Carnival Color With Purpose

NEW ORLEANS CULTURAL STUDIO | LESSON 54 | GRADES K–2 | CULTURE & SOURCES

Context before technique

Carnival in New Orleans includes diverse neighborhood traditions, community groups, and histories beyond the familiar purple, green, and gold.

Whose story is being told?

Teach this lesson through identified New Orleans institutions and, where possible, community-authored testimony. Name the people, places, and historical context in your examples. Explain what remains unknown or contested.

Responsible artistic engagement

Do not copy authentic krewe insignias, Black masking suits, or sacred imagery.

Visual permissions

Do not download photographs or artwork from source websites for public display unless permission or a valid license is confirmed. A live research link is not a license. The included lesson illustration is original conceptual artwork and not historical evidence.

Starter research sources

HNOC: History of Carnival throws

https://hnoc.org/publishing/first-draft/throw-me-somethin-mister-history-behind-new-orleans-mardi-gras-throws

HNOC: Louisiana history and diverse voices

https://visit.hnoc.org/louisiana-history-museum

Louisiana Visual Arts Benchmarks

Louisiana Department of Education arts standards (official PDF)

Discussion prompts

- Who created or maintains this tradition, space, or object?
- What do outsiders often overlook?
- Which images would require permission, and whose voices are missing?

Teaching note

These starter sources support inquiry, not a complete ethnography. Prioritize up-to-date local perspectives and appropriately compensated cultural partnerships when possible.