

Grades 9–10 Playlist: Analyzing Different Mediums

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9–10.7*:

- Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic media, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus”).

Welcome

Not all stories are told using words. Themes, central idea, plot, and characters can be developed in visual art and music as well as literature. The works of writers and poets inspire many artists, and often the reverse is true as well. A quick overview of the art and literature of a time period can reveal many common stories and themes, such as those from mythology, religious texts, and classic literature by authors like Shakespeare and Chaucer.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic media.

Review

Key Terms

- A **representation** of a subject involves presenting it in some form—using written words or other means such as audial or visual. A representation can be **literal**, showing how something really is, or **figurative**, depicting something in terms of a symbol or emblem of something else.
- A **medium** is a channel of communication for a message. To many people, mediums or “media” include newspapers, radio, television, and other means of communicating messages on a broad scale. Artistic media, used for communicating creative messages, include painting, sculpture, photography, literature, poetry, music, and performing arts such as dance and theater.
- The way a medium represents a subject is also referred to as its **treatment** of the subject. Different treatments **emphasize**, or place stress upon, different aspects of a subject.

Watch!

To learn more about analyzing themes across media, watch this video:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeYkw0kLJaY>



Exploring the Standard

When analyzing a subject or a key scene that is represented in two different artistic media, one should first examine how its treatment is similar and different in two representations. For example, if it's an analysis of a key scene, consider the following: Which characters are included in both? Do they seem to be experiencing the same emotions? Do both artistic media convey the same tone? What elements have been omitted from one but included in the other, and why might the artist/author have chosen to make this omission or inclusion?

A Closer Look: Emphasis and Purpose

When analyzing two works in different artistic media, it is helpful to do a little research to collect background information. Which work was created first? What was the relationship between the creators of the works? Was one work based upon the other, or do they each depict a story or theme independent of each other (such as two treatments of a traditional Greek myth)? Information such as this can help determine the author's or artist's purpose in creating the work and why they might have emphasized or de-emphasized certain elements that others do not. In some cases, an artist might create a painting based on a work of literature as an illustration for that work. Another artist might produce a painting that depicts the literary work in a different light to give the viewer a different perspective on the story or its characters.

Watch!

To learn more about analyzing literary and artistic subjects, watch this video:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=165&v=YcRLDeEZ2cs>

Example

The excerpt below is from William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, Act I, Scene II. Prospero, the former Duke of Milan, and his daughter Miranda have just witnessed a great shipwreck in the Mediterranean Sea from the island where they have lived for the past twelve years. While Miranda is concerned about the people aboard the ship, her father tells her the truth about their past: They were kidnapped and left for dead by the very people who sailed on that ship, including Prospero's brother Antonio, who usurped his position as Duke. After telling the story, Prospero assures his daughter that he will set everything right and restore both of them to their rightful positions in Milan.

Scenes from literature, including Shakespeare's plays, were popular subjects in painting in the nineteenth century. Around 1850, the English painter William Maw Egley (1826–1916) painted *Prospero and Miranda*, which seems to depict the pair at the moment they view the shipwreck.

Listen!

Listen to an audio recording of *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare:

- <https://librivox.org/the-tempest-by-william-shakespeare/>



Teacher Notes: Analyzing Different Mediums

The goal of RL.9-10.7 is for students to be able to analyze the representation of a subject or key scene (such as the interaction between two characters in a particular scene) in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each representation. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Have the students break into groups. Instruct them to reread the excerpt from *The Tempest* as a group and discuss how they would have depicted the excerpt in painting or sculpture. What elements would they have added that Egley did not include? Would they have omitted any of Egley's elements? Students will create a visual representation of their interpretation of *The Tempest* and present it to the class. They may use any visual artistic media they choose (painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, computer-generated, etc.).
2. Instruct the students to conduct research to locate examples of classical paintings or sculptures that depict Greek or Roman myths. Then, have them locate a written example of the myth, either in poetic or literary form or an informative description. Discuss how the artists' versions of the myths differ from the written versions.

Writing Prompts

1. Assign students a grade-appropriate, well-known painting that includes a setting, several figures, and/or a series of events. Have the students write a narrative about the painting. Instruct them to include details in their narratives that are not present or emphasized in the painting, and tell them that they may also choose to omit or de-emphasize elements of the painting in their narrative.
2. Have the students read "Musée des Beaux Arts" by W.H. Auden, a poem inspired by the painting *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* by Pieter Bruegel. Students will write an analysis comparing and contrasting the two treatments of the myth, specifically addressing the question of how a written work based on a visual medium differs from the reverse.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RL.9-10.7:

"Integration of Knowledge and Ideas": This resource provides teachers with more information about teaching standard RL.9-10-7.

- <http://www.shmoop.com/common-core-standards/ccss-ela-literacy-rl-9-10-7.html>

"The Common Core as Part of an Integrated Art Lesson": This resource educates teachers about introducing the visual arts to Common Core instruction.

- <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/ccss-and-integrated-art-lessons-getty>

