

LOS TEJANOS A PLAZA IN TEXAS IN THE 1930'S

An Exploration of Culture through Art
Based on Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills
Grades Kindergarten through Third Grade



UTSA INSTITUTE OF
TEXAN CULTURES

A Smithsonian Affiliate

801 E. César E. Chávez Blvd. San Antonio, TX 78205-3296

Introduction

Dear Educator,

Carmen Lomas Garza’s work “A Plaza in Texas in the 1930’s”, currently on display in our *Los Tejanos* exhibit here at the Institute of Texan Cultures, offers a glimpse into the past and details a uniquely Texan culture. This resource guide provides students with a visual way to connect with a previous time, and they will use critical thinking skills to analyze and make personal connections with “A Plaza in Texas in the 1930’s”. The contents of this guide are based on Art and English Language Arts and Reading TEKS for grades K through 3.

For additional resources and information on ITC exhibits and tours, please visit <http://www.texancultures.com/resources/>

If you have any questions or would like more information on materials, resources and services for students and educators, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,

The Institute of Texan Cultures

Education and Interpretation

210.458.2281

itceducation@utsa.edu

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Using This Educator Guide

An Exploration of Culture through Art features a series of interactive, inquiry-based and hands-on activities for your use in the classroom. These activities, developed for grades K through 3, are designed to help younger students engage with and identify basic elements of art, learn how culture is portrayed through works of art, and relate experiences and events portrayed in art to their own lives. As a culminating experience, students will curate their own works of art in a classroom “museum” exhibit. While these activities are designed to be completed as an entire series, please feel free to modify and/or expand upon them to meet your individual classroom needs.

The activities in this Educator Guide are based off a work by Carmen Lomas Garza titled “A Plaza in Texas in the 1930’s”. Background information on the image is provided in *Complete the Picture* activity below, and more information about Garza’s life and work can be found at www.carmenlomasgarza.com

“Big Picture” Understandings:

The following “Big Picture” Understandings are woven throughout the lessons provided in this guide. These understandings help students identify and connect with important thematic concepts that will come up throughout their studies in art and culture.

- All cultures create some form of art.
- All works of art share similar basic characteristics.
- Art is a visual expression of culture, and it is important because it helps us preserve, explain, and share our ways of life with others.

Classroom Activities:

Complete the Picture! – This activity helps students fine-tune skills in basic observation and inference, allows them to express ideas creatively through the completion of a “picture puzzle,” and helps students relate works of art to their own lives and experiences.

I Spy... – This activity helps students think about how to encourage fruitful discussions about works of art and incorporate basic art elements into their own pieces.

Create a Classroom Art Museum – Students will demonstrate their understanding in a culminating project by curating their works created during the *I Spy...* activity in a classroom museum exhibit.

Tips for Talking to Young Children about Art:

- The information itself is not as important as helping children find ways to describe what they see in art. Children will enjoy the process of discovery that unfolds as they are encouraged to explore art on their own, with you as their “guide on the side.”
- Be open-minded. Expect that your students will have their own ideas about the work of art in question. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers.
- Encourage careful looking. Have your students look at a piece of art from different perspectives – up high, from below, to the side, far away, etc.
- Always ask open-ended and exploratory questions, such as “What do you see?” or “If this artwork could talk, what might it say?”



Carmen Lomas Garza. A Plaza in Texas in the 1930's. 2015. Acrylic and oil on birch plywood. 36 in. X 48 in. UTSA Institute of Texan Cultures. San Antonio, Texas. Reproduced and used with permission. ©2015 by Carmen Lomas Garza.

Complete the Picture!

In this activity, students will examine a work of art to better understand the world around them, increase visual awareness and sensitivity through close examination, and express thoughts and ideas using creative media. Students should walk away with a better understanding of how images can be used to illustrate important details about community across cultures, and be able to relate their own experiences as members of a community. The activity can be completed individually, with a group, or as a whole class, and can easily be adapted to meet your individual classroom needs.

