



Summary: Art walks is a program that not only teaches students how to view and appreciate public art, but also helps them understand the narrative of the art.

Wilderness Nebraska, Pioneer Courage and Telling the Story

Morning, The Beginning of the Story

The goals for this project include teaching students storytelling and the narrative medium using Nebraska's natural and pioneer history and direct experience with public art. The outcome will be a video of students telling the stories of our pioneer ancestors and the wildlife that was part of their experience.

Students will travel to 15th St. -16th St. between Capitol and Dodge in Omaha. They will use two groupings of sculpture. The first is geese flying and bison behind them charging. The second is a wagon train with pioneers, people of all ages, and their accompanying equipment and livestock.

We will group the students so that they can be addressed by one or two teachers (12-15 each group). The teacher explains that we will start with the Wilderness Nebraska group of statues then move on to the next block. The teacher explains that the statues tell a story and that the story might be different for each student, but some things will be the same.

Start at the grouping of geese and bison at 16h and Dodge giving 15 minutes for students to walk around and view the statues, encouraging them to make observations and think about what story they might be telling. Whistle students back into the group. Teacher will now begin to get the students thinking about the narrative. Ask the following:

*“What might have made these geese fly away?” {fear, food, fun,
going south, going north}*

“If these geese were frightened and flying away for safety, what might have scared them”? {bison, and they are right there}

“Let’s go look at the bison. What are the bison doing?” {running}

“What might make these giant bison run? Why not walk? After all they are huge!”

“What are the natural enemies of bison and geese? What might harm a bison or a goose? Where might you see geese or bison today?”

Begin walking to the next grouping of sculptures. Notice the other sculptures along the way. The second grouping includes people, wagons, horses, etc. It is at 15th and Capitol.

Give the students time to walk around the grouping, this group will require more time. Whistle them back. This next set of questions is designed to complete a narrative with action and characters. Ask the following:

*“Do you see anything here that might make a bison run away?”
{people, guns, dogs, horses, wagons}*

“Could this have frightened the bison?” {yes}

Get a partner.

Stand by one of the people in the group of statues.

“You are going to make up a story about who that person is.”

Think for a minute silently.

“Now tell your partner about the person in the statue. You can give him or her a name, where she/he came from, where they are going. What happened to them to make them leave their home and walk across Nebraska. What is going to happen to them? Are they happy, sad, excited, tired, worried? Why?”

Back to the bus to KANEKO.

Lunch and Afternoon, Completing the Story

The goal of the afternoon is to create and record the narrative of each child. The narrative will explain the child’s response to a part of the art that they viewed. Students will receive instruction on storytelling. A story has a beginning, middle, and end. A story has characters and something happens. A narrative tells the story of the character. Students should be free to invent anything they want to in order to make their narrative interesting. Students will get time to prepare.

It is not necessary for students to write down their narrative, but it is an option depending upon time.

Students will then sit before a video camera and tell their narrative. The video clips will be edited later with still photos of the statues mixed throughout.

Publication will be through the school and the Community Learning Center and Nebraskans for Civic Reform. Partners such as KANEKO and First National Bank may also want to publish the results. Websites and FaceBook outlets will be used.

There is an art option. The same structure, however, instead of the narrative, the students will meet with a professional artist on site. The artist will talk about the creation of art, its purpose, materials, function, etc. At KANEKO children will create art as directed by the artist on site.

