



Rufino Tamayo's Noche y Dia/Night and Day
Lesson Plan for Grades K-5



Rufino Tamayo (1899-1991)
Noche y Dia/Night and Day, 1953
Oil on canvas
SBMA, Gift of Glen Larson (1998.76)

Grade Levels: K-2; Upper Elementary (3-5)

Subjects: English-Language Arts; Visual Arts

Format: Two-three class periods

Learning Objectives for Writing and Discussion:

- Students learn to observe, describe and analyze the elements of art
- Students learn how artists communicate information through visual details
- Students write a poem or story inspired by a work of art
- Students learn about one of Mexico's greatest 20th century artists

Learning Objectives for Art Activity:

- Students create an original work of art using the elements of art
- Students learn the difference between warm and cool colors, and how they influence expression and mood

Brief Background Information about Tamayo

Rufino Tamayo was one of the most famous Mexican artists of the 20th century. The other great Mexican artists were Diego **Rivera**, Jose Clemente **Orozco**, and David Alfaro **Siqueiros**. **Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros** are known as Los Tres Grandes (The Three Great Ones). They believed that art should have a purpose, and that is to instruct people and communicate a message, often a political one. Tamayo didn't agree with them. His art is much more personal, about the simple, everyday things that he cared about. He thought paintings should be more like poems than political speeches.

Let's take a look at a Tamayo painting at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and see what it tells us about Tamayo—and about ourselves!

First, take a good look at *Night and Day* for several seconds.

What are the first things you see?

Shapes, lines, colors; sun, shooting stars, comets, a lake, earth, sky, etc.

Let's be detail detectives and analyze how Tamayo tells us these things.

What shapes can you find?

Circle, half circles, rectangles, trapezoids, triangle, tadpole-shapes. .

How many different colors can you name?

Yellow, brown, blue, white, ocher, red, etc.

How many different kinds of lines?

Horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curved lines, zigzags.

Which parts of the painting do you think represent “noche” and which parts represent “dia”? Why?

Does this painting look like any daytime or nighttime that you have ever seen?

How is it different? *Yellow sky; all the shapes, colors, forms, textures are simplified, exaggerated, abstracted, made geometrical.*

How many parts is the composition divided into?

Four parts, or quadrants. There is sky and earth on both sides.

Put up your hand and close one eye like a film director so you can only see the sun side of the painting (the left side). Describe the weather on this side of the painting.

Hot or cold? Sunny or rainy?

What words would you use to describe the mood or feeling?

Happy? Sad? Why is that?

If you could compose some music to go with this side of the painting, how would it sound?

Now do the same with the moon side. What's the weather like on this side: is it warm or cool? What is the mood? Happy? Sad? Mysterious?

If there were music for this side, how would it sound?

Now take your hand away so you can see the whole painting.

Can you ever see daytime and nighttime together in real life?

Why do you think Tamayo decided to put *Day and Night* together in one painting?

The Stars and the Sky

Tamayo made many paintings of the night sky, with shooting stars and comets. It was one of his favorite subjects. His interest in “the cosmos,” the study of stars and planets and constellations was also part of his Mexican heritage. The art of the ancient Mexican people who lived thousands of years ago tells us that they too were very interested in what we call astronomy.

What is astronomy? Do you know what a constellation is? Can you name any of the constellations?

Opposites/Dualities

Night and Day are opposites. Tamayo liked to put opposites together. He called them “dualities” (*dualidades*). Write a list of word opposites that could describe this painting.
Earth-Sky Dark-Light Hot- Cold Rough-Smooth Straight-Curvy

Writing Projects

1. Write a short essay or poem that uses your pairs of opposites.
2. Write or tell a story about a time when you looked up at the night sky and saw the stars-- or a summer day when the sun was hot and the light bounced off the water.

3. Write a comparison poem (Similes). Students can use either a reproduction of Tamayo’s painting or use their own artwork to inspire the poem (see art activity instructions below).

