

Unit 1 Lesson 1: Using Line to Tell a Story

Student Objectives:

- Become comfortable with various kinds of lines that will be used in the drawing of narrative compositions that tell a story.
- Create a pencil drawing of events or activities in which the people that participate become the subject matter.
- Recognize the art of Peter Paul Rubens, Hieronymus Bosch, and Pieter Bruegel.

Worldview Integration:

[CWs need not currently include this entry.]

Materials:

- Pencils for drawing such as 2B
- Erasers
- Practice paper such as copier paper
- White drawing paper approximately 23cm x 30cm
- Optional: colored pencils or crayons

Introduction:

This lesson will require one to two (1-2) 50 minute class sessions.

When we think of drawing as an artistic experience, we almost always start with lines, for lines record information quickly and easily. What is a line? *Line* is an *Element of Art* that is a continuous mark made by a tool as it is drawn across a surface. Line is the oldest and most direct form of communication. It can be drawn quickly with expression or with great care and precision to capture detail. Line can suggest depth and perspective, known as *linear perspective*, showing distance and three dimensions. The type of tool that is used and the surface on which the mark is made gives us what is called media. Examples of tools might be pencil, ink pen, graphite, charcoal, crayons, pastels, sticks, feathers, or anything that makes a mark. The surfaces on which the mark is made, also known as *ground*, might be a variety of papers, fabric, clay, wood or anything that can receive a mark.

When we think of “line” we think of drawing, for that is how we usually create a line. A line can suggest movement. It can be thick or thin. It can be rough or smooth, broken or continuous, actual or implied. Refer to GL4 Unit 1 Lesson 1 for Line Chart.

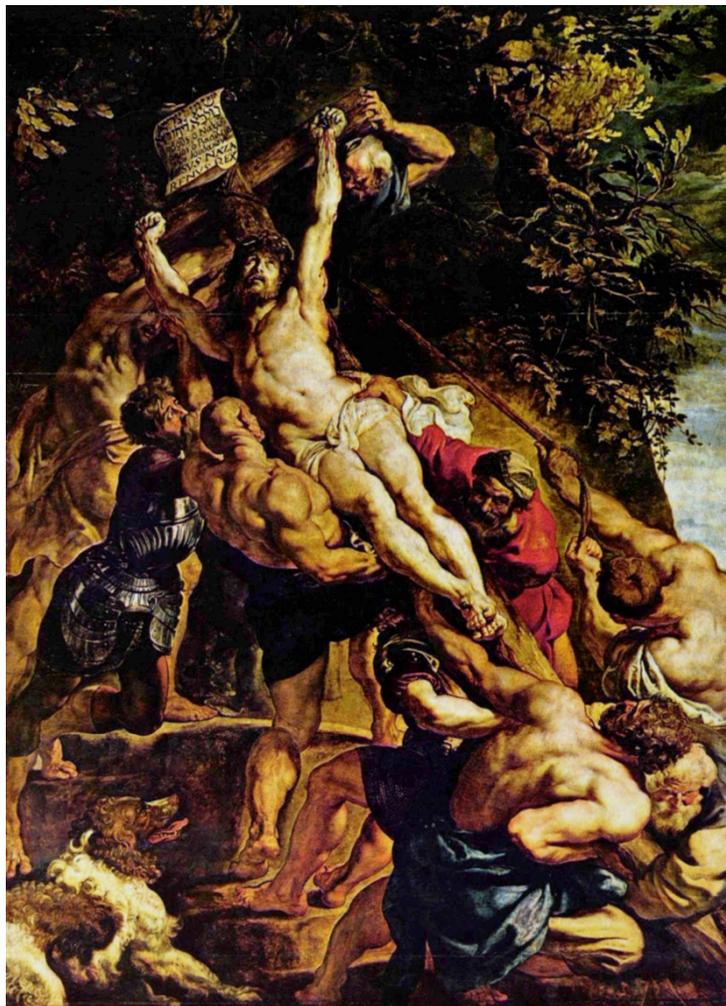
Line can even create a mood. Lines can be drawn in different directions such as horizontal which is a line that is lying down. A line that is standing up is called vertical. A contour line is one that follows edges within an object including detail, as opposed to one that shows only the outside edge which is a silhouette. Lines can be straight, curved or angular. Refer to GL4 Unit 1 Lesson 1 for Line Chart.

In the creation of a *narrative* work of art, that is one that tells a story or records an event, the artist most often starts with lines. By using lines, the composition can be planned and developed as the artist draws the people, animals, landscape, details of the environment or setting, and all the other objects that make up the total picture.

The purpose of this lesson is twofold as it emphasizes the use of line while creating a composition that is narrative. The student will rely on lines to communicate an event or activity.

It is helpful to see how famous artists create narrative paintings that began with pencil renderings and preliminary studies before producing the final painting. In this lesson, three artists will be introduced with examples of their works of art which will enable the students to better understand the assignment of creating a composition that relates an event.

