



Archibald J. Motley Jr.,  
*Mending Socks* 1924. Oil on canvas,  
43.875 x 40 inches (111.4 x 101.6 cm). Ackland Art  
Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel  
Hill. Burton Emmett Collection, 58.1.2801.  
© Valerie Gerrard Browne.

# THE ART OF ARCHIBALD MOTLEY

CONNECT,  
COLLABORATE  
& CREATE

## LESSON PLAN

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## Summary of lesson plan

In this unit, “**Mending Socks- A Study of American Portraiture,**” 4th grade visual arts students will learn about portraiture through Archibald Motley’s depiction of his grandmother, titled *Mending Socks* (1924). They will study this painting to learn how to draw a portrait and ways that the details of a setting can provide information of the time period interests of an individual and or culture. Students will be asked to research their family (grandmother) and compare and contrast time periods through sketches of objects, ideas, and influences.

## Big Idea

- Portraiture provides insights on our lives and families as well as society and culture as a whole.

## Enduring Questions

- How can portraiture describe an individual’s role in society?
- What examples illustrate the individual’s race, gender, interests, religious beliefs, place in society, etc. as seen through the elements of art (line, shape, color, texture, space, size, and value)?

## Learning Objectives

- Students will understand how the arts convey meaning.
- Student will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Students will follow a “close read” of Archibald Motley’s painting *Mending Socks* discussing their initial impressions, then move to deeper understandings by connecting to their own experiences and information on the artist and his context.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Common Core State Standards</b>	<b>Objective-Students will . . .</b>
Connecting: Relating artistic Ideas and work with personal meaning and external context	Anchor #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experience to make art Anchor #11 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding	Students will view and respond to <i>Mending Socks</i> by Archibald Motley in a close read.
Responding: Understand and evaluating how the arts convey meaning	Anchor #7: perceive and analyze artistic work. Anchor #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work Anchor #9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work	Students will respond in sketch books-journals to various prompts regarding <i>Mending Socks</i> .
Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.	Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Anchor #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Anchor #3: Refine and complete artistic work.	Students will create a portrait based on a family member of a different generation (parents' generation or older). Students will be historically accurate in the use of details reflecting the society of that time period.
Presentation: Interpreting and sharing artistic work	Anchor Standard #4: Analyze, interpret, and select work of art for presentation. Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic work for presentation. Anchor Standard #6: Convey meaning through the presentation.	Students will prepare a presentation in the form of a skit, newspaper article, song or formal discussion about their work of art and Motley's influence.

## Lesson Plan Activities

**Length:** Five lessons that complete a unit. Each lesson is once a week for 60 minutes.

### Materials/Supplies for the Lesson:

- *Mending Socks* by Archibald Motley computer image for projection
- Student packets containing: image and biography of Motley
- Handouts, sketchbook, pencils, oil pastels

### WEEK ONE:

Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work to personal meaning and external context

- Project the painting *Mending Socks* by Archibald Motley on the white board (additionally students will receive a color copy of image along with pertinent articles and prompts for activities).
- Begin "Close Read" with the following questions:
  - o "What do you see"?
  - o "Who is the subject of the painting?"
  - o "Who is she to the artist?"
  - o "Is she important? What makes you say that?"
  - o "Can you tell me about her personality? What does she like? What makes you say that?"
- We will discuss various elements of the painting such as- the artist and the subject.
- Students will read information about the life of Archibald Motley from the handout packet and complete exit ticket question, "How does the artist express his affection for the subject of the portrait?"
- Home work: Students will choose a family member to create a portrait of and list 3-5 objects that would represent that individual.

### WEEK TWO:

**Responding: understand and evaluate how the arts convey meaning**

- Introduce close reading prompt "What objects do you see – what do you think they represent to the subject of the painting?"
- Discuss the relationship between the subject and her objects as well as the relationship between the artists and the subject.
- Students will sketch 3-5 objects that are meaningful to their subject- use the elements of art for description
- Student complete exit ticket question "How do the objects in the painting express the interior and exterior attributes of the subject's character?"
- Homework: Sketch composition for portrait- identify 3-5 objects to accompany subject

Weeks Three and Four: Creating: conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work

- Discuss with students the composition and background using resources from J. Paul Getty Museum, "Understanding Formal Analysis" worksheets, see The J. Paul Getty Museum, "Understanding Formal Analysis," [http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/building\\_lessons/formal\\_analysis.html](http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/building_lessons/formal_analysis.html)
- Students create and complete composition for their portrait. Students begin to sketch and add color to their portrait.
- Discuss issues related to portraiture and compare how Motley would have solved that issue.

### Week Five: Presentation

- Students will present their work in the form of a skit, newspaper article, song or formal discussion that gives additional insight into their subjects and how looking at Motley's portraits influenced their process.