- Select a predominant color from each quadrant of the painting.
- For each color, write a phrase that compares that color to something else. The comparison could be with something tangible or intangible. For example: “golden as autumn leaves,” or “blue as deep as sadness.”
- Arrange the four phrases into a 4-line poem
- Write a title for your poem

Art Projects

Discussion question: What are warm colors? What are cool colors?

- Warm colors = red, orange, and yellow. They remind us of things that are warm, such as the sun. Cool colors = blue, violet, and green. They remind us of things that are cool, such as the ocean.
- Look at each quadrant of Tamayo’s *Noche y Dia*. Are the colors warm, cool, or a combination? How many different colors has Tamayo used in each shape, or in each section of background? Would you like the painting more or less if Tamayo had used only one color in each shape or background? Why?

Art Activity

Option #1: *Sketch a color study with pencils and paper.*



Materials: Pencil and paper for sketching; color pencils for color studies.

- Start by drawing a rectangular box.
- Divide the box into quadrants by drawing one vertical line from top to bottom and one horizontal line from side to side.
- Practice drawing the shapes and lines that you see in *Noche y Dia* on a separate piece of paper. Create some of your own shapes and lines, basing them on those of Tamayo.
- Draw some of those shapes inside your rectangular box. Make sure to have some of the shapes cross over from one quadrant into another.
- Now add some lines. Once again, have the lines cross over from one quadrant into another.
- Do an alternate sketch, using different shapes and lines. One of the sketches may be left quite simple, and another sketch may be more full and complex.

Using your sketches, create two different color studies with colored pencils. For each color study, do the following:

- Use only warm colors in one of the quadrants
- Use only cool colors in another of the quadrants
- Use a combination of warm and cool colors in a third quadrant
- Use any of the above color assignments for the fourth quadrant
- Experiment with layering at least two colors onto some of the shapes or background sections

Option #2: Texture Study with pastels



Materials:

- 9"x12" black construction paper
- Oil pastels, separated into sets of warm colors and cool colors

Teacher or Student Prep:

A day or two before the activity, crumple each piece of 9"x12" black construction paper as much as possible. The objective is to create a textured, heavily crinkled look.

Flatten out each piece of textured construction paper. Using an iron at a low setting works well; placing them underneath a stack of heavy books for a day or two also works.

Create an oil pastel painting on textured paper from your color study.

- Using the oil pastels, lay out the composition of the color study of your choice onto the textured paper.
- With your color study as a guide, apply colors to each shape and background section, using the oil pastels.

Option #3: Advanced color and texture composition on masonite

Materials:

- 9"x12" masonite panels (can be purchased from Nasco for \$.77 each – www.eNasco.com/artsandcrafts)
 - Black acrylic or tempera paint
 - Oil pastels, separated into sets of warm colors and cool colors
-
- Using the oil pastels, lay out the composition of the color study of your choice onto the black side of the masonite panel
 - With your color study as a guide, apply colors to each shape and background section, using the oil pastels

Teacher Prep:

The day before the activity, apply a coat or two of the black acrylic or tempera paint onto the "toothy" or rough side of the masonite panel.

Content Standards Addressed

Visual Arts Standards

Kindergarten

1.0 Artistic Perception

1.3 Identify the elements of art (line, color, shape/form, texture, value, space) in the environment and in works of art, emphasizing line, color and shape/form.

2.0 Creative Expression

2.6 Use geometric shapes/forms (circles, triangles, square) in a work of art.

3.0 Aesthetic Valuing

4.2 Describe what they see (including both literal and expressive content) in selected works of art.

Grade One

1.0 Artistic Perception

1.3 Identify the elements of art in objects in nature in nature, in the environment, and in works of art, emphasizing line, color, shape, and texture.

2.0 Creative Expression

2.4 Plan and use variations in line, shape, color, and texture to communicate ideas or feelings in artworks.

Grade Two

1.0 Artistic Perception

1.1 Perceive and describe repetition and balance in nature, the environment, and works of art.

Perceive and discuss differences in mood created by warm and cool colors.

1.2 Identify the elements of art in objects in nature, the environment, and works of art, emphasizing line, color, shape, texture, and space.

