

Arts Integration Guide

What is Arts Integration?

- According to the Kennedy Center Changing Education through the Arts Program, “Arts Integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.”

Curriculum Subjects and Suggested Arts Integration Activities (Described below.)

- Language Arts
 - Tableaux; Puppets; Story Dramatization; Performing Poetry; Setting Poetry to Music; Dramatic Storytelling; Dramatic Sequencing
- Math
 - Math and Music; Math and Movement
- Science
 - Demonstrate Scientific Concepts through Dance; Demonstrate Scientific Concepts through Drama
- Social Studies
 - Tableaux; Puppets; Story Dramatization; Dramatic Sequencing; Social Studies and Song
- Any Subject
 - Curriculum-Based Readers Theater; Curriculum-Based Song Lyric Writing; Curriculum-Based Traditional Songs

Why Arts Integration?

- Arts integrated learning actively engages students in experiential, reflective, social, and problem-solving experiences.
- Students build and demonstrate their understanding in the arts and other subjects as they proceed in the creative process.
- Arts integration techniques align with how students learn, leading to them finding meaning and motivation.
- Arts integration improves cultural understanding and helps students communicate in a variety of ways.
- Numerous studies have found many positive benefits of including the arts in lessons, including growth in student engagement, satisfaction, understanding, critical thinking, creativity, and academic, cognitive, personal, and social outcomes.

- Arts integration supports 21st Century Skills, Universal Design for Learning, Whole Child initiatives, the Common Core State Standards, Washington State Learning Standards, and formative assessment.

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Arts Integration Activities (Teachers can adapt most of these activities for any grade level.)

- Tableaux
 - A tableau is a living picture made with people’s bodies. Tableaux can be used to represent important events in history, plot points in literature, and visual arts. Groups of students pose themselves in a frozen scene, using their arrangement, facial expressions, and positions to convey the event and the characters. Additionally, students can write what their character would say in the scene. Tableaux can be presented in person, as a living timeline, via a slideshow, and/or with other elements. Students demonstrate understanding of the subject through their process to determine the most important concepts and how to represent them. Collaboration, revision, reflection, and performance encourage deeper learning. The different perspectives of characters in the same tableau can lead to rich discussions and students must show, rather than tell the important points. The kinesthetic elements, creativity, and personalization reach different kinds of learners. Teachers can easily assess understanding through observing the tableau-creation process and the final products.
- Puppets
 - Students create puppets of historical figures or literary characters and use them to perform student-written monologues of the character’s thoughts. This process produces a deeper understanding of the figure in the students as they put themselves in that person’s shoes. Thinking about how someone thinks and feels utilizes the skill of making inferences and doing the research for a character encourages close reading. This process incorporates art, drama, social studies, and language arts and appeals to different kinds of learners. The teacher can check for understanding as the students research, create, revise, and perform.
- Story Dramatization
 - Students create dialog for historical figures or literary characters. This uses the skills of retelling, paraphrasing, drawing conclusions, making inferences, predictions, and generalizations. They have to create something not in the text by using clues from the text and their own knowledge. This necessitates close reading and supports thorough comprehension. Collaboration, revision, and repetition deepen and clarify students’ knowledge and allow the teacher to gauge understanding. Performing the dialog can encourage kinesthetic, auditory, and verbal learners.

