



Muse Machine 2023 ATTS-Inspired Lesson Plan

6th Grade Meets Jim Henson's Muppets

Developed by Amy Mullins

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Introduction:

As creative as art teachers are, most will admit the difficulty of continuously bringing new ideas to their classroom. Amy Mullins of Smith Elementary found her inspiration during the 2023 Advanced Teacher Training Seminar during a discussion with Alan Muraoka, veteran actor, writer and director on *Sesame Street*, and through a visit to the Museum of the Moving Image. She used that inspiration to challenge her sixth graders to individually create original puppets and then work in groups to write and film an original puppet show related to their characters. Mullins wanted to challenge her students to become effective problem solvers and see how they responded when they got stuck for ideas or when things didn't go as planned. Her final projects attest to the success of this process and the enthusiasm of students when given such a creative and fun project.

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Teacher: Amy Mullins, Edwin D. Smith Elementary

Title: 6th Grade Meets Jim Henson’s Muppets

Subject Area & Grade Level: 6th Grade Art

Date of Implementation: Fall 2023

Inspiration: Muse Machine’s Advanced Teacher Training Seminar 2023, during which I toured “The Jim Henson Exhibition” at the Museum of the Moving Image in New York City and met Sesame Street cast member, writer and director Alan Muraoka

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Summary:

Students will create an original puppet and work with a group of fellow students to create and film an original puppet show related to their puppet characters.

Standards:

- **6.2CR** Brainstorm and experiment independently with ideas.
- **6.2PE** Identify technical skills that impact artmaking.
- **6.2CO** Identify the importance of lifelong involvement and advocacy in visual arts.
- **6.3CO** Link observations, life experiences and imagination for personal and creative expression.

Objectives/Outcomes:

1. Students will apply their knowledge of art concepts, generate ideas, and make connections.
2. Students will demonstrate craftsmanship through the use of tools, materials, and process.
3. Students will apply critical and creative thinking skills to assess and refine their work.
4. Students will work successfully as individuals or in small groups to create a three-minute (or less) puppet show.

Teaching Approach(es):

Full group lecture, independent and small group work

Assessment Tool(s):

Teacher observation, rubric

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LESSON PREPARATION

Teacher Needs:

Teacher Context & Research

- If you have the chance to visit the Museum of the Moving Image or see the touring Jim Henson exhibition, take advantage! Otherwise, MOMI has a lot of [online resources about the exhibition](#).

Helpful Hints

1. We used Flip to record and share our puppet shows. If your school does not allow the use of this application, you can record locally on the Chromebook itself.
2. Be aware of your students' ability to safely use a hot glue gun.

Student Needs:

Prior Knowledge

Knowledge of different kinds of puppets, experience using hot glue

Student Voice

Students will brainstorm how puppets can be used in a performance, decide how and where they will perform their puppet show, and choose the context of the show itself. Students will use their imaginations to create their own puppet character.

Vocabulary

- *Muppet*: Marionette + puppet (a word created by Jim Henson)
- *storyboard*: a tool artists use to plan a television show

EVIDENCE OF OUTCOMES

Students will perform a show with their puppets to demonstrate understanding of the art of puppeteering. They will photograph their puppet into their online art portfolio and answer questions about what challenges/successes they had in creating their puppets.

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ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will understand that puppeteering and puppet-making are possible career paths in the arts and that these skills are also potentially useful in other areas (for example, in the production of our school's video announcements).

Students will understand that problem solving and creative skills carry over into every aspect of their daily lives.

LEARNING PLAN

Essential Question: What do artists/effective problem solvers do when they get stuck for ideas or when things are not going as planned?

Resources/Materials:

- [Slide Deck](#)
- Chromebooks with internet access
- Puppet-making supplies: socks, ping pong balls, pipe cleaners, yarn, buttons, fabric, fur, cotton stuffing, cardboard, glue guns, glue sticks, Sharpie markers, tape, feathers
- Access to [Flip](#)
- [Artist Statement handout](#)
- [Grading rubric](#)

Hook:

I talked to the kids about my experience meeting Alan Muraoka and visiting the Jim Henson exhibition at the Museum of the Moving Image.

Main Lesson Narrative/Sequence:

Day 1 (55 min.)

1. Introduce the lesson. Slides 1-13
2. Sketch puppet ideas.

Day 2 (55 min.)

1. Slides 14- 17
2. Watch videos and discuss how to create a sock puppet.
3. Research on iPads other ideas or experiment with your own ideas.
4. Go over safety rules.
5. Begin gathering supplies needed to make puppets.

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Day 3 (55 min.)

1. Begin creating puppets.

Day 4 (55 min.)

1. Slides 18-19
2. Finish making puppets and start writing puppet show scripts.

Day 5 (55 min.)

1. Practice puppet shows and start recording.

Day 6 (55 min.)

1. Finish filming.
2. Write artist statements.
3. Photograph puppet in Google Drive art portfolio.

Demonstration of Learning:

Students will perform a show with their puppets to demonstrate understanding of the art of puppeteering. They will photograph their puppet into their online art portfolio and answer questions about what challenges/successes they had in creating their puppets.

[Here is a video recap of my class's work!](#)

[Artist Statement #1](#)

[Artist Statement #2](#)

[Artist Statement #3](#)

Final Review:

I will know the students met the objectives of this lesson based on the level of effort they put into the creative process, their ability to meet the grading criteria on the final puppet performance, and whether they can identify a problem they encountered and how they solved it in their written artist statements.

LESSON REFLECTION

Students will review their digital portfolios to see their growth over the years. As a class, we will discuss the setbacks and successes of our puppet project. How could we improve this project for future students?