### Assessments:

#### (D) Diagnostic

Diagnostic needed: consider adding pre and post written questions based on the elements of art?

**(F) Formative** – the check for understanding mechanisms used throughout the unit to ensure each student gets the instruction needed to be successful on the summative performance assessment. Examples: reader's notebooks, post-it jots, small group anecdotal records, discussion, drafts.

Formative assessments will be comprised of students sketch book entries based on prompts from close reads of painting *Mending Socks* by Archibald Motley.

Sketch book/ student journal (daily/ weekly entries)- written responses and/ or visual responses. Formative assessments will consist of daily/ weekly sketchbook entries to the questions:

- What are the objects in the painting?
- What do you think they mean?
- What is the relationship between exterior and interior in this painting- discuss subject and objects. 4) What is the relationship between the artist and the subject? How do you know?
- How can an artist express his sentiments about a subject using the elements of art?

(S) Summative – the "summary of student's achievement in relation to... learning standards."

Students will complete written exit tickets as well as a portrait project of a family member using key elements of art.

## Works of Art



Archibald J. Motley Jr., *Mending Socks*, 1924. Oil on canvas, 43.875 x 40 inches (111.4 x 101.6 cm). Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Burton Emmett Collection, 58.1.2801.



Archibald J. Motley Jr., *Portrait of my Grandmother*, 1922. Oil on canvas, 38.25 x 23.875 inches (97.2 x 60.6 cm). Collection of Mara Motley, MD, and Valerie Gerrard Browne. Image courtesy of the Chicago History Museum, Illinois.

## Key information about the artist:

Archibald Motley attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where he learned the principles of portraiture. He excelled at visualizing his sitter's interior personalities through the use of exterior signs such as costume, pose, and setting as well as color, light, and line. He made portraits throughout his career in addition to depictions of the streets, clubs, and experiences of the Bronzeville community in Chicago.

## Key information about the artist's context:

From Dr. Richard Powell's label accompanying the painting in the exhibition, *Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist*, we can learn more about the family's history and artist's intent for this portrait:

"Emily Sims Motley was born into slavery in Kentucky and lived in the Motley family's Chicago household throughout the 1910s and '20s. She and her husband Archibald spent much of their lives just outside of Napoleonville, Assumption Parish, Louisiana, where the artist's father was born.

Prior to emancipation, E.E. Kittredge owned Emily, her husband, and several other slaves with the surname Motley. Emily's maiden name, Sims, points to the woman depicted in the oval painting within this painting. She is Emma Kittredge Sims (1847-1911), daughter of E.E. Kittredge and Emily Sims Motley's "former mistress." *Mending Socks* can be seen as a reconciliation with the enslaved past, for both Emily Sims Motley and her artist/grandson."

## Key information about *Mending Socks*:

This is a depiction of Emily Sims Motley, the artist's paternal grandmother. She lived with the artist and was the subject of at least two of his portraits. Motley depicted her mending the family's socks. She wears a red shawl with a brooch painted with her daughter's image. Each of the objects included in this work conveys some element of the sitter's life and interests, from her love of fruit to her deep religious conviction.

## List of resources for teachers and students:

- The Art Institute of Chicago, *Faces, Places, and Inner Spaces Teaching Manual*:  
Available on-line at: [http://www.artic.edu/aic/exhibitions/faces/teacher\\_motley.html](http://www.artic.edu/aic/exhibitions/faces/teacher_motley.html)  
  
Artwork Resource Packet: *Self-Portrait* by Archibald J. Motley, Jr.  
<http://www.artic.edu/aic/resourcefinder/resource-type-resourcefinder/45?page=2>
- Chicago Metro History Education Center, *The Black Chicago Renaissance Resource Guide*:  
Available on-line at: <http://www.chicagohistoryfair.org/for-teachers/curriculum/black-chicago-renaissance.html>
- The J. Paul Getty Museum, “Understanding Formal Analysis,” [http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/building\\_lessons/formal\\_analysis.html](http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/building_lessons/formal_analysis.html)
- Learn NC, *The Power of a Portrait*:  
Available on-line at: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/3567>
- Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, *Archibald Motley: Jazz Modernist*  
Timeline, artworks and audio guides: <http://nasher.duke.edu/motley/#timeline>
- Oklahoma City Museum of Art, *The Harlem Renaissance*:  
Available on-line at: [http://www.okcmoa.com/wp-content/uploads/Harlem\\_Docent\\_Educator\\_Resource\\_Guide\\_web.pdf](http://www.okcmoa.com/wp-content/uploads/Harlem_Docent_Educator_Resource_Guide_web.pdf)
- Powell, Richard J., ed. *Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist*. Durham: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke U, 2014. Print.

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