

## Lesson 12.2

### CREATE YOUR OWN PHOTOESSAY

**Objective:** Students will synthesize what they know of their own community by creating a photoessay, including their own photographs and an accompanying commentary.

**Materials:**

- **Sheet 12.2A:** Create Your Own Photoessay Assignment Sheet
- Student access to digital cameras or cameras with film (This may pose a problem for some. Before you assign the project, see if you can find a few cameras that can be available for students to borrow. Check the school's art department and/or newspaper or yearbook office.)
- Heavy paper
- Scotch tape or mounting edges for students to mount their photographs on the page

**Timing:** About one month, with time spent both in class and at home

**Background Reading:** Chapter 12

**Procedure:**

1. Review Chapter 12 with students. Ask them to study how it is organized with questions like the following:
  - Is there a form to this chapter? What is it?
  - What sections does it include? Why are these important?
  - Are there any sections that you think are missing? What sections do you think the chapter should have included?
  - Does the chapter show some different sides of Maine?
  - Do you think it accurately represents the "character" of Maine?
  - If you were to do a photoessay of your community, what might you do differently? Similarly?
2. Tell students they will have the opportunity to create a photoessay of their own community. Begin with a class brainstorm about what kinds of photographs students might want to include. Have students take notes.
3. Hand out the Create Your Own Photoessay Assignment Sheets and Rubrics. Go over the assignment in detail with students, answering questions as they arise. Make sure all expectations are clear. Give students a due date and have them record it on their assignment sheets.
4. Have students begin work on their outlines in class, before finishing them at home. Approve student outlines before letting them begin work on their photoessays.

5. Conduct an in-class photography clinic. Either have someone from the school or community come in to give students tips (again, try the art department or newspaper and yearbook offices), or go over the use of a camera and film yourself. If you have a student in the class who is a talented photographer, you may want to ask him or her to lead the clinic. Have students bring in the cameras they are going to use and practice shooting with them. Suggested topics to review: lighting, choosing the proper film, using a flash, focusing, loading film, and envisioning a good photograph. Don't worry if you're not an expert--just the basics will do.

You might also try bringing in a variety of books of photography for students to study before attempting their own.

6. Set them loose! Make sure students have enough time to take their photographs, have them developed or upload them to a computer, write and edit their accompanying text, and assemble the finished product. Devote one day a week in class to working on the projects, and check in with each student every week to make sure they are on the right track.
7. Display finished student photoessays in the classroom. Allow students time to walk around and look at their classmates' work.

**Evaluation:** Create a rubric and have students grade themselves. Also use the rubric to assign your own grade to the projects, and assign a final grade using both the students' self-evaluations and your own evaluation. Students should include their photoessay in their Unit Portfolio.

**\*Note:** If you find it too difficult to find cameras available for every student to use, a similar activity to this one can be done with students using photographs from magazines instead of their own.

**Follow-up Activities:**

- Invite a local photographer to the classroom to discuss his or her work.
- Visit a local museum that displays photographic exhibits. Afterward, discuss the exhibits with students: what did the photographs represent? Was there a form to the exhibit? Was there a certain message or story that the photographs tried to tell, or not?
- Pair this activity with Photos as Documents, Lesson 12.1.

**Alignment with the Learning Results:**

Grade Level: **9<sup>th</sup>-dipl.**

Content Area: Visual and Performing Arts: **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS CONNECTIONS**

Standard: **The Arts and History and World Cultures**

Performance Indicator **E1**: Students analyze the characteristics and purposes of products of the visual/performing arts to understand history and/or world cultures.

Grade Level: **9<sup>th</sup>-dipl.**

Content Area: Social Studies: Visual and Performing Arts: **CREATION, PERFORMANCE, AND EXPRESSION – VISUAL ARTS**

Standard: **Composition Skills**

Performance Indicators **B2**: Students use Elements of Art and Principles of Design to create original art works that demonstrate development of personal style in a variety of media and visual art forms.

Grade Level: **6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**

Content Area: Social Studies: **APPLICATIONS**

Standard: **Researching and Developing Positions on Current Social Studies Issues**

Students research, select, and present a position on a current social studies issue by proposing and revising research questions, and locating and selecting information from multiple and varied sources.

Descriptors **A1c,e,f**: Locate and access relevant information that includes multiple perspectives from varied sources, distinguish between primary and secondary sources, and evaluate and verify the credibility of the information found in print and non-print sources.

Grade Level: **6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**

Content Area: Visual and Performing Arts: **AESTHETICS AND CRITICISM**

Standard: **Aesthetics and Criticism**

Performance Indicator **D1**: Students compare and analyze art forms.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CREATE YOUR OWN PHOTOESSAY  
ASSIGNMENT SHEET**

Photographers can convey a whole world of information with just a snap of the shutter. We rely on the work of cameramen and women every day: when we watch the news or read the newspaper, when we want to document important events like weddings, celebrations, or funerals, or when we want to look at a piece of extraordinary artwork. A collection of photographs can reveal the workings of a family, a community, or even an entire culture.

In this assignment, you will be the photographer. What do you see around you in your own community that is worth documenting? What kinds of people fuel the daily life of your town? Which streets do you walk down everyday? Where do you or your family do your shopping? Your playing? Your day-to-day living? Create a photoessay that illustrates your view of your community to your class. Follow the steps below:

1. Write an outline.
  - Make a list of the kinds of pictures you would like to include in your photoessay. What parts of your community do you think you should include?
  - Organize them into an order you think makes sense. Put this information into an outline.
  - Get your teacher's approval before continuing.
2. Learn to work your camera. If it is digital, learn how to zoom and focus, and if it is manual, be sure you know what film to use, how to load it, when to use the flash, and how to focus.
3. Take your pictures. You may need to take several shots of one scene in order to get the picture you want.
4. Upload your digital photos or develop your film and choose your photographs. Make sure you have at least 12 photographs to include in your essay. Printed photographs can be scanned into the computer to make the whole project digitized.
5. Write the narrative that will accompany your photoessay. You can choose to (a) write captions for every photograph, (b) include a few separate paragraphs introducing different sections of your photoessay, or (c) write a longer introduction to the whole photoessay, and let the pictures do their own talking. Whichever form you choose, there must be at least 250 - 500 words of written text accompanying your photographs.
6. Arrange your photographs and written text on heavy paper, or create the entire photoessay on the computer. Be sure to make it stunning!