Café au Lait and Beignet Shadows | Teacher Guide

Louisiana Foodways Visual Studio • Lesson 011 • Grades 6–8 • observation drawing • 3–5 sessions

Essential inquiry

How can we explore New Orleans café culture and public gathering spaces through observation drawing and communicate an original idea?

Cultural or technical context

New Orleans café culture and public gathering spaces. Louisiana foodways are living traditions with diverse Black, Indigenous, Creole, Cajun, Acadian, Vietnamese, Isleño and other contributors. Teach with credited sources and avoid treating one recipe as universal.

Learning targets

Students will demonstrate observation drawing; research the relevant context; create an original artifact or composition; justify at least one change after critique.

Materials and preparation

Drawing paper, scrap collage paper, pencils, markers, colored pencils, safe adhesive, optional photographs of locally credited foodways; no cooking required.

Differentiation

Students investigate maker and context, test three options, justify their design choices, and document one revision.

Extension beyond Grade 12

Advanced learners may deepen their research, technique and documentation while keeping the same core inquiry.

Ten-step teaching sequence

01. Notice two contrasting examples or observations associated with New Orleans café culture and public gathering spaces; name one uncertainty.
02. Investigate who made or uses the source material and what context must be represented accurately.
03. Complete two low-stakes trials of observation drawing; label what changed between trials.
04. Sketch three independent approaches to the question: New Orleans café culture and public gathering spaces.
05. Select one approach; plan materials, ethical citation, composition and success criteria.
06. Draw a still life of cups, powdered surfaces and cast shadows. Record one decision that differs from the first sketch.
07. Give peer feedback using one visible detail and one clarifying question.
08. Revise at least one element based on evidence; photograph or annotate the change.
09. Present artwork with an artist statement, source credit and medium information.
10. Explain how the technique and concept developed, plus one next studio goal.

Discussion prompts

01. What evidence tells you something important about New Orleans café culture and public gathering spaces?
02. How does observation drawing change the meaning of the result?
03. Which source is being credited, and whose voice is missing?
04. What feedback prompted a visible or audible revision?

Formative assessment

At entry: one baseline observation. During: two skill trials and a peer critique. Exit: final result, revision evidence and source credit.

Safety and accessibility

Provide choice of media, mobility alternatives, visual/auditory access supports, and permission-based documentation. No tasting or food preparation is required for foodways projects.

Reference and standards note

https://www.nps.gov/jela/learn/historyculture/louisiana-foodways.htm
https://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/CSE/creole_food_trad.html
Align locally with current grade-level arts standards; do not treat this resource as a verified Louisiana standards crosswalk.

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