

America the Beautiful

Grade Level: 3-5

Lesson Time:

Content Areas: Science, Art, Social Studies

Objective: Students will understand the concepts behind recycling while creating a visual of the United States representing how trash affects the environment.

Materials:

Litter or other trash

Background support –like construction paper or cardboard- at least 12" BY 18"

White Glue

Pencil and Eraser

Map of United States

Procedures/Steps:

1-Anticipatory Set- Begin lesson by asking students what they think when they hear the word “artist” . They will probably say someone who paints, sculpts, or makes some other form of visual art. Let students know that writers, actors, dancers, and musicians are considered artists too.

2- Discuss Pablo Picasso’s mural *Guernica*, which he made during the Spanish Civil War. Let students know that the mural shows the horrors of the conflict in his homeland and that he wanted to make people see how he felt about the war, and perhaps, persuade them to end it with his mural. Discuss how this lead to the idea behind art is more than just a pretty picture!

3- Begin leading discussion into talking about our environment and how people say they care about it, but getting them to do something about it is another matter. Discuss that with Picasso and other artists, sometimes it is necessary to make art that is disturbing in order to get people’s attention and activate them. It is with this in mind that the following Earth Day project is presented and the reminder to students that art is more than just a pretty picture.

4- Explain to students the project that they will be doing. Have students study the shape of the United States, using a pencil, draw this outline on the background support. Paying close attention to the Great Lakes and States like Florida and Texas whose shapes help to identify your finished picture of the map of the United States.

5-Being careful to follow the shape you have drawn, fill in the outline solidly by gluing the trash you have collected all over the map. You have just recycled! The collage may be displayed with the “America the Beautiful?” title. This will help remind other to keep America clean. Trash is a problem all over the world, so if you live in the United States, must substitute the shape of your country.

Tips and Tricks:

Look for trash in your school and on your playground. Have students look in their rooms, desk, and even in their backpacks. Draw the map on a large cardboard flat rescued from a refrigerator or freezer carton. Have students work together to glue on the trash, and display the works in a prominent place for all to see.

Kids Create "America the Beautiful?" Collage

In July of 2000, nearly 60 kids from the Lincoln-Central Neighborhood Family Center in Columbus, Indiana participated in a community litter sweep of our downtown area. They gathered enough trash to fill twenty-five garbage bags! After picking up the litter, the kids arrived at city hall where we glued some of the trash onto a 4'x8' outline map of the United States. It took about two hours to complete the "America the Beautiful?" collage.

Making the collage helped to motivate the kids during the litter sweep, and doing something creative with the trash made the whole activity more meaningful. In addition, it taught them that it is possible to make a powerful, artistic statement with the lowliest of materials. "America the Beautiful?" will be displayed at our municipal solid waste facility where the artwork will serve as a constant reminder to help keep our city clean. Shown here are a photo of the map, some of the kids who participated, and a picture of a few young artists gluing on the trash.

<p>href="http://www.kid-at-art.com/icons/backs.jpg" MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor Kids at work on the collage</p>	<p>href="http://www.kid-at-art.com/icons/close.jpg" MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor Close up of map</p>
<p>href="http://www.kid-at-art.com/icons/usa.jpg" MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor Finished collage</p>	<p>href="http://www.kid-at-art.com/icons/group.jpg" MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor Lincoln-Central Neighborhood kids and helpers</p>

Brackney created and introduced America the Beautiful? on the first Earth Day in 1970! Guernica image from English Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign.