What do these photos tell us about California or the people that make it their home?

**Art as an Argument**

**Background Information**

The teacher should familiarize himself or herself with the handouts ahead of time. The purpose is to inspire the students to create an argument about society or the human condition or California based on an art piece presented in class through the California Visual Cards. In addition, the teacher will want to analyze different models of argumentation so he or she can help students analyze moves worth imitating in their own writing.

**Lesson Description**

Students will study art of Californians and Californian imagery. Students will then create an argument based on a piece of art viewed in class.

**Grade Range:** 9-12

**Time to complete lesson:** Multi-day Lesson

**Resources needed:**
- OPTIC method chart or guide (provided)
- Art pieces (provided)
- Inquiry chart (provided)
- Materials for writing

**Lesson Author:** Tracy Clark
By the end of this lesson, students will know:

- How to use the OPTIC Method to analyze a piece of art
- California is, and has been, home to many diverse people

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Create a question that they can investigate further based off of a visual presented to them in class.
- Establish the significance of their claim and develop a counterclaim supplying multiple relevant evidence for both.
- Write an analysis with at least three of the OPTIC Method identifiers.

Supported Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.A

Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B

Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
Lesson Plan

Introduction

1) Students write a response to one of the following topics:
   - Write about a time that you visited a museum. What did you like or dislike about the museum? Did you have a favorite piece? Did you have a piece you strongly disliked? What spoke out to you about that experience?
   - Do you have a favorite billboard? Describe the billboard. What is it that you like about that billboard that speaks to you?
   - What is your favorite visual medium? Why?

Activity #1: OPTIC Analysis (30-45 minutes):

1) Students break into small groups.
2) Each group should have access to the California Visual Cards (Material #1). Access can be printed or digital.
3) Each group should use the Optic Method of Visual Analysis Graphic Organizer (Material #2a)
   OR the Optic Method of Visual Analysis Handout (Material #2b)
4) If using the graphic organizer, you will need 4 copies per student.
5) After no more than 30 minutes, groups share to class as a whole. Students can use the Words
to Describe Art (Material #3) while sharing out.

Activity #2: Student Inquiry (5+ hours- can span multiple periods)

1) Pose the essential question: What do these photos tell us about California or the people that make it their home?
2) Independently, the students will complete an Inquiry Chart (Material #4) about the four visual pieces they just analyzed
3) For the "What I See" section, it is important that students are literal, concrete and NOT inferring (yet)
4) For the “What I Think” section, this is where the students Infer. They can make a list of things that they are observing that enhance their thinking. (Text Clues + Background Knowledge = Inference)
5) For the “What I Wonder” section, students create questions based on arguments and inference. These questions will become researchable questions.
6) Ask the students what is worth writing about. Make a class list of topics that the students share.
7) Select one or more professional argument models from the list (Material #5) to use in this lesson
8) Analyze the moves found within the pieces.
9) Give the students the time they need to write. Have them use the professional argument models as inspiration for their writing.

**Differentiation:** Teacher can annotate and model the thinking aloud
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Variations to Use (and Encourage Students to)</th>
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Stock label: oranges, orange juice in glass and pitcher, newspaper and rose.

White, Doug. Sonya and birthday cake for March 1940 Electric Times Cover, undated

Foothill Oranges, 1900-1910

Pierce, C. C., Mexican Caballeros, La Fiesta de Los Angeles, circa 1895
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Pierce, C. C., *Mexican Caballeros, La Fiesta de Los Angeles*, circa 1895
## OPTIC Method for Visual Analysis

<table>
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<th>O = Overview</th>
<th>What is happening in the picture? Summarize the action of the visual without analyzing its meaning yet. This is equivalent to the paraphrase of a written text based analysis. Your statement should contain a complete description of the visual so that someone who is not viewing this visual has the gist of the visual and a general idea of what it contains.</th>
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<td>P = Parts of the Visual</td>
<td>Break the visual down into sections. Describe the placement of objects as if they were on a canvas. Typically, this would involve naming the placement as if on a grid or in quadrants. Name <strong>everything</strong> that you see. Describe color, lighting, placement, attitude, sizes, orientations, and movement in the visual. Textures should also be considered.</td>
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<td>T = Title</td>
<td>Write the title and full name of the artist. Include the date, if given. What does this information tell you about the piece? How much does it add to what you understand or do not understand about the piece? Explain.</td>
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<td>I = Images and Interrelationships</td>
<td>Analyze the relationships in the visual. How do the objects or people or colors relate to each other? What clues to the message or the argument are these relationships giving you? What seems to be the most important “relationship” in this visual?</td>
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<td>C = Conclusion</td>
<td>Draw a conclusion to the meaning or the message of the visual based on what you have viewed and discussed as a group. Essentially, what is the argument that the artist is trying to convey? Compose at least two phrases showing a relationship between the image phrases and the title of the visuals and write one or two complete sentences expressing this summation of relationships.</td>
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Adapted from a concept created by the Visual Communications Guy

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Professional Argument Models


◊ The Real Fault with San Andreas Is How It Maligns Californians by Joe Matthews: https://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/2015/06/04/the-real-fault-of-san-andreas-is-how-it-maligns-californians/ideas/connecting-california/

◊ Lebron, Take Your Ball and Go Home by Joe Matthews: https://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/2018/07/23/lebron-take-ball-go-home/ideas/connecting-california/