

# Arts, Incorporated

## • Keep 'em Reading •

Grades  
K-2, 3-5

by | Karen Larsen

*“Art is fundamental, unique to each of us . . . Even in difficult economic times—especially in difficult economic times—the arts are essential.”*

—Maria Shriver, Award-Winning Journalist and Author

To paraphrase one of my favorite musicals, the classroom comes alive with the sound of music—and art, and theater. Sadly, in today's tough economic times, the arts budget is often one of the first areas eliminated in order to cut costs. In addition, high-stakes testing can create an environment in which any minutes spent on the arts are considered minutes taken away from core academics.

Even a cursory glance through the research into the arts and student achievement shows just how penny-wise and pound-foolish these notions can be. According to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, incorporating the arts into academic subject area lessons can kick student motivation into high gear and actually increase learning. According to a 2005 Harris poll, ninety-three percent of Americans agree that the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education for children. Researchers from the University of California at Los Angeles found students with high arts involvement performed better on standardized achievement tests than students with low arts involvement. They also found that students with high involvement in the arts also watched fewer hours of TV, participated in more community service, and reported less boredom in school.<sup>1</sup>

It only makes sense to incorporate the arts into all areas of the curriculum, and doing so is fun and motivational for both the students and the teacher. Here are some ideas to get you started. Try a few of them out to add pizzazz to your lessons and increase learning at the same time. And now, on with the show!

### Incorporating the Arts into Your Curriculum

#### Math

- Draw using perspective—be aware of angles and shapes, and how they can be used to convey depth.
- Make shapes with your body.
- Act out word problems.
- Draw or photograph items that depict a math concept. Underneath it, attach an explanation of the concept.
- Create a game show in which the contestants compete over math problems. They can create a backdrop, sound effects, and make up characters playing the game. Have each student contribute one problem to the bank of math problem questions.
- Symmetry lessons are a natural tie-in for art. Give the students one half of a drawing or shape, and ask them to complete the mirror image.
- Cool art designs can be constructed using perpendicular and parallel lines. Break out the crayons!
- Create collages using basic shapes.
- Make works of art using congruent, similar, and equivalent shapes.
- Go to Online Math Applications (Math and Music) at <http://library.thinkquest.org/4116>. You will find lessons using the time signature to teach fractions.

1 "National Assembly of State Arts Agencies." National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, n.d. Web. 7 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Publications/critical-evidence.pdf>>. Critical Evidence: How the ARTS benefit Student Achievement



### Science

- Create a dance of the planets. Be the planets rotating and revolving around the sun.
- Study a famous scientist. Dress up and share the amazing contributions this scientist made to our understanding of the world.
- Act out a biological process (cell division, digestion, photosynthesis, etc.)
- Create a play about the life cycle of a plant.
- Write a song to help remember science concepts, such as the order of the planets.
- Listen to a recording of orchestral suite entitled "The Planets" by Gustav Holst. Have the students create a video using images to go with the music.
- Photograph items in nature. Create a scene study incorporating any number of science concepts captured in the photograph.
- Use the books created by Thomas Locker in which he explores a scientific concept through art (e.g., *Cloud Dance*, Harcourt, 2000) to inspire your own Thomas Locker-like book.
- Create a dance about erosion and how water washes away the soil. Use rain sticks to provide sound effects.

### Social Studies

- Create tableaux that depict a scene from history. Groups of students can show their works as an event unfolds. For example, create a set of tableaux about Washington crossing the Delaware, using Emanuel Leutze's painting by that name as a reference point. What happened just before they boarded the boat? How was each of the participants feeling? What were they thinking? What happened when the boat landed?
- Write a script about what people might have been saying during an event in history. Again, using "Washington Crossing the Delaware" by Emanuel Leutze as an example, write a short play on what each of the people in the boat might have said.
- Read poetry of the time period. Can you create a melody that can be sung or hummed as "background" music for a particular poem?
- Create a video documentary about a person or event from history. Use The Smithsonian website (<http://www.si.edu>) and the Library

of Congress website (<http://www.loc.gov>) to help you with your research.

