



Art 8 Curriculum

Board Approved: 02/19/2026

Course Information

Middle School Semester course

Course Description:

Art 8 is a semester-long course in which students will expand and deepen their knowledge of the elements and principles of design through rigorous studio work, art history, and art criticism. Students take greater ownership of the creative process by planning, creating, and refining artworks that address personal, cultural, and social themes. They maintain sketchbooks and digital portfolios, author artist statements, and curate collections of their work. The course emphasizes advanced problem-solving, critical analysis, and communication skills that prepare students for high school visual arts pathways.

Transfer Goals:

- Strategically select media, tools, and techniques to solve complex visual problems and communicate sophisticated ideas.
- Communicate ideas effectively.
- Independently be inspired, design, create, and reflect/present an original work of art.
- Evaluate and critique works of art.
- Make connections between art and society, culture, and history.
- Use a variety of media, tools, and techniques strategically.

Curriculum Standards: [Missouri Learning Standards Fine Arts Visual Arts Standards](#)

Curriculum Resource(s): TBD

priority standards indicated in **bold*

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Unit 1: Inspiration

Timeframe: All units in this semester-long course are integrated; skills and concepts are concurrently woven throughout the learning experiences to ensure ongoing practice and connection.

Unit Description: in this unit, students explore how inspiration drives complex artistic decision-making and original expression. They analyze artworks across cultures and time periods to examine how artists influence perceptions and respond to social, cultural, and political forces. Through research, sustained collaboration, and iterative problem-solving, students create original works that synthesize personal experience with broader societal and cultural understandings.

Enduring Understandings:

- Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be intentionally developed and applied to solve complex problems.
- Visual imagery shapes and influences understanding, interpretation, and responses to the world, inviting critical analysis and reflection.
- Engagement with art cultivates aesthetic and empathetic awareness, fostering deeper understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.
- Through art-making and analysis, people construct and critique meaning, developing nuanced understanding of themselves, others, and the societies they live in.
- Interactions with and analysis of art help people develop nuanced ideas and understanding of society, culture, and history.

Essential Questions:

- In what ways can collaboration challenge and expand the creative process, and how can diverse perspectives influence the outcome of artistic work?
- How do images shape or influence perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions about the world, and how can viewers critically interpret their impact?
- How do personal, cultural, and historical experiences shape the way individuals interpret and respond to art, and how can these experiences inform artistic expression?
- In what ways does actively engaging in art-making enrich personal understanding, emotional growth, and connections to others or society?
- How can art be intentionally used to influence social, political, or cultural viewpoints, and what responsibilities do artists and viewers have in shaping and interpreting those messages?

Unit 1 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
<u>VA:Cr1A.8</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can document the stages of the creative process.
<u>VA:Re7A.8</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can explain that an artist's choices are influenced by their culture, experiences, and environment.
VA:Re7B.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can compare and contrast how images influence ideas.
VA:Cn10A.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can reflect on group identity through a work of art.

**priority standards indicated in bold*

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- I can identify how art is used to represent group identity.

priority standards indicated in **bold*

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Unit 2: Design

Timeframe: All units in this semester-long course are integrated; skills and concepts are concurrently woven throughout the learning experiences to ensure ongoing practice and connection.

Unit Description: In this unit, students will apply the elements and principles of design strategically to solve complex visual challenges. They explore how design decisions shape audience response and meaning, using research, critique, and iterative refinement to inform their choices. Students plan, test, and revise compositions with increasing independence, demonstrating sophisticated control of visual organization and purposeful communication.

Enduring Understandings:

- Artists and designers shape artistic investigations by purposefully following or challenging traditions to achieve complex creative goals.
- Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and processes, analyzing how these choices affect meaning and impact.
- People create and interact with objects, spaces, and designs that influence, define, and enhance personal and community experiences.
- Engaging in art criticism allows people to gain deeper insights into the meaning, significance, and impact of artworks.

Essential Questions:

- How do artists and designers decide when to follow or break design traditions to communicate their ideas effectively?
- In what ways can challenging conventions lead to innovation in design?
- How do the materials, tools, and processes an artist chooses shape the meaning and emotional impact of a work of art?
- How can design shape the way people experience or connect with their surroundings and communities?
- How does engaging in critique help artists refine their work and deepen their understanding of a design’s purpose and impact?
- What can analyzing others’ design choices teach us about our own creative process and decision-making?

