FREE TEACHING RESOURCE / 6–8 / 05

Unexpected Scale: Our Streets

TEACHER GUIDE • lesson design & facilitation

Grade band: 6–8 | 5–7 studio sessions of 45–60 min

Media: Drawing, mixed media, paint or digital illustration

The artistic problem

Change the size of an everyday object connected to life in New Orleans or elsewhere in Louisiana, and place it in a convincing original environment. Use visual evidence to establish scale and a meaningful story.

Essential question: How can changing the scale of an ordinary object reveal a new story about city life?

Place-based cultural lens: Local experiences can include a corner-store bag, rain boot, grocery cart, porch step, public transit token, school notebook or plant; foreground everyday life rather than defaulting to Mardi Gras symbols.

Learning targets

- Maintain recognizable proportion when dramatically altering scale.
- Use at least two clear spatial scale clues and intentional focus.
- Demonstrate original ideation and visible critique-driven refinement.

Student-visible success criteria

- One familiar object dramatically altered in scale.
- Two distinct scale clues plus spatial depth.
- At least three thumbnails with different compositions.
- Evidence of an intentional revision and self-evaluation.

Standards & studio habits

Louisiana 5–8 cluster: VA-CE-M1, VA-CE-M3, VA-CE-M5, VA-AP-M4

Studio Habits of Mind: Observe, Envision, Stretch & Explore, 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

- Ordinary physical objects or student-created photos
- Drawing tools and viewfinders
- Paper for thumbnails and final media

- Rulers or measuring strips
- Optional collage or digital tools

10-stage teaching sequence

01 / Engage Show contrasting art examples of changed scale; ask how scale affects what viewers believe.

02 / Investigate Observe ordinary objects and discuss why some are tied to community experiences.

03 / Skill Studio Model proportional drawing, overlap, near/far size relationships, and foreground-background cues.

04 / Generate Generate three distinct thumbnail scenes, each with different narrative stakes.

05 / Plan Select a plan using scale clarity and meaning; annotate the two most important clues.

06 / Produce Develop the chosen world from big forms to value, detail, atmosphere and texture.

07 / Critique Ask: Where is the illusion strongest? Where does it break? What evidence would fix it?

08 / Revise Make a documented spatial or narrative correction based on peer evidence.

09 / Present Display the original and final plan or process strip beside the artwork.

10 / Reflect Evaluate how scale directs attention; set a next skill goal with visible evidence.

Studio sessions & evidence checkpoints

Session	Teaching move	Capture evidence
Day 1	**Investigate scale** Observe enlarged/reduced examples and everyday objects.	Notice–Interpret–Question response.
Day 2	**Construction + ideation** Demo proportion and overlap; make three thumbnails.	Teacher checks two scale clues.
Day 3–5	**Sustained production** Build and refine space; brief conferences.	Process images, focal-point check.
Day 6	**Critique + revision** Peer scale test and visible change.	Before/after annotation.
Day 7	**Present + reflect** Share titled artwork and process evidence.	Five-category rubric and growth goal.

Key technique to model

Proportion, overlap, foreground/middle/background, focal point, atmospheric clues.

Access without lowering the artistic goal

Physical objects, grids, viewfinders, tracing of self-made photos, oral planning conferences, simplified spatial diagrams; complexity grows without reducing artistic thinking.

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

Use objects from real lived experience; do not portray working-class neighborhoods as visual curiosities. Invite respectful, accurate place-based narratives.

Stretch & explore

Two-panel scene showing who gains or loses space when the object changes scale; explain design choices using evidence.

Design provenance: Direct localization of source investigation 1, Unexpected Scale; its fundamental artistic problem and sequence are preserved.