Fall Plowing Drawing to Scale

Background

Grant Wood was an American painter, born in Anamosa, Iowa. He is best known for his paintings of the rural American Midwest. His most famous painting is "American Gothic," a painting of a man and woman standing in front of a farm house with the man holding a pitchfork. Wood was part of the American Regionalist movement. Artists in this movement painted rural American themes in a realistic, or representational, manner and rejected the abstraction of European art which was dominant at the time. Wood was one of three artists usually associated with the movement. The others were John Steuart Curry and Thomas Hart Benton.

According to the Regionalist philosophy, artists should paint what was around them, what they knew and what they saw. Wood painted the rural landscapes in his native Iowa, but he didn't paint exactly what he saw. America in the 1930s was in the grips of the Great Depression and the Machine Age. Tractors had become practical and affordable on most farms, but there were no tractors or other machines in Wood's paintings. His landscapes were romanticized rural landscapes of the 19th Century. The clothing styles were from the 19th Century, as was the arrangement of the land he painted. Woods even wore overalls in his studio to identify himself with his own romanticized vision of farm life.

Wood's paintings were romanticized versions of small-town communities, of independently-employed farm families, and of security found in the wealth of farm land. These ideals were all being threatened during the Depression years and the Machine Age. Wood's paintings denied the instability of modern life. This denial, presented as reality, made Grant Wood and regionalism very popular during a decade of turmoil.

Many of Wood's landscapes are painted from atop a hill or rise, giving the impression of swooping movement. However, the landscapes remain very still; if there is movement, it seems very slow and regular, as in the act of plowing or planting.

Activities

HOOK

1. Show students the painting, "Fall Plowing," by Grant Wood. An online image is available from the "Ag in Art" link on the Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom website:

http://oklahoma4h.okstate.edu/aitc/lessons/extras/art.html

-Students will do a three-minute quick write on what they see in the picture.

Convert decimals, fractions and percents; Multiply and divide fractions; find coordinates in rectangular coordinate system

P.A.S.S.

GRADE 6 Math Process - 1.1,3,5; 2.1,2,4 Math Content - 2:1,2a; 3:3 Visual Art - 1.1,2,3,4; 2.2 Writing - 1.3 Oral Language - 2.3 Visual Art - 1.1,2,3; 2.2

GRADE 7 Math Process — 1.1,3,5; 2.1,2,4 Math Content — 2:1c,2a Visual Art — 1.1,2,3,4; 2.2 Writing — 1.3 Oral Language — 2.3 Visual Art — 1.1,2,3; 2.2

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-Choose three students to read their quick writes.

- 2. Read and discuss background and vocabulary.
 - -Ask students if their impressions of the painting changed after reading the background.
- 3. Show students the the Dorothea Lange Dust Bowl photograph "Tractored Out," included with this lesson.
 - -Students will compare and contrast the photograph with the painting.
- 4. Lead a discussion about the painting in which you ask these questions:—Is this picture symmetrical or asymmetrical?
 - -What geometric shapes do you see? What organic shapes do you see?
- 5. What is the center of interest? What estimated fraction of the entire painting do you think the center field encompasses? What percentage? (Answer these three questions in more detail during the Summary section.

IMPLEMENT

1. Students will recreate a portion of the picture in a scaled-up or scaleddown version.

 $-\mbox{Each}$ student will be assigned his/her own piece of the painting, using a Cartesian coordinate system.

—Give students a card with the assigned piece number and allow time for them to find it on the coordinate plane.

—Students will then scale to a teacher-decided scale factor. Each square on the coordinate grid is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

-Once students have calculated the new dimension of their piece, allow time for each student to reproduce his/her portion of the painting. Explain that no matter how tall or wide an object is in the painting, the new height and width will need to be scaled correctly as well.

-Display the completed scaled version of the painting.

SUMMARIZE

- 1. Discuss what was easy and what was difficult with this lesson.
- 2. Ask students if they noticed any polygons in the painting.
- 3. Return to the estimation question: What estimated fraction of the entire painting do you think the center field encompasses? What percentage? (Answer: The field takes up an estimated 5 sections of the 27, so for an estimation we can think of it as 5/25 which is 1/5 of the painting. In percentage, it is 20%.
- 4. Ask students: Would the painting be larger or smaller than the original if we scaled by 3? by ½? By 1.3? by 1/8? by 75%?

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Vocabulary

center of interest—the part of the picture which attracts the mind

geometric shape—shapes such as circles, squares, or triangles have perfect uniform measurements and are not commonly found in nature.

organic shape—associated with things from the natural world, such as plants and animals. These shapes are more free form.

symmetry—exact reflection of form on opposite sides of a dividing line **asymmetry**—a lack of symmetry

scale factor—a ratio between two sets of measurements

Painting Piece Cards

	•
Piece #1:	Piece #2:
(0,0), (0,1), (1,1), (1,0)	(1,0),(1,1),(2,1),(2,0)
Piece #3:	Piece #4:
(2,0), (2,1), (3,1), (3,0)	(3,0), (3,1), (4,1), (4,0)
Piece #5:	Piece #6:
(4,0), (4,1), (5,1), (5,0)	(5,0), (5,1), (6,1), (6,0)
Piece #7:	Piece #8:
(0,1), (0,2), (1,2), (1,1)	(1,1), (1,2), (2,2), (2,1)
Piece #9:	Piece #10:
(2,1), (2,2), (3,2), (3,1)	(3,1), (3,2), (4,2), (4,1)
Piece #11:	Piece #12:
(4,1), (4,2), (5,2), (5,1)	(5,1), (5,2), (6,2), (6,1)
Piece #13:	Piece #14:
(0,2), (0,3), (1,3), (1,2)	(1,2), (1,3), (2,3), (2,2)
Piece #15:	Piece #16:
(2,2), (2,3), (3,3), (3,2)	(3,2), (3,3), (4,3), (4,2)
Piece #17:	Piece #18:
(4,2), (4,3), (5,3), (5,2)	(5,2), (5,3), (6,3), (6,2)

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Piece #19:	Piece #20:
(0,3), (0,4), (1,4), (1,3)	(1,3), (1,4), (2,4), (2,3)
Piece #21:	Piece #22:
(2,3), (2,4), (3,4), (3,3)	(3,3), (3,4), (4,4), (4,3)
Piece #23:	Piece #24:
(4,3), (4,4), (5,4), (5,3)	(5,3), (5,4), (6,4), (6,3)
Option	al (sky)

Piece #25:	Piece #26:
(0,4), (0,5), (1,5), (1,4)	(1,4), (1,5), (2,5), (2,4)
Piece #27:	Piece #28:
(2,4), (2,5), (3,5), (3,4)	(3,4), (3,5), (4,5), (4,4)
Piece #29:	Piece #30:
(4,4), (4,5), (5,5), (5,4)	(5,4), (5,5), (6,5), (6,4)

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Fall Plowing, Grant Wood, 1931

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Fall Plowing

Compare and contrast this Dust Bowl photograph by Dorothea Lange with Wood's Fall Plowing.



Tractored Out, Dorothea Lange, 1938

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