- Listen to music from the time period you are studying, such as songs of the Civil War era.
- Perform an interpretive dance to music of the era.
- Create a backdrop and have one student act as a journalist interviewing people from the past or who witnessed an event in history. Create a video news report.
- As you are studying an era, have students locate art, music, literature and theater of the time period. The Library of Congress website (<http://www.loc.gov>) is a wonderful site for this.
- Ask students to think about what color, texture, and shapes would best symbolize this event in history. What art medium would be the best to use to show the emotion of the time? Create a work of art that evokes the feeling of the time period.
- Design a production about the time period. Write a script, design a theatrical set, etc.
- Create a wordless picture book that shows an event in history.

### Language Arts and Reading

- Create a Reader's Theater script from a beloved picture book.
- Write a poem for two voices showing opposing points of view about an event in history. Perform the poem.
- Have student in small groups create short skits that summarize a chapter in a book you are reading.
- Have one student read a passage aloud while others use small instruments to provide sound effects. This works especially well with picture books.
- In a reading group setting, introduce a few new words each day. Give two or three students a small instrument, such as finger cymbals or jingle bells. Assign one of the new words to each of the students. Every time they come across the new word while reading aloud, they will play the instrument.
- Draw a character's home or room. What colors would your character want in his room? What items would your character display in his room? What clothing would be in his closet?



- Create a costume for a character in a book.
  - Create a rap to teach grammar rules.
  - Set up an art center as one of your reading centers. Have the students create a piece of art using the materials provided, and then write about their art.
  - Create short, three-minute videos using music and movement to teach a writing or reading concept, such as The Three Little Theres (Their, There, They're).
  - In small group reading instruction, have students read aloud using a variety of voices. How would a big man read this? How would a little old lady read this? How would a mean person read this? By experimenting with using different voices, they are actually learning to read with expression.
  - Build a story. Have one person stand up and start telling a story. Then have different students come up and tell the next line of the story and act it out. This is a great activity for reluctant writers. Another variation on this is to take a setting and have one person start describing it, e.g., "It was a snowy morning." The next person adds a detail and acts out the scene.  
"It was a snowy Colorado morning."  
"It was a snowy Colorado morning and the air was crisp."  
Encourage the students to ham it up and say the lines with great expression. This really hones their listening skills and helps them practice adding details to their stories.
- *Come Look With Me: American Indian Art* by Stephanie Salomon. Lickle Publishing, 2002.
  - *Come Look with Me: Discovering African American Art for Children (Come Look with Me)* by Jr. Rolling James Haywood. Charlesbridge, 2005.
  - *Come Look With Me, Latin American Art* by Kimberly Lane. Charlesbridge, 2007.
  - *Cool Collage: The Art of Creativity for Kids!* by Anders Hanson. Checkerboard Books, 2008.
  - *Cool Printmaking: The Art of Creativity for Kids! (Cool Art)* by Anders Hanson. Checkerboard Books, 2008.
  - *Cool Sculpture: The Art of Creativity for Kids!* by Anders Hanson. Checkerboard Books, 2008.
  - *How the West Was Drawn: Cowboy Charlie's Art* by Linda L. Osmundson. Pelican Publishing, 2011.
  - *Making Amazing Art: 40 Activities Using the 7 Elements of Art Design (Williamson Kids Can! Series)* by Sandi Henry. Ideals Pubns, 2007.
  - *Name That Style: All About Isms in Art (Bob Raczka's Art Adventures)* by Bob Raczka. First Avenue, 2009.
  - *Spot the Differences: Art Masterpiece Mysteries Book 1 (Dover Children's Activity Books)* by Dover ISBN-10: 048647299X
  - *The Usborne Art Treasury* by Rosie Dickins and Nicola Butler. Usborne, 2007.

## Nonfiction Reading

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### Art

- *123 I Can Sculpt! (Starting Art)* by Irene Luxbacher. Kids Can press, 2007.
- *13 Sculptures Children Should Know* by Angela Wenzel. Prestel USA, 2010.
- *Asian Art (Come Look With Me)* by Kimberly Lane. Charlesbridge, 2008.
- *Art for Kids: Cartooning: The Only Cartooning Book You'll Ever Need to Be the Artist You've Always Wanted to Be* by Art Roche. Sterling, 2010.
- *Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Art* by Diane Lindsey Reeves, Lindsey Clasen and Nancy Bond. Checkmark Books, 2007.
- *101 Rhythm Instrument Activities: for Young Children* by Abigail Flesch Connors. Gryphon House, 2004.
- *Beethoven for Kids: His Life and Music with 21 Activities (For Kids series)* by Helen Bauer. Chicago Review Press, 2011.
- *Can You Hear It?* by William Lach. Abrams, 2006.
- *Do Re Mi: If You Can Read Music, Thank Guido D'Arezzo* by Susan L. Roth. Houghton Mifflin, 2007.
- *For the Love of Music: The Remarkable Story of Maria Anna Mozart* by Elizabeth Rusch, Lou Fancher and Steve Johnson. Tricycle Press, 2011.
- *Learn to Speak Music: A Guide to Creating, Performing, and Promoting Your Songs* by John Crossingham and Jeff Kulak. Owlkids Books, 2009.