In 1610, Dutch artist, Peter Paul Rubens, painted three panels, called a *triptych*, for the Antwerp Cathedral in Belgium. The central portion is entitled, *Elevation of the Cross* that is full of movement and contrast as the heavily muscled men strain to lift the cross on which Christ is nailed at his crucifixion. This composition seethes with power and tension as it relates this event. Notice the movement of the lines that capture the curves of the bodies of Christ and the other figures.



Rubens

The Peasant Wedding by Pieter Bruegel is a wonderful example of a narrative painting. You can almost hear the bagpipes play at the celebration of a marriage where guests enjoy the food, drink and festivities. Bruegel's paintings are known for their dominant theme of human activities.



Bruegel

Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516) was a painter from the Netherlands known for his use of fantastic imagery to illustrate moral and religious concepts and narratives. His paintings include an enormous amount of details that use his imagination, keeping the viewers of his paintings engrossed with the numerous events and activities. His painting, *The Hay Wagon* is a wonderful example of his attention to detail as it includes the story of Creation, the fall of man and his redemption or destruction. The people in the painting come from a wide range of backgrounds: rich and poor, noble and common, scholars and tradesmen, clergy and laymen. It is entertaining to look closely at this painting to enjoy the incredible detail, numerous activities all created with amazing imagination.



Bosch

Unlike these three examples that are paintings, this lesson will give the students the opportunity to illustrate an activity or event of their choice, drawn in pencil. If time allows the students might add color at its completion using colored pencil or crayon.

Before the students begin this project, the teacher will lead a class discussion about possible events or activities that would be appropriate subject matter. The possibilities are extremely varied as they may come from the student's experiences in daily activities in the village and at school both in and out of the classroom, including recess, mealtime, family time in the cottages, doing chores and enjoying their siblings. They might also choose from events in the Bible that they have enjoyed and want to illustrate. The emphasis for their narrative art work will be on creating a detailed drawing that will bring enjoyment to the viewer by including many aspects of the event or activity. The teacher will allow the students to view the examples closely so that they will understand more clearly the potential and expectations for this project. In viewing the examples, the teacher should point out that the activity takes place throughout the composition and is not limited to the bottom edge of the paper. The tendency for young artists is to crowd the bottom of the picture with subject matter rather than considering the composition as a whole.

In addition to discussing potential subject matter for the drawing, the students will participate in an exercise of drawing different kinds of line. This will familiarize them with the element of line so that they can create interest in the lines that they use to create the narrative drawing.

Vocabulary:

line: an element of art that is a continuous mark made by a tool as it is drawn across a surface.

element of art: the basic components used by the artist to create works of art. Shape, value, texture, line and color are elements of art.

linear perspective: technique used to create the illusion of depth on a two- dimensional plane.

narrative: a work of art that tells a story or records an event.

triptych: a three paneled painting also called an altarpiece.

Methods:

- The teacher will lead a discussion with the students that will stimulate their interest in the narrative subject of this lesson. As the students suggest ideas as part of this discussion, the teacher will record them on the board. It is important that each student selects his own idea to avoid copying one another.
- The students will be given a piece of practice paper such as copier paper, a drawing pencil and eraser that will be used to draw different kinds of line as shown in the Introduction. The teacher will use the kinds of line drawn in the illustration and will name the type of line to be drawn after demonstrating that line on the board. It is not necessary for the student's line to be an exact copy of the teacher's example, rather should demonstrate their understanding of the description, such as delicate curves, or bold angles.
- Once the students have drawn the different kinds of line that could be used in their art, they are now ready to begin to plan the composition.
- The students will draw some preliminary sketches in pencil either in their sketchbook or on a piece of paper before working on the final drawing paper. This will help them develop their ideas and work on the placement of people, buildings, or landscape that will be a part of their composition.
- Students are often unsure about how to draw people, but this does not need to be a concern for this project. The students should be encouraged to draw people and animals in their own style with emphasis on the activity or event in which they are involved.
- When the students have completed their planning, the teacher will pass out the final drawing paper and the students will then begin to draw their narrative work of art. The first lines should be drawn very lightly until the student is sure of the placement of major areas such as the landscape and the general setting for the event. Once this has been accomplished the student can then begin to develop the scene with the participants and activities.
- Because this lesson is about line, in addition to narrative works of art, the students need to be reminded of the numerous kinds of line to use to add interest to the drawing. The

teacher will interact with the students as they work on their project to see that different kinds of line are being used in the drawing.

- As the students develop their drawing, they will become involved in the creativity of the drawing and find that ideas will come to them as they draw that will further enhance the art.
- At the completion of the drawings, the teacher will determine whether it is appropriate to invest more time in the drawings by adding color.
- When all the students have finished their narrative drawings, they will be asked to share what they have drawn with the other students. This will be done individually in front of the classroom, with the teacher maintaining order and creating an atmosphere conducive to enjoyable sharing of art.

Assessment:

An event or activity should be reflected and expressed clearly in the art.

There should be evidence of a variety of line styles incorporated in the composition.

Extensions:

[Begin here.]

Helpful, though not strictly required:

Modifications:

[Begin here.]