

The Treaty Trail: U. S. - Indian Treaty Councils in the Northwest

STUDENT WORKSHEET: RESPONDING TO ART AS A PRIMARY SOURCE



Crossing the Bitter Root Mountains Nov. 1855

The detail of the painting "Crossing the Bitter Roots, Nov. 1855" by Gustav Sohon depicts the Stevens' party's journey through the Bitterroot Mountains en route to the Spokane Treaty Council.

Washington State Historical Society Collections.

Art Vocabulary:

space feeling of depth in 2-dimensional art

texture real or implied tactile characteristics of a surface

value lightness or darkness of an area of color or tone

composition the organization of art elements into a unified whole

emphasis use of contrasts (color, size, shapes) to place greater attention on specific parts of a work of art

pattern repeating sequence of lines, shapes or colors

rhythm movement in art created through repetition of elements

atmospheric perspective the illusion of distance created through reducing detail and muting colors as objects or figures recede in space

horizon where earth and sky meet

landscape art representing a place in the natural environment

perspective the illusion of distance created in a 2-dimensional work of art through reduction of size of objects, figures, or environmental features

scale the relative size of objects, figures or features of the environment

- *Make sure that before you begin you have read both Gustav Sohon's biography to learn more about the artist who created the art and Spokan Garry's biography to learn more about the Spokane Indians and Garry's point of view.*
- *Use the art vocabulary words and definitions to help you describe, analyze and interpret Gustav Sohon's Crossing the Bitter Root Mountains, Nov. 1855.*

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

**Observe and describe:
Create an inventory of what you see...**

<p>Who or what is in the picture? List people, animals, objects...</p>	<p>Where is the place or setting? List buildings, structures, landforms, plants, trees...</p>
<p>What time of day or season is it? What is the weather like? Temperature?</p>	<p>Which art elements did the artist use to create the picture? List colors, lines, shapes, space, texture, values...</p>
<p>How was the picture made? Is it a photograph, a painting, a drawing?</p>	<p>When was the picture made? Why is this date significant?</p>

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Question and analyze:
Investigate what you see by examining the details...
Consider the artist's choices in making the art...

Where do you see the most detail or information in the picture? How did the artist create **emphasis** or draw attention to certain parts of the picture?

Who are the people? What clues tell us about their cultural identity? What are each of the people and animals doing in the picture? What do you think they are thinking or feeling? Why?

Where are the people, landscape features and animals in space? How does the artist use **perspective** to communicate information about the landscape?

Where do you see **rhythm** in the picture? How does the artist's use of repetition show movement?

Why do you think the artist made this picture? Who might be looking at it at the time it was made?

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

**Use observations and clues to develop a historical interpretation of the art:
What is the artist communicating about time, place,
and the interaction of cultures?**

What is happening in the picture? Use descriptive words, details and ideas about choices the artist made (documented on this worksheet) to support your interpretation.

What does the art communicate about this part of the Treaty Trail journey?

Consider whether or not the readings change how you see Gustav Sohon's artwork.

Compare the art to the written account of crossing the mountains. What might the figures in the artwork might have been thinking?

Describe how you think a Native American artist might have shown these men crossing the mountains. Would the art show a different perspective?

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

List specific findings from the primary sources (artwork and written accounts) as evidence to help answer the following questions...

What motivated Governor Stevens to choose this route over the Bitterroot Mountains?

What did Governor Stevens want at this point in the journey?

What strategies or plans was he using to get what he wanted?