

Language learning through art for German language learners
Language: German, adaptable to any language
Developed by Dr. Necia Chronister, K-State Modern Languages

Unit 7: This unit is targeting high proficiency level (GRMN: 527) students, requiring advanced conversations discussing art.

Context: GRMN 527 (Advanced German Conversation) is structured around topics that one might encounter in a newspaper. Each unit of the course has an overall topic, such as “Politics,” “Economics,” “The Arts and Literature,” “Popular Science,” etc. (Politik, Wirtschaft, Feuilleton, Wissenschaften, etc.). The course also has a heavy grammar review component. Within the “Arts and Literature” unit, we talk about film, read a literary review, talk about visual art, and go to the Beech Museum. There is no explicit grammar component on the day of the museum visit.

In the lesson prior to the museum visit, we go over basic vocabulary for discussing visual art: composition, color, light, materials, lines, brushstroke, and genre. Students discuss what kind of art they like, and we practice discussing art by looking at images in art books. I try to encourage students to talk about what they see and how they feel and not concentrate on there being a “right” or “wrong” way to view art. The linguistic goals for the day are: description of something visual, description of feeling, forming an opinion, and explaining/defending one’s opinion.

On museum day, we meet at the Beech Museum. Students are then partnered. In the 75-minute class, we spend 10 minutes going over museum etiquette and reviewing vocabulary to talk about art. The students then have half an hour to explore the museum in pairs, speaking German. Each pair must select one artwork that they will introduce to the rest of the class. In the last 30 minutes of class, we go through the museum together, each group introducing the artwork they chose to the rest of the class.

References

Ellis, R, & Shintani, N. (2014). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. New York, NY: Routledge

Yenawine, P. (2014). *Visual thinking strategies: Using art to deepen learning across school disciplines*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Kunst diskutieren

I. Diskussion mit einem Partner oder einer Partnerin

Magst du Kunst?

Hast du ein Lieblingsmuseum? Eine/n Lieblingskünstler/in? Einen Lieblingsstil? Wenn ja, welche und warum?

Magst du lieber moderne oder klassische Kunst? Warum?

Magst du lieber Gemälde, Fotografie, Skulptur, Installation, Videokunst oder Performance Art? Warum?

Magst du lieber politische Kunst oder nichtpolitische Kunst?

II. Diskussion zusammen

Worauf fokussiert man sich, wenn man Kunst anschaut?

III. Partnerarbeit: die Kunst anschauen

Schauen Sie die Kunstwerke in dem Buch an. Wählen Sie zusammen ein Kunstwerk aus, worauf sie sich fokussieren werden. Sie werden uns das Kunstwerk präsentieren.

Warum finden Sie dieses Kunstwerk besonders schön oder interessant?

Beschreiben Sie bitte die wichtigen Elemente des Stils oder des Designs.

Wie fühlen Sie sich, wenn Sie das Kunstwerk anschauen?

Was, denken Sie, soll das Kunstwerk uns sagen?

Discussing Art

I. Discuss with a partner:

Do you like to look at art?

Do you have a favorite museum? A favorite artist? A favorite style? If so, which one and why?

Do you like modern or classical art better? Why?

Do you prefer painting, photography, sculpture, installation, video art, or performance art? Why?

Do you prefer political art or art that doesn't appear to be political?

II. As a class

What do we focus on when we look at art?

III. Partner Work: Viewing Art

With your partner, look through the art book and select an image to focus on. You will present your selected image to the class.

Why do you find this artwork beautiful or interesting?

Describe the important elements of style or design.

How do you feel when you look at the artwork?

What do you think this artwork is saying to us?