

# National Standards for Visual Art

## The National Standards for Arts Education

Developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (under the guidance of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts), the National Standards for Arts Education is a document which outlines basic arts learning outcomes integral to the comprehensive K-12 education of every American student. The Consortium published the National Standards in 1994 through a grant administered by MENC, the National Association for Music Education.

### VISUAL ARTS (9-12)

In grades 9-12, students extend their study of the visual arts. They continue to use a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions. They grow more sophisticated in their employment of the visual arts to reflect their feelings emotions and continue to expand their abilities to evaluate the merits of their efforts. These standards provide a framework for that study in a way that promotes the maturing students' thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating skills.

The standards also provide for their growing familiarity with the ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge important in the visual arts. As students gain this knowledge and these skills, they gain in their ability to apply knowledge and skills in the visual arts to their widening personal worlds.

The visual arts range from the folk arts, drawing, and painting, to sculpture and design, from architecture to film and video -- and any of these can be used to help students meet the educational goals embodied in these standards. For example, graphic design (or any other field within the visual arts) can be used as the basis for creative activity, historical and cultural investigations, or analysis throughout the standards. The visual arts involve varied tools, techniques, and processes all of which also provide opportunities for working toward the standards. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose from among the array of possibilities offered by the visual arts to accomplish specific educational objectives in specific circumstances.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts. As they develop greater fluency in communicating in visual, oral, and written form, they must exhibit greater artistic competence through all of these avenues.

In grades 9-12, students develop deeper and more profound works of visual art that reflect the maturation of their creative and problem-solving skills. Students understand the multifaceted interplay of different media, styles, forms, techniques, and processes in the creation of their work.

Students develop increasing abilities to pose insightful questions about contexts, processes, and criteria for evaluation. They use these questions to examine works in light of various analytical methods and to express sophisticated ideas about visual relationships using precise terminology. They can evaluate artistic character and aesthetic qualities in works of art, nature, and human-made environments. They can reflect on the nature of human involvement in art as a viewer, creator, and participant.

Students understand the relationships among art forms and between their own work and that of others. They are able to relate understandings about the historical and cultural contexts of art to situations in contemporary life. They have a broad and in-depth understanding of the meaning and import of the visual world in which they live.

**Content Standard #1:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks

Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students communicate ideas regularly at a high level of effectiveness in at least one visual arts Medium

Students initiate, define, and solve challenging visual arts problems independently using intellectual skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation

**Content Standard #2:** Using knowledge of structures and functions

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students demonstrate the ability to form and defend judgments about the characteristics and structures to accomplish commercial, personal, communal, or other purposes of art

Students evaluate the effectiveness of artworks in terms of organizational structures and functions

Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students demonstrate the ability to compare two or more perspectives about the use of organizational principles and functions in artwork and to defend personal evaluations of these perspectives

Students create multiple solutions to specific visual arts problems that demonstrate competence in producing effective relationships between structural choices and artistic functions

**Content Standard #3:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture

Students apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students describe the origins of specific images and ideas and explain why they are of value in their artwork and in the work of others

Students evaluate and defend the validity of sources for content and the manner in which subject matter, symbols, and images are used in the students' works and in significant works by others

**Content Standard #4:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art

Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places

Students analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students analyze and interpret artworks for relationships among form, context, purposes, and critical models, showing understanding of the work of critics, historians, aestheticians, and artists  
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