- *M Is for Music* by Kathleen Krull and Stacy Innerst. Sandpiper, 2009.
- *Something Musical Happened at the Library* by Rob Reid. ALA Editions, 2009.
- *Story of the Orchestra : Listen While You Learn About the Instruments, the Music and the Composers Who Wrote the Music!* by Robert Levine, Meredith Hamilton and Robert T. Levine. Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2009.

### Theater/Dance

- *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults* by Bob Bedore. Hunter House, 2004.
- *A Dictionary of Dance* by Liz Murphy. Blue Apple Books, 2011.
- *How Does the Show Go On: An Introduction to the Theater* by Thomas Schumacher and Jeff Kurtti. Disney Editions, 2007.
- *Action! Writing Your Own Play (Writer's Toolbox)* by Nancy Jean Loewen and Dawn Beacon. Picture Window Books, 2010.
- *Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Music and Dance* by Diane Lindsey Reeves. Checkmark Books, 2007.
- *Cool Costumes: How to Stage Your Very Own Show (Cool Performances)* by Karen Latchana Kenney. Abdo, 2009.
- *Cool Jobs for Young Entertainers: Ways to Make Money Putting on an Event (Checkerboard How-To Library: Cool Kid Jobs)* by Pam Scheunemann. Checkerboard Books, 2010.
- *Cool Makeup: How to Stage Your Very Own Show (Cool Performances)* by Karen Latchana Kenney. Abdo, 2009.
- *Cool Productions: How to Stage Your Very Own Show (Cool Performances)* by Karen Latchana Kenney. Abdo, 2009.
- *Cool School Drama and Theater: Fun Ideas and Activities to Build School Spirit (Cool School Spirit)* by Karen Latchana Kenney. Checkerboard Library, 2011.
- *Cool Sets & Props: How to Stage Your Very Own Show (Cool Performances)* by Karen Latchana Kenney. Abdo, 2009.
- *Cool Special Effects: How to Stage Your Very Own Show (Cool Performances)* by Karen Latchana Kenney and Diane Craig. Abdo, 2009.
- *Dance!* by Apryl Lundsten, Carrie Anton and Chris David. American Girl, 2008.
- *Dance* by Andre Grau. DK Children, 2005.
- *Irish Step Dancing (Snap Books: Dance)* by Wendy Garofoli. Capstone Press, 2008.
- *Learn to Speak Dance: A Guide to Creating, Performing & Promoting Your Moves* by Ann-Marie Williams and Jeff Kulak. Owlkids Books, 2011.
- *Lights on Broadway: A Theatrical Tour from A to Z, with CD* by Harriet Ziefert. Blue Apple Books, 2009.
- *Look Around a Shakespearean Theater (Virtual History Tours)* by Stewart Ross. Arcturus Publishing, 2007.
- *Lost Boy: The Story of the Man Who Created Peter Pan* by Jane Yolen. Dutton Juvenile, 2010.
- *On Stage: Theater Games and Activities for Kids* by Lisa Bany-Winters. Chicago Review Press, 1997.
- *Readers Theater for Building Fluency: Strategies and Scripts for Making the Most of This Highly Effective, Motivating, and Research-Based Approach to Oral Reading (Teaching Strategies, Grades 3-6)* by Jo Worthy. Teaching Strategies, 2005.
- *Song and Dance: A Journey Through Musical Theater (Culture in Action)* by Elizabeth Raum. Heinemann Raintree, 2010.
- *Super Simple Masks: Fun and Easy-To-Make Crafts for Kids (Super Sandcastle: Super Simple Crafts)* by Karen Latchana Kenney. Abdo, 2009.
- *The Official Stage Playbook (Disney Club Penguin)* by Katherine Noll. Grosset & Dunlap, 2009.
- *You Wouldn't Want to Be a Shakespearean Actor!: Some Roles You Might Not Want to Play* by Jacqueline Morley, David Salariya and David Antram. Franklin Watts, 2010.

