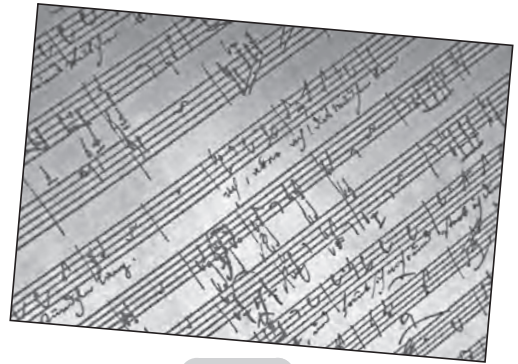


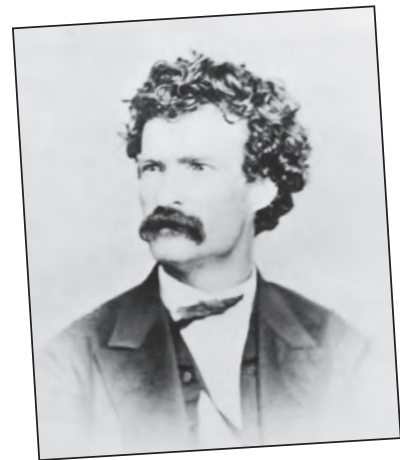
Timeline

Art Reflects History

- 1831 — Samuel F. Smith wrote the song “My Country ’Tis of Thee.”
- 1840 — The 1840s are widely thought to be the setting for Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.
- 1871 — American artist Winslow Homer painted *The Country School*
- 1876 — Mark Twain wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.
- 1940 — Woody Guthrie wrote the song “This Land Is Your Land.”



music



literature



visual art

Words to Know
**Visual Art Tells
About History**

sculpture

image

analyzing

portrayed

gestures

medium

interpret

Art Reflects History ■

Words to Know
**Music Tells
About History**

culture

lyrics

metaphors

hyperbole

patriotic

significant

cherished

earnest

excerpts

rapture

trespassing

Art Reflects History ■■

Words to Know
**Literature Tells
About History**

intrigued

mischief

conscience

Reconstruction

emancipated

devastated

economically

industrialized

literary

realism

corruption

themes

Art Reflects History ■■■



Visual Art Tells About History

Art comes in many forms. Whether it is a painting, drawing, sculpture, or carving, an image provides us with an experience. Art gives us a glimpse of how the artist may have viewed the subject or the world when the art was created. Because of this, we can learn a little more about history by analyzing a piece of art. The oil painting *The Country School* by Winslow Homer is a perfect example of art that offers an impression of early days in America.



A one-room schoolhouse in 1871, showing students of all ages working

Who is shown in the art?

Look at the people or animals in a piece of art and notice details. For example, how are the personalities in the art portrayed? Do the people appear well groomed? What are they wearing? Look at their facial expressions and gestures. Inspect people's clothing. Note whether or not they are holding objects.

What does the art show?

Think about the event or the moment that the artist is presenting. It is as if the artist has paused for a moment just so that you can see something. Question why the artist has chosen this particular moment.

When was the art created?

If a piece of art portrays a scene in history, think about whether the art was created at the time the scene was actually happening. Maybe the art was created many years after the event occurred. Either way, the artist has created an image that is historically important.

What medium did the artist use to create the art?

The medium, such as paint on canvas or a stone that has been carved, affects how the art appears. An artist may choose a specific material because of how it looks. Or, an artist may only have enough money to create art with a certain material. Either way, the medium affects how people feel about the art.

What is the setting, or location, of the image?

Art may show a specific location. Sometimes, a location may be implied. Consider this when thinking about how the art is related to history.

Art is meant to be experienced and enjoyed, but it can also be informative. It is important to remember that artists create images to share a feeling, an idea, or an event, and that we can study and interpret what they reveal about history.

Visual Art Tells About History

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then write the answers to numbers 3, 4, and 5.

1. How could the bold-text questions in the text be described?
Ⓐ questions to answer in order to be an artist
Ⓑ guiding questions that help you better understand a piece of art
Ⓒ questions that can be asked and answered only about carvings
Ⓓ questions that apply only to the painting in the selection
2. How are the people in the painting portrayed?
Ⓐ They are in conflict with each other.
Ⓑ They are getting ready to go somewhere.
Ⓒ They are playing and talking.
Ⓓ They busy doing their schoolwork.
3. Write one observation about the people in the painting.

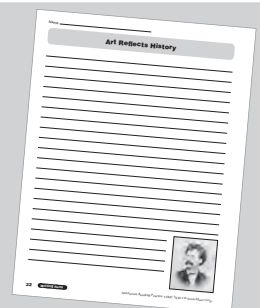
4. How could you change the painting to portray the people differently?

5. Why would the artist choose to paint this moment in history?

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

What does the art show about life during the 1870s in America?
Use details from the text in your response.