Unit 2 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
VA: Cr1B.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can plan my artwork through investigating contemporary art and design.
<u>VA: Cr2A.8</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can experiment and take risks to pursue new ideas.
VA: Cr2C.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can organize and design images and words to communicate my ideas clearly.
VA: Re8A.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can interpret a work of art to identify the ideas and mood.

**priority standards indicated in bold*

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Unit 3: Creation

Timeframe: All units in this semester-long course are integrated; skills and concepts are concurrently woven throughout the learning experiences to ensure ongoing practice and connection.

Unit Description: In this unit, students will engage in rigorous studio practice by applying advanced techniques across multiple media, choosing tools and processes strategically to support their concepts. They independently manage multi-stage projects—planning, creating, and refining artworks using research, experimentation, and critique. Students take creative risks, pursue originality, and demonstrate mastery of media through purposeful, high-quality execution and problem-solving.

Enduring Understandings:

- Artists and designers strategically experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and approaches to explore and expand the expressive potential of their work.
- Artists and designers navigate the balance between experimentation and making deliberate choices that shape both the process and the final artwork.
- Artists and designers cultivate works through sustained practice, critical reflection, and constructive critique, systematically revising and refining their work to communicate more sophisticated ideas.

Essential Questions:

- How do artists determine, justify, and strategically select the resources, tools, and methods needed to plan and execute complex artistic investigations?
- In what ways do artists and designers employ experimentation, reflection, and iterative problem-solving to refine their ideas and achieve more effective outcomes?
- How do artists and designers make intentional choices in composition, materials, and techniques to communicate meaning clearly and impactfully to diverse audiences?
- How does understanding and applying visual art vocabularies enhance the ability to analyze, interpret, and critically evaluate artworks?

Unit 3 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
VA: Cr2A.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can experiment and take risks to pursue new ideas.
VA: Cr2B.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can demonstrate awareness and responsibility when sharing and using images.
VA:Cr3A.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can reflect on my work, make revisions, and explain my intended meaning.

**priority standards indicated in bold*

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Unit 4: Presentation/Reflection

Timeframe: All units in this semester-long course are integrated; skills and concepts are concurrently woven throughout the learning experiences to ensure ongoing practice and connection.

Unit Description: In this unit, students will curate and present their artwork with increasing professionalism, selecting and organizing pieces to communicate a cohesive artistic vision. They evaluate artworks using evidence-based reasoning, craft artist statements, and create convincing arguments about aesthetic and conceptual decisions. Students maintain refined sketchbook and digital portfolios that document process, growth, and intention, demonstrating readiness for high school visual arts pathways.

Enduring Understandings:

- People critically evaluate art using multiple criteria, considering both technical execution and the meaning conveyed.
- Objects, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented by artists, museums, or other venues communicate complex social, cultural, and political narratives, fostering deeper appreciation and understanding.
- Artists, curators, and others intentionally consider a range of factors and methods, including evolving technologies, when preparing, refining, or preserving artworks for display or long-term care.
- The collection, preservation, and presentation of objects, artifacts, and artworks provide insight into human experiences, cultivating critical awareness and informed interpretation.

Essential Questions:

- How can one establish and justify criteria to evaluate the quality, meaning, and impact of a work of art?
- How do the choices made by art museums influence how we view art and history?
- What criteria are considered when selecting works for presentation, a portfolio, or a collection, and how do these decisions influence the way art is perceived?
- Why do people assign value to objects, artifacts, and artworks, and how do these judgments shape decisions about which works are preserved or presented?

Unit 4 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
VA: Pr4A.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can develop a collection of artwork for presentation.
VA: Pr5A.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can prepare and present my art to meet specific criteria or theme.
VA: Pr6A.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can understand and analyze how a collection of artwork influences ideas, beliefs, and experiences.
VA:Re9A.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can create a convincing and logical argument to support an evaluation of art.

**priority standards indicated in bold*

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