

USING ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES TO TEACH LANGUAGE AND VISUAL ARTS by Michelle Markel, author of *Dreamer From the Village*

LANGUAGE ARTS

After showing examples of artwork and reading a biography, have students

-discuss how the biography helps them understand the artwork (what do they see in the picture that reminds them of what they learned from the biography?)

-write a letter to the artist, decorating it with imagery from his art

-write a paragraph about the artist

-write a biography of the artist

-write biographies of other students

-write a descriptive paragraph about a memorable event

-compare and contrast artwork from another artist that has a similar subject, make a Venn diagram, then write about it

-discuss what obstacles the artist had to overcome, and what traits helped him to achieve success

After showing an example of artwork, have students

-write a paragraph describing the painting and how it makes them feel

-write a story telling who the characters are and what happens before, during, and after the action depicted in the painting.

Questions to ask students about artwork:

-What is happening in the picture? The characters? The action?

-What element stands out more than others? (color/shape/line/texture etc.)

-What technique did the artist use? (watercolor/oils/ collage etc)

-How do you think the artist felt as he did this work?-How does it make you feel? (Excited, sad, scared, happy, peaceful etc.) Why do you think you feel that way?