Music Tells About History

Music has existed for thousands of years, and every culture has some form of music. Songs are entertaining to sing and listen to, but they can also be informative. Within lyrics lie clues that reveal how things once were or how people felt about a particular subject. Like writing or speaking, music is a way for people to express ideas. Songs can be about the things that people value most.

Lyrics

Many song lyrics contain metaphors, hyperbole, and other nonliteral forms of speech. Lyrics often tell a story and describe situations and feelings.

Patriotic Songs

The purpose of a song is significant. Some songs are cherished for being patriotic. Other songs are earnest, and still others are fun and lively. The verses below are from patriotic songs that were inspired by the United States of America.



“My Country 'Tis of Thee” by Samuel F. Smith, 1831 (excerpts)

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From ev'ry mountainside
Let freedom ring!

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble, free,
Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills,
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above.

“This Land Is Your Land” by Woody Guthrie, 1940 (excerpts)

This land is your land,
This land is my land,
From California,
To the New York Island;
From the red wood forest,
To the Gulf Stream waters,
This land was made for you and me.

As I went walking,
I saw a sign there
And on the sign it
said “No Trespassing.”
But on the other side
it didn't say nothing,
That side was made for you and me.

Music Tells About History

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then write the answers to numbers 3, 4, and 5.

1. Why does the singer mention pilgrims in “My Country 'Tis of Thee”?
Ⓐ The song is about how the pilgrims came to America.
Ⓑ The song is about the area where the pilgrims lived.
Ⓒ The pilgrims played an important role in America’s history.
Ⓓ Samuel F. Smith was a pilgrim.
2. “This Land Is Your Land” mentions specific places in the U.S. to _____.
Ⓐ show that the entire country is free, from coast to coast
Ⓑ provide geographical information in the song
Ⓒ inform listeners of how far he has traveled
Ⓓ make the song appeal to people in different areas
3. In Guthrie’s song, why does the singer claim that the “other” side is for you and me?

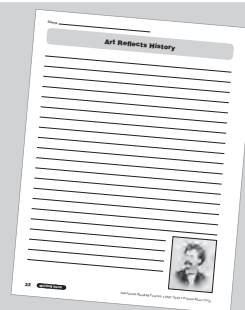
4. What details do the songs give us about the geography of the United States of America? Are these details an important part of the songs?

5. What things do Americans probably value most, according to these songs?

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Compare and contrast the themes in the two songs.
Use examples from the text to support your statements.



Literature Tells About History

When we read a story or novel, we are entertained by the characters and the plot. Sometimes we are so intrigued by the story that we don't even consider the historical information we can learn from it. Literature often tells about the real world through the author's eyes. An excellent example of a fictional story that reflects reality is *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, written in 1876 about life in Missouri along the Mississippi River in the 1840s. The story is about a boy's adventures in the South before the Civil War, while slavery was still taking place.

Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

The story is about Tom, a boy being raised by his aunt because his mother passed away. He lives in a small town along the Mississippi River. His friend Huck is not well cared for by his dad. Huck's dad does not work, and he does not watch out for Huck. Tom and Huck have adventures (and get into mischief) together.

One night, they sneak out of the house and witness a horrific crime. The criminal blames another person for his crime. As a result, the wrong person is put on trial. Tom knows who really committed the crime, and guilt eats away at him. But Tom has a strong moral conscience. He eventually tells the truth about the crime. As the story progresses, Tom, Huck, and their other friends have other adventures, and Tom and Huck are even found to be heroes.



The 1870s

The 1870s, known as the Reconstruction period, were the years immediately following the destructive Civil War era. There were new issues to deal with. For example, millions of enslaved people were now emancipated and needed homes and jobs. And while regions of the South were devastated economically, parts of the North were industrialized. This created economic inequality throughout the country. With Reconstruction came political, social, and even literary changes. After a war-torn era, it was difficult to see the world as a perfect place. Realism in literature became popular. Rather than creating stories that painted an ideal picture of the world, authors wanted to show how things really were. As a result, some of the uglier sides of reality, such as poverty, racism, crime, and corruption, became common themes in literature.

Literature Tells About History

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then write the answers to numbers 3, 4, and 5.

1. What inference can you make about Mark Twain as an author?
Ⓐ He is against slavery.
Ⓑ He wishes he were a boy again.
Ⓒ He felt it was important to write about criminals.
Ⓓ He felt it was important to write about life in the South during slavery.
2. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* reflects reality by focusing on _____.
Ⓐ an American family's ideal life
Ⓑ hardship and moral struggles
Ⓒ the life of emancipated people
Ⓓ the Reconstruction period
3. In your own words, explain what realism is in literature.

4. How does the text support the idea that the Civil War caused new issues in the country?

5. Would you recommend a fictional book from the 1870s to someone who wants to learn more about American history? Explain why or why not.

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Describe the relationship between realism, the Reconstruction period, and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Use examples.

