

THREE-PART ART PRE-VISIT POSTER

Ansel Adams: Early Works

ARTFUL THINKING ROUTINES: SEE / THINK / WONDER

Use this questioning strategy to help students reach for new observations and connections.

Slowly look at the artwork for a minute.

- What do you see?
- What do you think?
- What do you wonder?

PRE-VISIT TIP

Encourage curiosity! Have students develop "I wonder" statements about the field trip to the William D. Cannon Art Gallery.

VOCABULARY

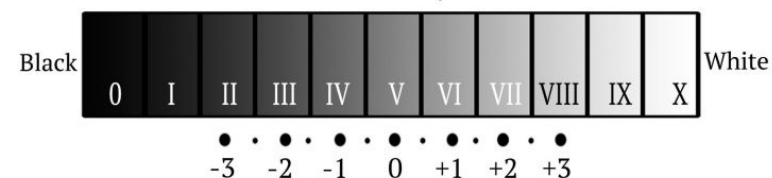
Contrast – Showing the difference between the elements of art, for example dark versus light or rough versus smooth.

Film – A flexible strip of plastic or other material, stored in the body of the camera, coated with light-sensitive emulsion when exposed to light captures and records an image. When you push the button on a film camera, it opens a shutter, which is a lid that protects the film. On a camera, the shutter opens and closes really fast. It only wants to let enough light in to capture the image and then close before it gets too much light.

Value scale – Value is the lightness or darkness of a color. A value scale is a linear system to describe the differences in a color or a neutral ranging from lightest to darkest, for example white to black with a series of grays in between.

Zone system – A system used when taking a photograph that adjusts the tonal quality of each of the various areas within a photograph so as to boost the final picture's clarity and depth. The zones are divided into a range of ten zones from pure black to pure white.

The Zone System



Mount Williamson, from Manzanar, 1944
Vintage gelatin silver print, 7 1/4 x 9 1/4 inches

Who made this?

- Ansel Adams (1902-1984) was an American photographer and environmentalist. He disliked going to school and did not like to sit still.
- When he was 14 years old he begged his family to take him to Yosemite in California. He later lived there as an adult.
- Ansel enjoyed teaching photography to others.
- He developed the zone system of photography with photographer Fred Archer.
- He preferred to work in black and white because he felt he could better capture the sense of place with the range of tones in black and white film.

What inspired this photograph?

In 1943 and 1944, Ansel Adams made several trips from Yosemite to the Manzanar Relocation Center, located at the foot of Mount Williamson, where Japanese and Japanese-American citizens were interned after the attack on Pearl Harbor. On one of the trips to the Manzanar camp, Adams made what he considered to be one of his best images, a view of a vast field of boulders with Mount Williamson in the distance surrounded by dramatic clouds.

THREE-PART ART PRE-VISIT LESSON

Ansel Adams: Early Works

Intended Age Group: Elementary (grades K-5 with teacher modifications)

Length of Lesson: One 60-minute lesson

THE PRACTICE: STUDIO HABITS OF MIND

What does artistic thinking look like and how does studio art benefit students in art and in other content areas? Teachers using this lesson will help foster the following thinking dispositions:

1. **Develop Craft:** Learning to use tools, materials, and artistic conventions
2. **Understand Art Worlds:** Learning about what artists make and artist communities.
Learning to collaborate and understanding that artists often work in groups.

Students will understand that artists and photographers can use black, gray, and white to create contrasts of light and shadow to move the viewer's eye across a landscape.

MATERIALS:

- Image: *Mount Williamson, from Manzanar, 1944*
- 4x6 Index Cards 10 per student
- Pencils
- Paint brushes
- Water containers
- Cups of black and white tempera paint
- Paper towels
- Sheet of butcher paper approximate 4 feet in length
- Glue sticks or tape to adhere cards to butcher paper

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Conduct class discussion of *Mount Williamson, from Manzanar, 1944* using Artful Thinking Routine: See/Think/Wonder as exemplified on the reverse side of this poster.
2. Explain to students that during the hands-on part of the lesson they will try to mix as many different types of gray as possible with black and white paint. When they have finished mixing their different grays, they will bring the painted cards to the butcher paper and begin to collaboratively organize them from white to black to create a class value scale poster.
3. Pass out index cards to students and direct them to number cards on front from 1 to 10. Let them know that for this project card one will be black and 10 will be white.
4. Next direct students to add a quarter size amount of white paint and the tiniest drop of black possible to card number nine and blend the two tones together. Remind students to leave an unpainted edge around the card to allow for handling and arranging on butcher paper.
5. Then direct students to find the card numbered eight and add same amount of white and two drops of black and stir together. After this initial practice allow students to begin to work independently to begin mixing different ratios increasing the darkness of gray. Students should finish this section of the lesson by painting card one black and leaving card ten white.
6. It is important to circulate through the classroom and monitor student progress changing water often as black is a powerful color and can overwhelm the white and be difficult to clean from brush.
7. Allow time for students to discuss the strategies they used for mixing the black and white paint. Have them describe what they noticed about the different types of grays. Ask how being able to see this range of grays create a new understanding about black and white photography.