### Fiction

#### Art

- *A Nest for Celeste: A Story About Art, Inspiration, and the Meaning of Home* by Henry Cole. Katherine Tegen Books, 2010.
- *Art Auction Mystery* by Anna Nilssen. Kingfisher, 2005.



- *Emily's Art* by Peter Catalanotto. Atheneum, 2006.
- *Ish* by Peter Reynolds. Candlewick Press, 2004.
- *Mr. Satie and the Great Art Contest* by Tomie dePaola. Paw Prints, 2007.
- *The Art Lesson* by Tomie dePaola. Puffin, 1997.
- *The Dot* by Peter Reynolds. Candlewick Press, 2003.
- *You Are My Work of Art* by Sue DiCicco. Running Press Kids, 2011.
- *No Biz Like Show Biz (Katie Kazoo, Switcheroo No. 24)* by Nancy E. Krulik. Grosset & Dunlap, 2007.
- *Oh, No! We're Doing a Show! (We Both Read)* by Dev Ross and Meredith Johnson. Treasure Bay, 2011.
- *Song and Dance Man* by Karen Ackerman and Stephen Gammell. Knopf, 2003.
- *Star Time (Zigzag Kids)* by Patricia Reilly Giff and Alasdair Bright. Yearling, 2011.
- *The Curtain Went Up, My Pants Fell Down #11 (Hank Zipzer)* by Henry Winkler, Lin Oliver and Jesse Joshua Watson. Grosset & Dunlap, 2007.

### Music/ Band/Orchestra

- *Ah, Music!* by Alike. HarperCollins, 2005.
- *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* by John O'Brien and Barbara S. Garriel. Boyds Mills Press, 2004.
- *Passing the Music Down* by Sarah Sullivan and Barry Root. Candlewick Press, 2011.
- *The Carnival of the Animals (Book and CD)* by Jack Prelutsky. Knopf, 2010.
- *The Jazz Fly* (book w/ audio CD) by Matthew Gollub. Tortuga, 2000.
- *The Music Teacher from the Black Lagoon* by Mike Thaler and Jared Lee. Scholastic, 2009.
- *Those Amazing Musical Instruments! with CD: Your Guide to the Orchestra Through Sounds and Stories* by Genevieve Helsby. Sourcebooks, 2007.
- *Violet's Music* by Angela Johnson and Laura Huliska-Beith. Dial, 2004.
- *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin* by Lloyd Moss. Aladdin, 2000.
- *The Ghost in the First Row (The Boxcar Children Mysteries #112)* by Gertrude Chandler Warner. Albert Whitman, 2007.
- *The Only Boy in Ballet Class* by Denise Gruska. Gibbs Smith, 2007.

### Online Resources

- **Benefits of the Arts in Kindergarten: An ESL Perspective.** Many ideas for using the arts with English as a Second Language classroom. <http://iteslj.org/Articles/PrinsArtsInKindergarten.html>
- **Integrating the Arts into the 4th and 5th Grade Classroom: A Primer for Classroom Teachers.** A treasure trove of ideas to bring the arts into your classroom. <http://www.aideas.com/text/articles/integratingthearts.cfm>
- **Music Activities and Arts Integration Lessons.** A highly interactive site where students "play" a variety of instruments and learn about math, reading, and science at the same time. <http://www.philtulga.com/resources.html>.

### Theater/ Dance:

- *A Thief in the Theater: A Kit Mystery (American Girl Mysteries)* by Sarah Masters. American Girl, 2008.
- *Ghost of the Chicken Coop Theater (Bailey Fish Adventures)* by Linda Salisbury. Tabby House, 2007.
- *Ivy and Bean Doomed to Dance (Book 6)* by Annie Barrows and Sophie Blackall. Chronicle Books, 2010.
- *Julep O'Toole: What I Really Want To Do Is Direct* by Trudi Trueit. Dutton, 2007.
- *Leading Ladies* by Marlee Matlin. Simon & Schuster, 2007.



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