What is the purpose of art gallery labels?

What’s in a Label?

Background Information

In order to make the most out of a museum field trip or even an online field trip, students need to be able to read art gallery labels and label text to understand a piece of artwork. They will extend this knowledge by writing their own art labels and label text for their own pieces of art.

Lesson Description

Students will explore and then write their own art gallery labels. This lesson is best done after you have completed an art project in class.

Grade Range: 3-5
Time to complete lesson: 1-2 hours

Resources needed:

- Copies of artwork and labels
- Blank art labels
- Student artwork
- Chart paper

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By the end of this lesson, students will know:

What is included in an art gallery label and label text and what they mean.

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

- Read and understand an art gallery label and label text.
- Write their own art gallery label and label text.

Supported Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
Lesson Plan

Introduction:

1. Provide students an overview of the lesson: Artists display their work with an art gallery label. Students will explore what the purpose of that label is, what it consists of, and then write labels for their own artwork. If doing the extension activity, students will also explore label texts and write a label text for their own artwork.

Activity #1: Label Inquiry (20 minutes):

1. Tell students they will engage in an inquiry to see what the purpose of an art gallery label is and what it consists of.

2. Display a piece of art with an art gallery label (Material #1). You may want to make copies so students can mark up the different parts of the art gallery label. You may also want to have your own copy to mark up.

3. For the next 10 minutes, have students attempt to answer these two questions: 1) What do you see in the art gallery label? 2) Why do you think it was included? Invite students to write notes on their copy.

4. After working for 10 minutes, have students share what they found and why they think it is there. They should notice the following or something along these lines:

- Title (Title written to capture attention)
- Maker: (name of the artist)
- Date: (when the artwork was made so we know how old it is)
- Dimensions: (the size of the artwork so we know how big/small it is)
- Medium: (the materials the artist used to create the artwork)
- Credit Line: (Where the artwork can be found, like what museum and what section of the museum)
- Object Number (the number assigned to the artwork by the museum to help keep track of the artwork)
Activity #2: Writing Art Gallery Labels (20 minutes):

1. Students will be writing an art gallery label for their own finished art piece.

2. Pass out completed artwork. Either have students create labels based on what they observed in their inquiry or provide students label templates (Material #2).

3. You may want to model how to label your own art piece. Give it a title based on the topic.

4. For the dimensions, you can pass out rulers and students can measure. They can convert to centimeters as well.

5. For the credit line, they can put the name of the school and the classroom where the art will be displayed.

6. For the object number, students can work together to assign each of their works a unique number.

Activity #3 (Extension): Label Text Inquiry and Writing Label Text (60 minutes)

1. Go through the same process of inquiry for the label text, using the Top Man label text (Material #1).

2. Close read the label text and analyze what each paragraph is about. (Essentially, the first section talks about what the art piece is about and the second part talks about the artist).

3. Students can brainstorm what their artwork is about, writing a paragraph with a main idea and details. Then they can write another paragraph about who they are as artists. You can model a sample.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

1. Have students discuss the following question with a partner: “What is the purpose of the art gallery labels?”
Materials

Material #1: *Top Man* [http://emuseum.huntington.org/objects/5161/top-man?ctx=8862b6f9-1739-4b1c-b1cd-d955c21d6a6b&idx=0](http://emuseum.huntington.org/objects/5161/top-man?ctx=8862b6f9-1739-4b1c-b1cd-d955c21d6a6b&idx=0)

Material #2: Sample Art Gallery Label

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<th>Title:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maker:</td>
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<td>Dimensions:</td>
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<td>Medium:</td>
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