- Performing Poetry
 - Students watch poetry performances (by the teacher or online), read and discuss poetry, write their own poetry, and finally perform their own poem. Listening to and reciting a poem helps students engage with the text and understand different aspects of the language used. The performative aspect helps the teacher gauge understanding and supports auditory learners.
- Setting Poetry to Music
 - Students analyze a poem line by line to create a line by line musical version or accompaniment. The class discusses what the poem means, what they picture in their minds, and what they see, feel, and hear. They then use basic musical elements to represent each line of the poem, conveying its rhythm, imagery, meaning, and other characteristics. This activity creates a deeper understanding of poetry and musical elements simultaneously, while students of all different learning styles make a personal connection to poetry. The teacher can see the students' understanding by how well they use the musical and poetic elements.
- Dramatic Storytelling
 - Teachers and students use props, movements, vocal and facial expressions, and call and response to retell a story. The dramatic elements help students engage with and understand the material and the repetition and modeling encourage reading fluency and expression. The process encourages excitement, socialization, and kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learners.
- Dramatic Sequencing
 - Students put images from books or history in sequence. They then retell the story in their own words, using expressive vocabulary and dramatic vocalization. They can record their narration or perform it for others. This activity shows the teacher what the students understand about the text or subject, as well as makes the students check their own understanding as they paraphrase. They can do the activity alone or in pairs and it works well for visual and verbal learners.
- Math and Music
 - Students can represent music with math and math with music because both of these subjects use number concepts, sequence, groupings, and patterns. When students create a rhythmic phrase and play it on their bodies or an instrument, they can feel and hear the pattern. Identifying, creating, and changing patterns leads to higher-order mathematical thinking. Teachers can check for understanding by asking students to play a phrase back to them, discuss what a pattern represents, or show the concept in a different way. This process is collaborative, makes thinking visible, and makes mathematical concepts concrete. It engages auditory, kinesthetic, and social learners.

- **Math and Movement**
 - As in math and music, students can represent movement with math and math with movement because all of these subjects use number concepts, sequence, groupings, and patterns. Students can create dance sequences in small groups or pairs to demonstrate problem-solving. When students create a dance sequence, they can feel and see the mathematical concept. Teachers can check for understanding by observing the students creative process and examining their dance sequences. This process is collaborative, makes thinking visible, and makes mathematical concepts concrete. It engages visual, kinesthetic, and social learners.
- **Demonstrate Scientific Concepts through Dance**
 - Both dance and science use the concepts of energy, cycles, sequence, and patterns. Students create dance patterns with various energies to move through space and illustrate a scientific concept or a physical process. This necessarily requires that students understand science and dance vocabulary. Using movement along with the scientific idea helps students learn and remember the concepts and vocabulary more thoroughly. Revision helps them clarify their understanding of the scientific idea as well as basic dance elements. The activity deepens understanding because the students engage intellectually and experientially. This is a social, kinesthetic, and creative process that supports different types of learners. The teacher can assess understanding through observing the students' process and products.
- **Demonstrate Scientific Concepts through Drama**
 - Students act out a natural process. They will show the impact of one thing on another and how they change. Students can use pantomime, sound effects, and/or dialog. Collaboration ensures that they will clarify each other's understanding and teachers will easily see what concepts the students grasp. This activity encourages kinesthetic, verbal, social, visual, and auditory learners.
- **Social Studies and Song**
 - Students sing songs from historical periods or cultures around the world. This gives students an experiential way to learn about a person's life and make a connection to their own lives. It provides a different way to look at culture, offers students a chance for expression, and reaches many learners through the enjoyment of music.
- **Curriculum-Based Readers Theater**
 - In readers theater students read dramatically from a script. Teachers can write or find scripts on any topic and focus on the elements and concepts they want the students to remember. Rehearsing the script makes the students remember the information and repeated readings improve their reading

fluency. Using dramatic techniques to perform the script helps students learn those skills and engage in the material. Eventually the students can create their own scripts. This activity can engage kinesthetic, verbal, and social learners.

- Curriculum-Based Song Lyric Writing
 - Music is an important part of children’s lives. Creating song lyrics taps into their natural love of music. This technique can be used for any subject and encourages students to focus on what is most important and essential to convey. They first brainstorm everything they know on a topic, then determine what they want to communicate. Writing the lyrics engages students in the curricular content, as well as the musical concepts of rhythm, rhyme, sequence, and pattern. As they revise their work collaboratively they check each other’s understanding. The process and performance encourages auditory and kinesthetic learners. The finished lyrics allow the teacher to assess what students understand about the topic and the musical elements.
- Curriculum-Based Traditional Songs
 - Teachers take a familiar song or singing game and plug in their own content. The students gain an auditory and physical way to express their understanding. Encouraging students to create their own lines and gestures gives them their own symbolic representation of a concept. Playing and learning together builds community and engages different kinds of learners.

Sources, more information, and lesson plans:

- [The Kennedy Center: Arts Edge](#)
- [George Lucas Educational Foundation: Edutopia – Arts Integration](#)
- [Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America’s Future Through Creative Schools, a 2011 report from the President's Committee for the Arts and Humanities](#)