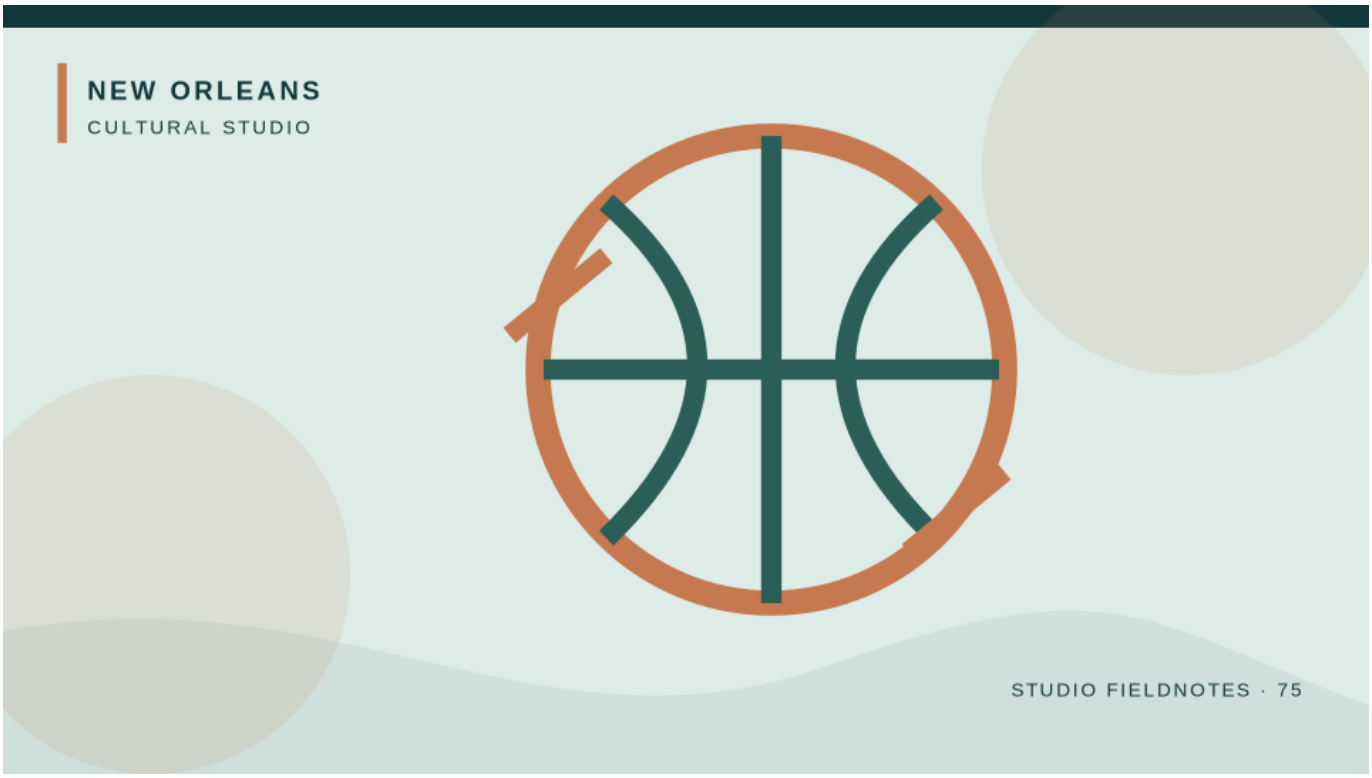
# Port City: Connected Histories

NEW ORLEANS CULTURAL STUDIO | LESSON 75 | GRADES 9–12 | TEACHER GUIDE




## The artistic problem

Create a historically sourced visual atlas that traces two cultural pathways linking New Orleans to the wider Caribbean and Atlantic world.

## Inquiry & goals

How do ideas and materials travel through a port city?

- Students can demonstrate cartography, visual chronology, research synthesis.
- Students can produce a map-based visual essay with provenance notes.
- Students can explain one culturally grounded decision and make one visible revision.

## Instructional frame

Grade band: 9–12 | Suggested duration: 6–8 lessons · 50–70 minutes | Suggested materials: Drawing, collage, paper, colored media.

Louisiana visual arts standards (grade-cluster benchmark references): VA-CE-H2, VA-CE-H3, VA-CE-H6, VA-HP-H1. Use the relevant grade-level cluster, particularly for Grades 3–5.

## Community and cultural context

New Orleans architecture, music, and commerce reflect African, Caribbean, Indigenous, European, and other histories shaped by migration and coercion.

Teaching care: Do not collapse distinct communities into a single style; separate chosen and forced migration contexts.

## Success criteria

- The work responds to the artistic problem with an identifiable student-authored idea.
- The selected techniques are visible and purposeful: Cartography, visual chronology, research synthesis.
- A source or cultural context is acknowledged accurately without appropriation.
- At least two alternatives were generated before the final choice.
- One revision is visible and the artist explains what changed.

## Studio sequence: 10 purposeful moves

**01 ENGAGE** Show two contrasting, attributed local sources. Ask what students notice and what they should not assume.

**02 INVESTIGATE** Students gather visual evidence and identify who made it, what it is for, and whose voice is represented.

**03 SKILL STUDIO** Model the targeted techniques: Cartography, visual chronology, research synthesis. Demonstrate a choice, not a model image to copy.

**04 GENERATE** Students develop at least three distinct thumbnail responses to the investigation.

**05 PLAN** Compare ideas against audience, meaning, technique, and cultural care; select or combine one plan.

**06 PRODUCE** Build the work: A map-based visual essay with provenance notes. Conduct a mid-workshop conference with visual evidence.

**07 CRITIQUE** Peer feedback: identify a design choice that works, a question about meaning, and one specific improvement.

**08 REVISE** Make an observable change to strengthen communication or craft; photograph before and after if appropriate.

**09 PRESENT** Display with a caption naming source context, intent, and choices. Keep student consent central.

**10 REFLECT** Explain strongest choice, a changed decision, what the source taught, and a next growth target.

## Checkpoints and prompts

- Entry: What do we know about this specific New Orleans history, and how do we know it?
- Middle: Can the viewer see the design decision you intended?
- Exit: Which source and revision changed your interpretation?

## UDL and access

Offer multiple ways to plan (sketch, spoken notes, physical mock-up, digital tools); use large-print image descriptions and high-contrast examples; allow written, recorded, or conference-based reflection. Honor religious, identity, bereavement, and trauma-related opt-outs where relevant.

## Extension

Invite a community partner or cultural institution to critique the interpretation, with appropriate preparation, permission, and compensation where possible.

## Materials and rights

Use school-safe tools and school-approved media. Attribute source materials and respect photographic, artwork, interview, and museum-image permissions. Student artwork must remain original. This packet uses original abstract teaching illustrations, not replicas of regalia or historical documents.