FREE TEACHING RESOURCE / 9–12 / 44

Gulf South Material Histories

TEACHER GUIDE • lesson design & facilitation

Grade band: 9–12 | 6–8 sessions, 50–70 minutes

Media: drawing, print, collage or approved digital media

The artistic problem

Build a mixed-media artwork tracing the social journey of one everyday material.

Essential question: What histories travel inside the objects artists use?

Place-based cultural lens: Research material culture in the Gulf South, including trade and labor histories.

Learning targets

- Investigate the question: What histories travel inside the objects artists use?
- Apply material sampling, assemblage, documentary labels, visual comparison in a deliberate original composition.
- Use critique evidence to improve material sampling and name one next step.

Student-visible success criteria

- The final artwork solves this problem: Build a mixed-media artwork tracing the social journey of one everyday material.
- Artwork includes one material map, source labels, and a revised assemblage decision.
- Process evidence shows three different options before selection.
- Visual decisions demonstrate material sampling and support the intended audience.
- Feedback results in at least one visible revision that the student can explain.

Standards & studio habits

Louisiana 9–12 cluster: VA-CE-H1, VA-CE-H2, VA-CE-H3, VA-CE-H7, VA-AP-H6

Studio Habits of Mind: Understand Art Worlds, Develop Craft, Express, Engage & Persist, Reflect. These habits are developed interactively, not in a fixed rank or sequence.

Instructional alignment: Louisiana benchmark codes are official broad grade-cluster benchmarks; specific expectations are developed locally. The ten instructional stages come from the supplied Artistic Investigations framework.

Preparation & materials

- Drawing paper or sketchbook for idea studies
- drawing, print, collage or approved digital media
- Samples and images from reliable sources, with attribution
- Tools appropriate to local safety rules and grade level
- Choice of visual, oral, or written reflection tools

10-stage teaching sequence

01 / Engage Present the artistic question: What histories travel inside the objects artists use? Give students two contrasting examples that do not dictate a finished product.

02 / Investigate Research material culture in the Gulf South, including trade and labor histories. Gather visual evidence and note what is observed rather than assumed.

03 / Skill Studio Demonstrate material sampling, assemblage, documentary labels, visual comparison. Make thinking visible by testing two alternate solutions and identifying what each communicates.

04 / Generate Develop three possibilities for the challenge: Build a mixed-media artwork tracing the social journey of one everyday material. Change the focal point, material, arrangement or viewer perspective between drafts.

05 / Plan Compare sketches to the success check (one material map, source labels, and a revised assemblage decision); choose a direction and state why it better communicates the intention.

06 / Produce Produce an original visual response using material sampling, assemblage, documentary labels, visual comparison; conference on one technical choice and one contextual question.

07 / Critique Partners identify where the artwork communicates the intended idea and locate evidence of material sampling in the work.

08 / Revise Revisit the specific checkpoint: One material map, source labels, and a revised assemblage decision. Make one visible change after critique and preserve the initial view for comparison.

09 / Present Present with a title, medium, one key artistic decision and any needed credit or contextual limitation.

10 / Reflect Reflect: What evidence proves you improved material sampling? What will you try or investigate next?

Studio sessions & evidence checkpoints

Session	Teaching move	Capture evidence
Day 1	**Locate the problem** What histories travel inside the objects artists use?; Research material culture in the Gulf South, including trade and labor histories.	Initial inquiry and positionality check.
Day 2	**Source and context audit** Evaluate evidence, stakeholders, permission or material constraints.	Source log with known/uncertain claims.
Day 3	**Investigate technical options** Demonstrate material sampling, assemblage, documentary labels, visual comparison. Make thinking visible by testing two alternate solutions and identifying what each communicates.	Material trials and design comparison.
Day 4	**Generate + plan** Three robust concepts with intended audience and criteria.	Annotated concepts and rationale.
Day 5–6	**Build and document** Develop work with dated process notes and ethical checks.	Progress photos, source credits, technique notes.
Day 7	**Critique + substantive revision** Test with peers for communication and context; revise material sampling.	Feedback and before/after comparison.
Day 8	**Present + evaluate** Curate for audience and acknowledge limitations.	Rubric, portfolio record, and next investigation.

Key technique to model

material sampling, assemblage, documentary labels, visual comparison

Access without lowering the artistic goal

Investigate creators, workers, consumers, and environmental impacts without reducing them to types. Offer physical samples, captioned images, accessible demonstrations, flexible planning modes, and alternate materials while retaining the common visual learning target.

Teacher coaching questions

- What is the visual problem you are solving?
- Which decision communicates your intended meaning most clearly?
- What does your reference prove, and what are you still imagining?
- What could a viewer misunderstand?
- What visible revision will strengthen your next version?

Cultural care

Avoid unverified claims about a material's origin and unsafe found materials.

Stretch & explore

Translate the work into a small exhibit with provenance notes.

Design provenance: Original Studio Fieldnotes investigation developed for the 50-lesson library; informed by the teacher-supplied ten-stage Artistic Investigations architecture and reflective Studio Habits framework.