

Teaching with *Oklahoma Black Gold* by Jeff Dodd



This document is designed to help teachers present, discuss, and teach about Oklahoma history and art literacy through the use of this work of art. The information and exercises here will aid in understanding and learning from this artwork.

Contents:

- First Analysis and Criticism
- Overview of the Artwork
- About the Artist
- History Details
- Painting Details
- Suggested Reading
- Final Analysis
- PASS Objectives

First Analysis and Criticism

The steps below may be used for group discussion or individual written work.

Before beginning the steps, take two minutes to study the artwork. Look at all the details and subject matter. After studying the artwork in silence, follow these steps:

Describe:

Be specific and descriptive. List only the facts about the objects in the painting or sculpture.

- What things are in the artwork?
- What is happening?
- List what you see (people, animals, clothing, environment, objects, etc.).

Analyze:

- How are the elements of art – line, shape, form, texture, space, and value used?
- How are the principles of design – unity, pattern, rhythm, variety, balance, emphasis, and proportion used?

Interpretation:

Make initial, reasonable inferences.

- What do you think is happening in the artwork?
- Who is doing what?
- What do you think the artist is trying to say to the viewer?

Evaluate:

Express your opinion.

- What do you think about the artwork?
- Is it important?
- How does it help you understand the past?
- Do you like it? Why or why not?

Overview of the Artwork

In 1996, Jeff Dodd was commissioned to create a mural for the Oklahoma State Capitol in celebration of the oil and gas industry. In 1998, he was commissioned to create a mural to highlight the agricultural industry in Oklahoma. It has been said that these commissions brought Dodd back to Oklahoma; the second brought him back to his small-town roots. In these works, the artist returned to the people and landscapes of his childhood and pays tribute to the impact agriculture and the oil and gas industry have had on our state. Today, the works hang over the Senate and House of Representatives chambers.

Oklahoma Black Gold celebrates the 100th anniversary of the oil and gas industry in Oklahoma. The wooden structure on the left side of the twenty-two foot mural represents Oklahoma's first attempts at drilling. The oil rig on the right side represents the boundless future of the state. The two roughnecks in the middle of the epic piece display the physical strength and stamina necessary to work in the oil patch as the Oklahoma state flag blankets the state through "booms" and "busts." Funded by private donors, the commission was managed by the Oklahoma Arts Council.

About the Artist

Anative of rural Western Oklahoma, artist Jeff Dodd has been painting realistic portraits and landscapes for nearly 30 years. Drawing since he was a child, Dodd received his formal education from Southwestern Oklahoma State University where he graduated with a degree in commercial art. After a brief stint as a student at Wichita State University, Dodd relocated to New York City to study drawing at the Art Students League under noted teacher Tony Ryder. However, it was only after he had moved to Santa Fe in 1991 that Dodd first began painting, stating that his influences came from the art of Rembrandt, Monet and Francis Bacon.

Details



Mural Details

1. Artist Jeff Dodd spent three days in an oil field taking photographs and observing workers as research for the mural.
2. The mural, which celebrates the one hundredth anniversary of Oklahoma's oil and gas industry, depicts both the past and the future of petroleum production in Oklahoma.
 - a. On the left, an antique wooden structure represents Oklahoma's first attempts at tapping vast oil reserves.
 - b. The structure on the right side represents the future and the infinite possibilities.
3. The artist used the Oklahoma flag, with its striking blue and gold as the background.
4. In the center of the mural, oil well workers represent a consistent pushing and pulling toward the goal of drawing energy from the earth.
5. The mural measures 22 feet at its base and is eleven feet high.
6. This mural, combined with *Oklahoma Black Gold*, also by Jeff Dodd, provide eye-catching color to the fourth-floor rotunda at the Oklahoma State Capitol.

Details



Oil and Gas Industry in Oklahoma

1. The Oklahoma State Capitol is famous for being the only state capitol with an active oil rig on the property.
2. Oil was first discovered in Oklahoma by Native Americans. They believed the substance to possess healing powers and used it as medicine to cure illness.
3. Oklahoma first used oil for commercial production in 1889.
4. The discovery of Glenn Pool in 1905, a large underground lake of oil, helped the Tulsa area earn the title of “Oil Capitol of the World.”
5. The oil industry produced many jobs in the state and helped develop towns such as Cushing and Kiefer. These towns were originally boom towns, which were quickly developed by people following the work produced by the oil industry.
6. Oil was Oklahoma’s major contribution to support the efforts of World War I.
7. So many new topics needed to be addressed by the quickly-developing oil industry, the state lawmakers couldn’t make the laws quick enough and govern the rest of the state. Therefore, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission was constituted to govern the oil industry.
8. In the 1980s, unemployed workers from other states flocked to Oklahoma for the job opportunities provided by the oil industry. So many people moved to Oklahoma that the housing and hotel industry could not keep up and people had to stay in their cars until they found housing.
9. Today, Oklahoma is the third largest gas-producing state in the nation.

