

Art & Feminine Power

Lesson Plan

This lesson contains several speaking and listening tasks to talk about Art. It is constructed around the listening and speaking activity on Public Art in *English File C1.1*, unit 7B, p. 114, Oxford University Press. It can last around 180 minutes.

Lesson 1: Public Art and Women (125')

- 1) Introduce the topic of Art (the questions have been taken from various sources: ITESL Journal, Toeflepedia, Teacher Joe etc.) (15').
 - a. Attention-grabbing questions:
 - i. Does anyone in the class have any artistic talent? Please raise your hand and explain briefly.
 - ii. Do you know anyone who is a good artist? Please, raise your hand and explain briefly.
 - iii. Are you interested in Art? Please, raise your hand.
 - b. Questions to discuss briefly as a whole class (choose one or two):
 - i. Do you enjoy going to museums, exhibitions? Which is the best exhibition you've ever seen?
 - ii. What's the latest museum/ exhibition you've visited?
 - iii. What's the longest you've spent looking at an artwork? Why were you so fascinated?
- 2) Do Listening Task (1) in *English File C1.1.*, p. 114. (45'-55')
 - a. Discuss the quote very briefly.
 - b. Listen to the two extracts twice and discuss comprehension in pairs and then as a group.
 - c. Discuss the two follow-up question (1e) in pairs and as a whole group, to lead the class to section 3 (the second question, "What new statue would you put up in the main square of your town and what would you like it to commemorate?" might take the students a little time to respond, be patient and help them to express their opinions, probably they had never thought about it before!).
- 3) Public Art in Zaragoza (20')
 - a. Introductory question:
 - i. Which is your favourite public work of Art in Zaragoza?

b. Show them the Power Point presentation “Public Art in Zaragoza”.

- i. Students choose their favourite statues/ public works of Art, they nominate 4 or 5 for a short-list and they have to explain why they like them or what memories they associate them with. The rest of the class can support the nominations with their own perceptions.

4) Art, Power, and Women. Introduction (5')

a. Introductory questions (choose one or two questions if you are short of time):

- i. Is Art always beautiful? Can you appreciate Art without liking it? Can the message or the symbolism of a work of art be more important than its beauty? Give some examples.
- ii. Is Art a reflection of the power structure of society or the power tensions in a community? Give examples.
- iii. How have women been represented in Art throughout history? Give examples.

5) Listening comprehension “Feminine Power, the Divine to the Demonic” (20'-30'). This is a C2 task: it is very dense, fast and conceptually complex, unless your students are well-read in feminist issues.

a. Introduce the British Museum exhibition and ask students to read the comprehension questions. Explain any difficult words.

b. Listen to the “Today” report (BBC Radio 4) twice.

- i. Discuss the questions in pairs and then together in an open class.
- ii. If there is time and the students have the feeling they have missed a lot of information, you can play the recording a third time and help students follow it with the list of key words as a listening guide.
- iii. Explain a few key words in the recording.

c. Follow-up questions:

- i. Would you like to visit that exhibition? Why/ Why not? (You can show them some of the highlights of the exhibition on the internet).

- ii. “The representation of the women in Art has always been controversial throughout history (Eve, Venus, Medusa, Pandora, Virgin Mary, Mona Lisa, Mary Quant etc.)”, do you agree? Why is that?

Lesson 2: Street Art (55’)

(The times in this second lesson are a rough estimate, I have not taken this plan to the classroom yet).

- 1) Discussion: Art and Education (10’)
 - a. Did you study Art at school? Did you like the lessons?
 - b. How have you learnt about Art later in life? In trips and holidays, reading, visiting museums?
 - c. When you visit a museum/ exhibition, do you prefer to have a guide/ an audio guide/ to see the objects in silence or to talk to a friend?
 - d. How can Art be explained to teenagers/ children?
- 2) Discussion: Street Art, Graffiti and Vandalism (10’).
 - a. What is Art?
 - b. Does Art imitate life?
 - c. Are there any artists that you think are over-rated? Are today’s artists as good as those from a hundred years ago?
 - d. Do you need an explanation to appreciate modern art?
- 3) Power Point Presentation: “Street Art in Zaragoza” (25’-35’).
 - a. Show your students the slides in “Street Art in Zaragoza” (or in your own town or in Brick Lane, London).
 - b. Choose one painting that you like and explain why. If you have time, students can discuss this in pairs and then together as a group.
 - c. Choose one painting that you do not like and explain why. (Same class dynamics as above).
 - d. Follow-up discussion:
 - i. “Are graffiti Art or vandalism?” Express your opinion and support it with reasons and examples.

For homework you can ask students to do a mini-presentation “My Favourite Work of Art”: they should do some research on the internet about their favourite art piece and talk about it for 3’- 4’.