for instance, were divided into six large bands, two of which, the Wea and Piankashaw, later came to be recognized as separate tribes.

There was no tribal chief, but there were band or village chiefs and clan chiefs. Village and band affairs were handled by councils of clan chiefs and tribal affairs were the concern of a council of band and village chiefs. Tribal unity, however, was not achieved by political organization but through the ties of language, clan, and kinship.
Little House on the Prairie Visual Representations

*Sacs and Foxes: Canoeing*, George Catlin

*Slave Dance*, George Catlin
Catlin’s observations

Sac and Fox Sailing in Canoes

“I was often amused at their freaks in their canoes, whilst travelling; and I was induced to make a sketch of one which I frequently witnessed, that of sailing with the aid of their blankets, which the men carry; and when the wind is fair, stand in the bow of the canoe and hold by two corners, with the other two under the foot or tied to the leg; while the women sit in the other end of the canoe, and steer it with their paddles” (Letters and Notes, vol. 2, p. 214, pl. 294).

The Slave Dance

“The slave-dance is a picturesque scene, and the custom in which it is founded a very curious one. This tribe has a society which they call the ‘slaves’ composed of a number of the young men of the best families in the tribe, who volunteer to be slaves for the term of two years, and subject to perform any menial service that the chief may order, no matter how humiliating or how degrading it may be; by which, after serving their two years, they are exempt for the rest of their lives, on warparties or other excursions, or wherever they may be—from all labour or degrading occupations, such as cooking, making fires, &c. &c.

“These young men elect one from their numbers to be their master, and all agree to obey his command whatever it may be, and which is given to him by one of the chiefs of the tribe. On a certain day or season of the year, they have to themselves a great feast, and preparatory to it the abovementioned dance” (Letters and Notes, vol. 2, p. 213, pl. 291).
Little House on the Prairie Visual Representations

Sac Warriors Dancing, George Catlin

Sacs and Foxes: Begging Dance, George Catlin
them to return to the spot where she was sitting, at the end of one
tyear, and then would find a reward for their kindness and generous-
ty. She then ascended to the clouds, and disappeared. The two
men returned to their village, and explained to the nation what
they had seen, done, and heard—but they were laughed at by their
people. When the period arrived, for them to visit this consecrated
ground, where they were to find a reward for their attention to the
beautiful woman of the clouds, they went with a large party, and
found, where her right hand had rested on the ground, corn gron-
ing—and where the left hand had rested, beans—and immediately
where she had been seated, tobacco.

The two first have, ever since, been cultivated by our people, as
our principal provisions—and the last used for smoking. The white
people have since found out the latter, and seem to relish it as
much as we do—as they use it in different ways, viz. smoking, masticating,
and eating.

We thank the Great Spirit for all the benefits he has conferred
upon us. For myself, I never take a drink of water from a spring,
without being mindful of his goodness.

We next have our great ball play—from three to five hundred on
a side, play this game. We play for horses, guns, blankets, or any
other kind of property we have. The successful party take the
stakes, and all retire to our lodges in peace and friendship.

We next commence horse-racing, and continue our sport and
feasting, until the corn is all secured. We then prepare to leave our
village for our hunting grounds. The traders arrive, and give us
credit for such articles as we want to clothe our families, and enable
us to hunt. We first, however, hold a council with them, to ascer-
tain the price they will give us for our skins, and what they will
charge us for goods. We inform them where we intend hunting—and
tell them where to build their houses. At this place, we deposit
part of our corn, and leave our old people. The traders have
always been kind to them, and relieved them when in want. They
were always much respected by our people—and never since we
have been a nation, has one of them been killed by any of our
people.

We disperse, in small parties, to make our hunt, and as soon as it

On returning, in the spring, from our hunting ground, I had the
pleasure of meeting our old friend, the trader of Pocia, at Rock
Island. He came up in a boat from St. Louis, not as a trader, as in
times past, but as our agent. We were all pleased to see him. He
told us, that he narrowly escaped falling into the hands of Dixon.
He remained with us a short time, gave us good advice, and then
returned to St. Louis.

The Sioux having committed depredations on our people, we
sent out war parties that summer, who succeeded in killing four-
teen. I paid several visits to Fort Armstrong during the summer, and
was always well treated. We were not as happy then in our vil-
lage as formerly. Our people got more liquor than customary. I
used all my influence to prevent drunkenness, but without effect.
As the settlements progressed towards us, we became worse off, and
more unhappy. Many of our people, instead of going to their old

8 Here the editor inserted into the 19th edition (p. 66) a long paragraph about a Sioux warrior and a bunk maiden busted under a rock slide. He also added
the following passage about Black Hawk's so-called watch tower:

"This tower to which my name had been applied, was a favorite seat and
was frequently visited by me alone, when I could sit and smoke my pipe,
and look with wonder and pleasure, at the grand scenes that were
enacted by the sun's rays, ever across the mighty river. On one occasion
a forked branch, which one of our people, who had been making his home
in this village, brought with him to the tower, to use and cherish for the
remembrance of a number of our people, who had assembled there, and while
dancing with his back to the cliff, accidentally fell it over and was killed by the fall. The Indians say that always at the same time of the year, soft
oatmeal of the violin can be heard near the spot."
Dance to the Medicine Bag of the Brave

“...This is a custom well worth recording, for the beautiful moral which is contained in it. In this plate is represented a party of Sac warriors who have returned victorious from battle, with scalps they have taken from their enemies, but having lost one of their party, they appear and dance in front of his wigwam, fifteen days in succession, about an hour on each day, when the widow hangs his medicine-bag on a green bush which she erects before her door, under which she sits and cries, whilst the warriors dance and brandish the scalps they have taken, and at the same time recount the deeds of bravery of their deceased comrade in arms, whilst they are throwing presents to the widow to heal her grief and afford her the means of a living” (Letters and Notes, vol. 2, p. 215, pl. 297).
Little House on the Prairie Visual Representations

Buffalo Hunt-Plate 7, George Catlin
Little House on the Prairie Visual Representations

Alfred Jacob Miller

Buffalo Hunt, Karl Bodmer
Little House on the Prairie Visual Representation

- *Artifacts*, watercolor and ink on paper, Karl Bodmer

- 2. Hair Ornament, Fox
- 3. Lance, Sauk and Fox
Lesson 4: Battle On, Warriors

Overview
• Students will gain insight into the recording of history by studying paintings, primary documents, and secondary sources about two battles in Black Hawk’s War: the Battle at Wisconsin Heights and the Battle of the Bad Axe River.

Essential Questions
• How is history recorded? (How is your social studies book created??)
• Do primary sources agree on descriptions of events?
• What are the pros and cons versus using either a primary source or a secondary source?
• How do the eyewitness accounts compare and differ in visual representations and written accounts?
Black Hawk’s stand

had been invited to Prairie du Chien, to hold a council to settle the differences existing between them and the Sioux. That the chiefs and headmen, amounting to nine, started for the place designated, taking with them one woman—and were met by the Menomonees and Sioux, near the Osawatomie, and all killed, except one man. Having understood that the whole matter was published shortly after it occurred, and is known to the white people, I will say no more about it.

I would here remark, that our pastimes and sports had been laid aside for the last two years. We were a divided people, forming two parties. Ke-o-kuck being at the head of one, willing to barter our rights merely for the good opinion of the whites; and cowardly enough to desert our village to them. I was at the head of the other party, and was determined to hold on to my village, although I had been ordered to leave it. But, I considered, as myself and band had no agency in selling our country—and that as provision had been made in the treaty, for us all to remain on it as long as it belonged to the United States, that we could not be forced away. I refused, therefore, to quit my village. It was here, that I was born—and here lie the bones of many friends and relations. For this spot I felt a sacred reverence, and never could consent to leave it, without being forced from it.

When I called to mind the scenes of my youth, and those of later days—and reflected that the theatre on which these were acted, had been so long the home of my fathers, who now slept on the hills around it, I could not bring my mind to consent to leave this country to the whites, for any earthly consideration.

The winter passed off in gloom. We made a bad hunt, for want of the guns, traps, &c., as the whites had taken from our people for whisky! The prospect before us was a bad one. I fasted, and called upon the Great Spirit to direct my steps to the right path. I was in great sorrow—because all the whites with whom I was acquainted, and had been on terms of friendship, advised me so contrary to my wishes, that I began to doubt whether I had a friend among them.

Ke-o-kuck, who has a smooth tongue, and is a great speaker, was
War soon to come...
War soon to come...
War soon to come...