

Writing about Art

**ELA COMMON CORE STANDARDS,
WRITING, AND VISUAL ARTS**

Cross Curricular Connections

At every grade level the Kentucky Core Academic Standards for Arts and Humanities state that:

- Students will understand that there are three distinct processes for involvement in the arts; creating new artworks, performing works previously created, and responding to artworks and performances.
- Students will understand that full understanding and appreciation of the arts requires some degree of involvement in all three processes.
- Program Review emphasizes that students must be engaged in all three processes

ELA Common Core Standards for Informational Writing require students to

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

- a. **Introduce** a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

ELA Common Core Standards for Informational Writing

- b. **Develop** the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

- c. Use appropriate and varied **transitions** to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

ELA Common Core Standards for Informational Writing

- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- e. Establish and maintain a formal style.
- f. Provide a **concluding statement** or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

Critiquing a Work of Art

- There are four steps to writing a critique:
 1. Description
 2. Analysis
 3. Interpretation
 4. Evaluation

Describe

- Describe the type of artwork, including medium and technique
- Describe the size and subject matter.
- Describe how the elements of art are incorporated into the artwork (the lines, the form, the color, and the texture).

Analyze

Analyze how the principles of design are used.

- **Balance**: visual equalization of the elements in a work of art. The three major forms of balance are asymmetrical (where equilibrium is achieved by the balance of differences in the art elements within a composition), symmetrical (where the art elements in a composition are balanced in a mirror-like fashion), and radial balance (a kind of balance where the elements branch or radiate out from a central point).

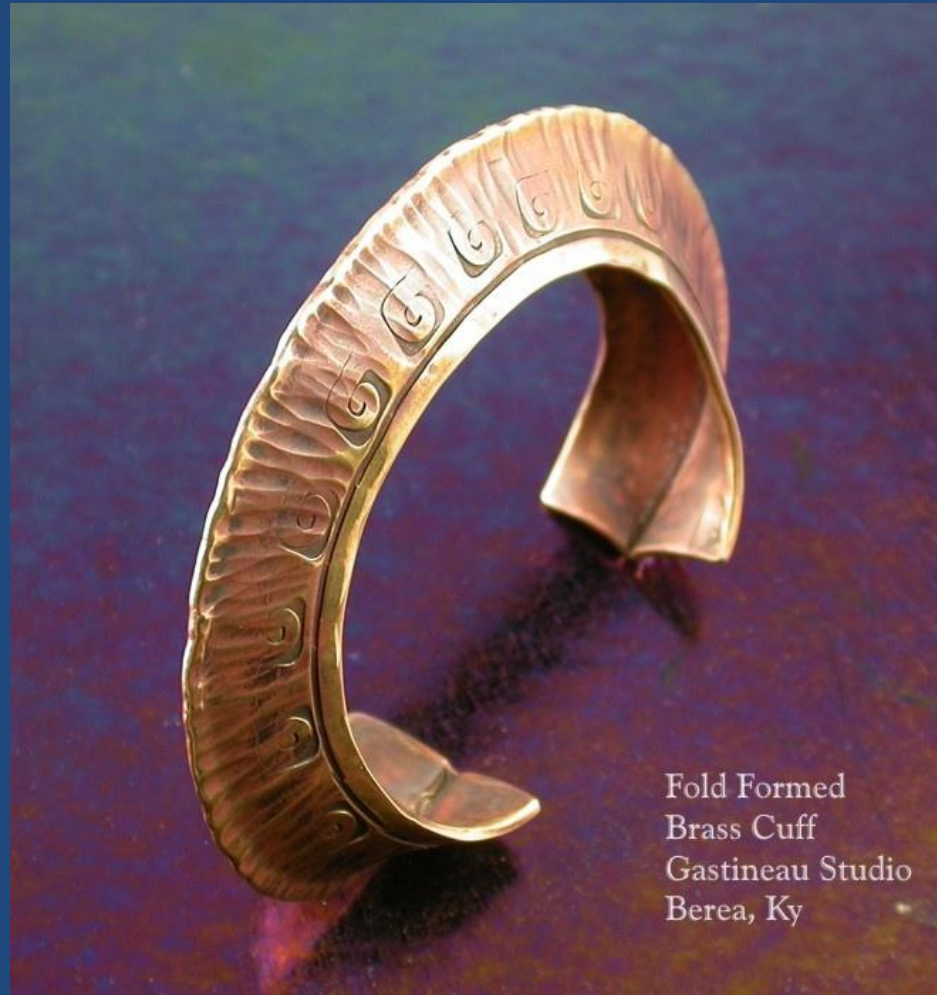
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- **Contrast** emphasizes differences between the art elements. For example, in jewelry there might be a contrast in texture.
- **Repetition** is a way of combining art elements so that the same elements are used over and over to achieve balance and harmony.
- **Pattern** is the repetition of an element of art (i.e., shapes, lines, or colors) to achieve decoration or ornamentation.
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Interpretation and Evaluation

- What is the purpose of this artwork? Is it functional, narrative (tells a story), artistically expressive or a combination?
- Is the artwork successful in using the elements of art and principles of design to create something useful AND aesthetically pleasing? Would you like to wear it? To give it as a gift? Who would you give it to? Why?

Fold formed Brass Cuff by Ken Gastineau



Pewter Pendants by Ken Gastineau



Filigree Necklace by Bob Mattingly



Other Informational Writing Ideas

- Lead the students in writing a how-to feature article about their art experience. Illustrate it with step-by-step photos of the process.
- Have students research the history of the art form in a specific time period or culture and write a report about the purpose of the art form within that culture.

Informational Writing

Writing about a Tradition

- Basket making is a tradition in Appalachia. There are many traditions in every community.
- Write an essay about a tradition that is important to your family, your school, your church, or your community.

Possible Topic Ideas

- Family trips, gatherings, or reunions
- Holidays or traditional family celebrations
- Arts and crafts
- Music
- Gardening or farming
- Cooking or special meals
- Sports
- Fishing or hunting
- Four-wheeling or horse back riding

Research

- For this essay, you need to do a different type of research. Instead of looking on the Internet or in a book, you need to interview people in your family, school, church, or community to get more information about how long the tradition has been passed on and other important information. It is a good idea to make a list of questions to ask and to take notes on the answers.

Introductory Paragraph

- When you have researched the tradition, you are ready to begin.
- Briefly describe the tradition and why it is important to you, your family, your church, or your community.

Body of the Essay

- Explain the who, what, when, where, and how of the tradition. Think about these questions:
- Who is involved in this tradition?
- Who taught you about it?
- What do you do?
- When do you do it?
- Where do you do it?

- Add some details on how the tradition is carried out. You might give some how-to information, such as how to bait a hook, how to grow tomatoes, how to set up a tent, how to knit a scarf, how to play basketball, etc.

Conclusion

- In the conclusion, return to talking about why the tradition is important. Explain why it matters to you. Will you pass it on to your children in the future? Why?