

## **National Standards for Visual Art**

### **The National Standards for Arts Education**

Developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (under the guidance of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts), the National Standards for Arts Education is a document which outlines basic arts learning outcomes integral to the comprehensive K-12 education of every American student. The Consortium published the National Standards in 1994 through a grant administered by MENC, the National Association for Music Education.

**Visit your State Department of Education for your state standards on Visual Art**  
State Contacts and Information

**Find your state department of education, state contacts and organizations at the link below**

<http://www.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html>

#### **VISUAL ARTS (K-4)**

**Source:** [http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/standards\\_k4.cfm](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/standards_k4.cfm)

These standards provide a framework for helping students learn the characteristics of the visual arts by using a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions, to reflect their ideas, feelings, and emotions; and to evaluate the merits of their efforts. The standards address these objectives in ways that promote acquisition of and fluency in new ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating. They emphasize student acquisition of the most important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge offered by the visual arts. They develop new techniques, approaches, and habits for applying knowledge and skills in the visual arts to the world beyond school.

The visual arts are extremely rich. They range from drawing, painting, sculpture, and design, to architecture, film, video, and folk arts. They involve a wide variety of tools, techniques, and processes. The standards are structured to recognize that many elements from this broad array can be used to accomplish specific educational objectives. For example, drawing can be used as the basis for creative activity, historical and cultural investigation, or analysis, as can any other fields within the visual arts. The standards present educational goals. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose appropriately from this rich array of content and processes to fulfill these goals in specific circumstances and to develop the curriculum.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts and must exhibit their competence at various levels in visual, oral, and written form. In Kindergarten-Grade 4, young children experiment enthusiastically with art materials and investigate the ideas presented to them through visual arts instruction. They exhibit a sense of joy and excitement as they make and share their artwork with others. Creation is at the heart of this instruction. Students learn to work with various tools, processes, and media. They learn to coordinate their hands and minds in explorations of the visual world. They learn to make choices that enhance communication of their ideas. Their natural inquisitiveness is promoted, and they learn the value of perseverance.

As they move from kindergarten through the early grades, students develop skills of observation, and they learn to examine the objects and events of their lives. At the same time, they grow in their ability to describe, interpret, evaluate, and respond to work in the visual arts. Through examination of their own work and that of other people, times, and places, students learn to unravel the essence of artwork and to appraise its purpose and value. Through these efforts, students begin to understand the meaning and impact of the visual world in which they live.

**Content Standard #1:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

*Achievement Standard:*

Students know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes  
Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses  
Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories

Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

**Content Standard #2:** Using knowledge of structures and functions

*Achievement Standard:*

Students know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas  
Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses  
Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas

**Content Standard #3:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

*Achievement Standard:*

Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art

Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning

**Content Standard #4:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

*Achievement Standard:*

Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures

Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places

Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art

**Content Standard #5:** Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the

work of others

*Achievement Standard:*

Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art

Students describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks

Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks

**Content Standard #6:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

*Achievement Standard:*

Students understand and use similarities and differences between characteristics of the visual arts and other arts disciplines

Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the

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curriculum

## **VISUAL ARTS (5-8)**

**Source:** [http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/standards\\_58.cfm#04](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/standards_58.cfm#04)

Students in grades 5-8 continue to need a framework that aids them in learning the characteristics of the visual arts by using a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions. They grow ever more sophisticated in their need to use the visual arts to reflect their feelings and emotions and in their abilities to evaluate the merits of their efforts. These standards provide that framework in a way that promotes the students' thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating skills and provides for their growing familiarity with the ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge important in the visual arts. As students gain this knowledge and these skills, they gain in their ability to apply the knowledge and skills in the visual arts to their widening personal worlds.

These standards present educational goals. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose among the

array of possibilities offered by the visual arts to accomplish specific educational objectives in specific circumstances. The visual arts offer the richness of drawing and painting, sculpture, and design; architecture, film, and video; and folk arts -- all of these can be used to help students achieve the standards. For example, students could create works in the medium of videotape, engage in historical and cultural investigations of the medium, and take part in analyzing works of art produced on videotape. The visual arts also involve varied tools, techniques, and processes -- all of which can play a role in students' achieving the standards, as well.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts. As they develop increasing fluency in visual, oral, and written communication, they must exhibit their greater artistic competence through all of these avenues.

In grades 5-8, students' visual expressions become more individualistic and imaginative. The problemsolving

activities inherent in art making help them develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. They select and transform ideas, discriminate, synthesize and appraise, and they apply these skills to their expanding knowledge of the visual arts and to their own creative work. Students understand that making and responding to works of visual art are inextricably interwoven and that perception, analysis, and critical judgment are inherent to both.