Suggested Reading

Oklahoma Adventure, Centennial Edition 2006 by Oklahoma History Press

Chapter 13: The Final Conquest, **page 123**

Chapter 17: Early Government, **pages 160-161**

Chapter 24: Highlights of the 1970s and 1980s, **page 238**

Oklahoma: Land of Contrasts by Clairmont Press

Chapter 2: Where in the World is Oklahoma?, **page 48**

Chapter 11: Rebuilding Indian Territory, **page 279**

Chapter 14: Growing Pains, **pages 356-361**

Chapter 15: The Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression, **pages 377-378**

Chapter 17: Politics, Protests, and Social Change, **pages 442-443**

Chapter 18: Oklahoma Roundup, **pages 460, 470-472**

The Story of Oklahoma, Second Edition by Baird and Goble

Chapter 2: Geological Resources in Oklahoma, **pages 22-23, 26**

Chapter 14: Changes in Indian Territory, **pages 232-233**

Chapter 19: The Economy, **pages 308-311**

Chapter 20: A New Society, **pages 320-321**

Chapter 23: A Mature Economy, **pages 367-369**

Final Analysis

After completing the readings and activities, go back and look at the artwork again. Now that the students are more familiar with the subject matter, ask them to write a few paragraphs about their interpretation of the artwork. In their own words, the writing should address the following:

- Description of the artwork and who/what is in it
- How the elements of art and principles of design are used within the artwork
- What feelings, emotions, or information the artwork depicts
- Their opinion of the artwork

Pass Objectives

Grade 4- Social Studies

Standard 5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the unique features which contributed to the settlement of the state of Oklahoma.

2. Describe major events of Oklahoma's past, such as settlements by Native Americans, cattle drives, land runs, statehood, and the discovery of oil.
3. Analyze the use of Oklahoma's natural resources (e.g., salt, bison, oil, coal, timber and sod) by early visitors and settlers.

Grade 4- Visual Art

Standard 1: Language of Visual Art - The student will identify visual art terms (e.g., architecture, contour, medium, mixed media, perspective, symbol).

4. Discuss observations of visual and expressive features seen in the environment (such as colors, textures, shapes).

Standard 2: Visual Art History and Culture - The student will recognize the development of visual art from an historical and cultural perspective.

1. Describe and place a variety of specific significant art objects by artist, style and historical and cultural context.
2. Identify themes and purposes of works of art and artifacts in history and culture.
3. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of several fields of art such as painting, sculpture, drawing, computer graphics, printmaking, architecture, and fiber arts.
4. Identify how visual art is used in today's world including the popular media of advertising, television, and film.

Standard 4: Visual Art Appreciation - The student will learn to appreciate visual art as a vehicle of human expression.

2. Demonstrate respect for personal artwork and the artwork of others.

High School- Oklahoma History

Standard 6. The student will investigate the geography and economic assets of Oklahoma and trace their effects on the history of the state.

1. Locate the significant physical and human features of the state on a map (e.g., major waterways, cities, natural resources, military installations, major highways, and major landform regions).
2. Examine how economic cycles (e.g., the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, and the oil boom and bust) have affected and continue to affect major sectors of state employment (e.g., fossil fuels, timber, mining, tourism, the military, and agriculture).

High School- The Arts

Standard 1: Language of Visual Art - The student will identify visual art terms (e.g., content, engraving, foreshortening, mosaic, perspective)

1. Identify and apply knowledge of the principles of design: rhythm, balance (symmetrical, asymmetrical, radial) contrast, movement, variety, center of interest (emphasis), and repetition in personal artwork, and the artwork of others.
3. Describe exhibitions of original works of art seen in the school or community.
4. Differentiate between art criticism and art reviews, recognizing that criticism is positive as well as negative in its evaluation of a work of art.

Standard 2: Visual Art History and Culture - The student will recognize the development of visual art from an historical and cultural perspective.

5. PROFICIENT: Identify major regional, national, and international collections of art.

Standard 4: Visual Art Appreciation - The student will appreciate visual art as a vehicle of human expression.

2. Demonstrate respect for their work and the work of others.