

Humanities Through the Arts Classroom Glossary

abstract: Paintings and other arts (e.g., selected forms of contemporary jazz music and sculpture) that have the sensuous as its subject matter.

appropriation: The act of combining the artist's basic medium with the medium of another art or arts but keeping the basic medium clearly dominant.

artistic form: The organization of a medium that clarifies or reveals a subject matter.

catharsis: The cleansing or purification of the emotions and, in turn, a spiritual release and renewal.

coda: The tonal passage or section that ends a musical composition.

comedy: A form of drama that is usually light in subject matter and ends happily but that is not necessarily void of seriousness.

connotation: The associated or secondary meaning of a word or expression in addition to its explicit or primary meaning.

content: A subject matter detached by means of artistic form from its accidental or insignificant aspects and thus clarified and made more meaningful.

counterpoint: In music, two or more melodies, themes, or motifs played in opposition to each other at the same time.

criticism: The analysis and evaluation of works of art.

critique: A critical review or commentary, especially judging the merits of works of art or literature.

denotation: The direct, explicit meaning or reference of a word or words.

descriptive criticism: The descriptive of the subject matter and/or form of a work of art.

dissonance: When two or more tones sounded simultaneously are unpleasant to the ear.

dynamics: In music, the loudness and softness of the sound.

essence: The individual, real, or ultimate nature of a thing especially as opposed to its existence; "a painting that captures the *essence* of the land."

evaluation (evaluative criticism): The judgment of the merits of a work of art.

evaluative criticism: The judgment of the merits of a work of art.

film (material): A fixed (audio-) visual medium, whether celluloid or digital

film (artistic genre): A form of Fine Art, which consists of motion pictures, with or without audio, considered to have been created primarily for aesthetic purposes and judged for its beauty and meaningfulness.

Fine Arts: A visual art considered to have been created primarily for aesthetic purposes and judged for its beauty and meaningfulness, specifically, painting, sculpture, drawing, watercolor, graphics, and architecture.

Folk Art: A creative work produced outside the professional tradition.

form: The design, structure, or pattern of a work of art.

framing: The photographic technique whereby important parts of figures or objects in a scene are cut off by the edges of the photograph.

horizontal: Being or situated at right angles to the vertical line.

interpretive criticism: An explication of the content of a work of art.

irony: A literary device that makes one statement but means another. Dramatic irony plays on the audience's capacity to perceive the difference between what the characters expect and what they will get.

lyric (al): A poem, or music composition, usually brief and personal, with an emphasis on feelings or states of mind as part of the subject matter.

major (as in Music): A key, mode, or scale; a scale consisting of a series of whole steps except for half steps between the third and fourth and seventh and eighth degrees.

mass (as in Music): The celebration of the Eucharist. Compare High Mass, Low Mass (sometimes lowercase); a musical setting of certain parts of this service, as the Kyrie eleison, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei

mass (as in Sculpture): Bulk, especially in relation to size.

metaphor: An implied comparison between different objects.

minor (as in Music): A scale having half steps between the second and third, fifth and sixth, and seventh and eighth degrees, with whole steps for the other intervals.

narration: Something narrated, such as an account, story, poem, or other narrative. It is an articulation of the stories about and within varied art forms.

narrator: The teller of a story or poem; the narrator of a story or poem is not necessarily the author, however.

naturalism: The treatment of forms, colors, space, etc., as they appear or might appear in nature.

perception: The awareness of something stimulating our sense organs.

protagonist: The chief character in drama and literature.

region (as in visual arts): In painting, a large portion.

relief (as in Sculpture): With sculpture, projection from a background.

sentimentality: An oversimplification and cheapening of emotional responses to complex subject matter.

sensa: Sensual characteristics of art which specifically appeal to our senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing).

sonata: In music, a movement form with three major sections: exposition, development, and recapitulation, often followed by a coda.

subject matter: What the work of art is about; some value before artistic clarification.

symbol: A perceptible object that represents another.

theme: In music, a melody or motive of considerable importance because of later repetition or development. In other arts, a theme is a main idea or general topic, sometimes repeated.

tonal center: The core, dominant single tone and/or chord, within a musical scale.

tragedy: Drama that portrays a serious subject matter and ends unhappily.

vertical: Being or situated at right angles to the horizon; upright.