Their own art making becomes infused with a variety of images and approaches. They learn that preferences of others may differ from their own. Students refine the questions that they ask in response to artworks. This leads them to an appreciation of multiple artistic solutions and interpretations. Study of historical and cultural contexts gives students insights into the role played by the visual arts in human achievement. As they consider examples of visual art works within historical contexts, students gain a deeper appreciation of their own values, of the values of other people, and the connection of the visual arts to universal human needs, values, and beliefs. They understand that the art of a culture is influenced by aesthetic ideas as well as by social, political, economic, and other factors. Through these efforts, students develop an understanding of the meaning and import of the visual world in which they live.

**Content Standard #1:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

**Achievement Standard:**

Students select media, techniques, and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices

Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques,

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and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

**Content Standard #2:** Using knowledge of structures and functions

**Achievement Standard:**

Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work

Students employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas

Students select and use the qualities of structures and functions of art to improve communication of their ideas

**Content Standard #3:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

**Achievement Standard:**

Students integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks. Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks

**Content Standard #4:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

***Achievement Standard:***

Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures  
Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts  
Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art

**Content Standard #5:** Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

***Achievement Standard:***

Students compare multiple purposes for creating works of art  
Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry  
Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures

**Content Standard #6:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

***Achievement Standard:***

Students compare the characteristics of works in two or more art forms that share similar subject matter, historical periods, or cultural context  
Students describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts

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**VISUAL ARTS (9-12)**

**Source:** [http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/standards\\_912.cfm#04](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/standards_912.cfm#04)

In grades 9-12, students extend their study of the visual arts. They continue to use a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions. They grow more sophisticated in their employment of the visual arts to reflect their feelings emotions and continue to expand their abilities to evaluate the merits of their efforts. These standards provide a framework for that study in a way that promotes the maturing students' thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating skills. The standards also provide for their growing familiarity with the ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge important in the visual arts. As students gain this knowledge and these skills, they gain in their ability to apply knowledge and skills in the visual arts to their widening personal worlds.

The visual arts range from the folk arts, drawing, and painting, to sculpture and design, from architecture to film and video -- and any of these can be used to help students meet the educational goals embodied in these standards. For example, graphic design (or any other field within the visual arts) can be used as the basis for creative activity, historical and cultural investigations, or analysis throughout the standards. The visual arts involve varied tools, techniques, and processes all of which also provide opportunities for working toward the standards. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose from among the array of possibilities offered by the visual arts to accomplish specific educational objectives in specific circumstances.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts. As they develop greater fluency in communicating in visual, oral, and written form, they must exhibit greater artistic competence through all of these avenues.

In grades 9-12, students develop deeper and more profound works of visual art that reflect the maturation of their creative and problem-solving skills. Students understand the multifaceted interplay of different media, styles, forms, techniques, and processes in the creation of their work.

Students develop increasing abilities to pose insightful questions about contexts, processes, and criteria for evaluation. They use these questions to examine works in light of various analytical methods and to express sophisticated ideas about visual relationships using precise terminology. They can evaluate artistic character and aesthetic qualities in works of art, nature, and human-made environments. They can reflect on the nature of human involvement in art as a viewer, creator, and participant.

Students understand the relationships among art forms and between their own work and that of others.

They are able to relate understandings about the historical and cultural contexts of art to situations in contemporary life. They have a broad and in-depth understanding of the meaning and import of the visual world in which they live.

**Content Standard #1:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks

Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use

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*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students communicate ideas regularly at a high level of effectiveness in at least one visual arts medium

Students initiate, define, and solve challenging visual arts problems independently using intellectual skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation

**Content Standard #2:** Using knowledge of structures and functions

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students demonstrate the ability to form and defend judgments about the characteristics and structures to accomplish commercial, personal, communal, or other purposes of art

Students evaluate the effectiveness of artworks in terms of organizational structures and functions

Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students demonstrate the ability to compare two or more perspectives about the use of organizational principles and functions in artwork and to defend personal evaluations of these perspectives

Students create multiple solutions to specific visual arts problems that demonstrate competence in producing effective relationships between structural choices and artistic functions

**Content Standard #3:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture

Students apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students describe the origins of specific images and ideas and explain why they are of value in their artwork and in the work of others

Students evaluate and defend the validity of sources for content and the manner in which subject matter, symbols, and images are used in the students' works and in significant works by others

**Content Standard #4:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art

Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places

Students analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making

***Achievement Standard, Advanced:***

Students analyze and interpret artworks for relationships among form, context, purposes, and critical models, showing understanding of the work of critics, historians, aestheticians, and artists

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