2.0 Creative Expression

2.4 Create a painting or drawing, using warm or cool colors expressively.

Grade Three

1.0 Artistic Perception

1.5 Identify and describe elements of art in works of art, emphasizing line, color, shape/form, texture, space, and value.

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

5.2 Write a poem or story inspired by their own works of art.

Grade Four

1.0 Artistic Perception

1.5 Describe and analyze the elements of art (e.g. color, shape/form, line, texture, space, value, emphasizing form, as they are used in works of art and found in the environment.

2.0 Creative Expression

2.7 Use contrast (light & dark) expressively in an original work of art.

2.8 Use complementary colors in an original composition to show contrast and emphasis.

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

4.1 Identify and describe how a person's own cultural context influences individual responses to works of art.

4.3 Discuss how the subject and selection of media relate to the meaning or purpose of a work of art.

4.5 Describe how the individual experiences of an artist may influence the development of specific works of art.

Grade Five

1.0 Artistic Perception

1.3 Use their knowledge of all the elements of art to describe similarities and differences in works of art and the environment.

2.0 Creative Expression

2.6 Use perspective in an original work of art to create a real or imaginary scene.

2.7 Communicate values, opinions, or personal insights through an original work of art.

3.0 Aesthetic Valuing

4.1 Identify how selected principles of design are used in a work of art and how they affect personal responses to and evaluation of the work of art.

English- Language Arts Standards

Kindergarten

1.0 Writing, Listening and Speaking

1.1 Use letters and phonetically spelled words to write about experiences, stories, people, objects, or events.

1.1 Recognize and use complete, coherent sentences when speaking

1.2 share information and ideas, speaking audibly in complete, coherent sentences

2.1 Describe people, places, things (e.g. size, color, shape), locations, and actions)

2.2 Recite short poems, rhymes, and songs

2.3 Relate an experience or creative story in a logical sequence

Grade One

Writing, Listening and Speaking

1.1 Select a focus when writing

1.2 Use descriptive words

2.1 Write brief narratives describing an experience

2.2 Write brief expository descriptions of a real object, person, place, or even, using sensory details

1.1 Write and speak in complete, coherent sentences

1.1 Listen attentively.

1.2 Ask questions for clarification and understanding

1.4 Stay on topic

1.5 Use descriptive words when speaking about people, places, things, and events.

2.4 Provide descriptions with careful attention to sensory detail.

Grade Two

Writing, Listening and Speaking

- 2.1 Write brief narratives based on their experiences;
 - a. Move through a logical sequence of events
 - b. Describe the setting, characters, objects and events in detail
- 1.2 Recognize and use correct word order in written sentences
- 1.6 Speak clearly in informal discussion
- 1.7 Recount experiences in a logical sequence

Third Grade

Writing, Listening and Speaking

- 2.0 Write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences.
- 2.1 Write narratives:
 - a. Provide context
 - b. includes well-chosen details
- 2.2 Write descriptions that use concrete details to prevent and support unified impressions of people, places, things, or experiences.
- 1.3 Respond to questions with appropriate elaboration
- 1.6 Provide a beginning, a middle, and an end, including concrete details
- 1.7 Use clear and specific vocabulary to communicate ideas
- 2.1 Make brief narrative presentations that include well-chosen details

Grade Four

Writing, Listening, and Speaking

- 1.0 Students write clear, coherent sentences that develop a central idea.
- 1.3 Cause and effect, similarity and difference.
- 2.1 Write narratives
 - a. relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience
 - b. provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience
 - c. Use concrete sensory details.
 - d. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.
- 2.1 Make narrative presentations that relate ideas, observations, or recollections about an event or experience

Grade Five

Writing, Listening and Speaking

- 2.4 Write persuasive (letters or) compositions
- 1.0 Students deliver focused, coherent presentations that convey ideas clearly
- 1.1 Ask questions that seek information not already discussed
- 1.3 Make inferences or draw conclusions
- 1.5 Clarify and support spoken ideas with evidence and examples
- 1.7 Identify, analyze, and critique persuasive techniques
- 1.8 Analyze media as sources for information, entertainment, persuasion, interpretation of events, and transmission of culture.