

Lesson Suggestions for: *Edward Hopper Paints His World* by Robert Burleigh, illustrated by Wendell Minor

Submitted by Mary Gardner

Synopsis of book: Robert Burleigh's biography of Edward Hopper follows him from a young boy who printed "Would Be Artist" on his pencil box to a young man studying illustration and painting in New York then painting in Paris, through the years of no one buying his work and beyond. Throughout the narrative it is emphasized that Hopper studied and sketched his surroundings looking at the things he loved and that moved him. He wanted to paint things the way he saw them. Minor's illustrations create the feelings of Hopper's art and add much to the biography.

Suggestions for Use: This book belongs in a collection of biographies for all ages. It could be shared as a read aloud for Kindergarten through first and second graders. Many third graders and up will be able to read it independently.

This book also offers many possibilities for collaboration with art teachers. Whether studying Hopper specifically, exploring a variety of artists and their styles, or even light, color, or composition there are key art concepts to be learned in this biography. There is also information about the artist's processes and feelings.

In the Artist's Notes in the back pages Wendell Minor describes his process as he sought to keep the feelings of Hopper's work while maintaining his own style. Understanding how Minor painted some of Hopper's famous pieces to illustrate the book is another layer of meaning in this text. Minor's illustrations could be compared and contrasted with the prints of four of Hopper's paintings that are included in the back of the book.

The Art Institute of Chicago houses *Nighthawks* in its collection and has many resources (including audio lectures) to supplement this book (<http://www.artic.edu/>). The book itself has additional resources and a Hopper Bibliography in the back pages as well, offering many possibilities for further research.

Possible CCSS: Since the book can be used across grade levels, anchor standards that could be met are included here. Choose appropriate corresponding standards for your grade level.

Reading:

- RI.3: Describe connections between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
- RI.8: Identify reasons an author gives to support points in a text.

If the book is read aloud – Speaking and Listening

- SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Possible activities:

These activities could be incorporated during or after reading in response to a teacher read aloud, shared reading, or independent reading. They offer different purposes for rereading as well.

1. Students can create timelines that include key events in the life of artist Edward Hopper. The end pages of the book offer Important Dates in the Life of Edward Hopper to add to the information in the book itself. The timelines could be multimedia presentations of various kinds. Small groups could be assigned different segments of Hopper’s life then the class could work collaboratively to assemble the completed timeline. The art teacher might help students with some of the illustrating tasks. Students could create a rubric for evaluation of their timelines. They could be shared with other classes and with parents on a class webpage. Students could also present the timelines in a museum format.
2. Throughout the text Burleigh emphasizes what Hopper thought and felt and how that affected his work. During and after reading students could gather evidence to complete an organizer similar to the following. They could then use their information to write about Edward Hopper.

Artist Edward Hopper

Thoughts	Actions	Results

Younger students might enjoy creating a large chart of a person (drawing or cut paper) and adding thought bubbles to show Hopper’s thoughts. His actions could be added around the person’s hands and/or feet.

3. The Afterword contains possibilities for further writing and thinking. Burleigh asks the question “Can an artist be a *hero*?” underneath the heading EDWARD HOPPER: HERO, EXPLORER, AND ARTIST (Burleigh, R., 2014, Afterword). Students could use that question in a Discussion Web. They would work in partners to complete reasons to say yes and reasons to say no to the question. Together they should use their information to form a conclusion. These could then be shared with other classmates. A possible format can be found at the end of this document.

Students could also find evidence in the text and other sources to support the author's claim that Hopper was a hero, explorer, and artist. Follow-up writing could be done after either activity.

The Afterword also has three quotes by Hopper about art. Any one or all could be recreated on a poster and interpreted. This might also be a chance to collaborate with the art teacher. These posters could be displayed, or shared digitally, along with students' writing about Hopper.

Modifications

Working with classmates in varied group formations from whole group to small groups will provide opportunities for collaboration. Students with varying educational needs will be supported in learning by their peers and teacher. A scribe could be provided for students with difficulties writing. A listening center with copies of the book and an audio recording could be provided for additional reading support.

Can an artist be
a hero?

YES

NO

Conclusion