Before you begin, you'll need to gather the following materials:

- A high-resolution copy of the Garza mural (included in this resource packet)
- Enough color copies of the "Complete the Picture!" handout to distribute to your students
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Construction paper (you may wish to cut out the individual images and place them on a larger canvas to give your students more room to work)

Background Information and Introduction: The image below represents a "snippet" of a larger piece of work, *A Plaza in Texas in the 1930's*, created by artist Carmen Lomas Garza (above). The panel is currently on display at the entrance to the newly installed *Los Tejanos* exhibit at UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio, Texas. The exhibit explores 500 years of Tejano culture through major themes and life experiences, focusing on cultural encounters, foodways, ranching, education, and making a living.



Tejano cultural traditions are reflected throughout Texas. In architecture, music, and art, you can see and hear Tejano influence all around you. The plaza depicted in the mural is based on Spanish-influenced plazas throughout Texas.

According to Spanish tradition, the plaza was the starting point of a new town. It served as the social center of the community. Typically a church, *kiosco* or bandstand, walkways, and benches are major features of a plaza.

Traditionally the plaza was the site of *paseos*, or promenades, as well as vendors, musical performances, and *ferias*, or fairs.

Directions:

1. Acquaint yourself with the background information related to the mural, but do not share that information with your students.
2. Distribute copies of the “Complete the Picture!” handout provided on the next page of this guide.
3. Give your students a few minutes to look over the image and ask them to think generally about the kinds of things they see in the image. This part of the activity can be done as an entire class. Use the following prompts to spark your students’ interest and curiosity and engage them in critical thinking about the image:
 - How many people are in the painting, and what are they doing? How do you know that?
 - Are the people in the image happy or sad?
 - What kinds of clothes are the people in the image wearing?
 - Where do you think these people are? Are they indoors or outdoors?
4. Distribute crayons, colored pencils, or markers to the students.
5. Instruct your students to think of this image as a small piece of a larger puzzle. Ask them to complete the puzzle by drawing or coloring a scene around it. Instruct them to be creative! Encourage students to think about where this scene may have taken place, and why the individuals pictured are doing what they are doing.
6. Ask students to share their completed images with the class.

Closure:

1. Show students the full mural and discuss their artworks in relation to the mural.
2. Take a moment to discuss the mural in relation to your students’ lives and experiences, thinking about the roles that parks, community centers, cultural centers, music halls, fairs, churches, and other gathering places play in promoting positive interactions among members of a community.
3. Ask students to share with the class one of their favorite places to gather and visit with friends or family members.

Extension Ideas:

- Ask students to think about the different types of jobs or occupations represented by people featured in the image, and have them share their answers with a partner or the class (Foci: Community interactions, jobs, exchange of goods and services). What roles do different jobs play within the community?
- Have students work with partners or in groups to choose a scene within the image to “act out” for the class. Have students try to guess which scene from the mural is being depicted.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Complete the Picture!

Directions: Finish the painting below by drawing and coloring your very own scene around it! What do you think might be going on in the rest of the painting?



I Spy...

In this activity, students will explore a work of art in further detail by playing the game “I Spy.” Students will refine their skills in shape, color, and object identification through question and answer sessions with their teacher and classmates, and create their own murals using different elements of art. Students should walk away with a better understanding of how to identify basic elements of art and how they work together to tell a story about a person or group of people. This activity is a great way to expand upon concepts and ideas introduced in the “Complete the Picture!” activity, and can be easily modified to meet your needs.

Before you begin, you’ll need to gather the following materials:

- Board or chart paper
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Enough copies of the “Trace the Lines and Shapes!” handout to distribute to your students
- Blank paper (any size or color)
- A high-resolution copy of the Garza mural (included in this resource packet) to be projected; OR
- Enough copies of the mural to distribute to small groups or pairs of students

Directions:

1. Distribute copies of the Garza mural to groups of students or project the image on the board. You may also access an interactive, zooming-capable version of the mural [here](#). The interactive image contains prompts that may help guide your class discussion.
2. Remind students about some of the elements of art that they have previously learned about—specifically, colors, shapes, and different types of lines. Show students some examples of different colors, shapes, and lines using pictures or by drawing examples on the board. For kindergarten students, it may be helpful to have them model after you and practice drawing these elements on their own.
3. Begin by discussing the artwork as an entire class. Encourage students to answer in complete sentences and use descriptive language. Ask students the following questions:
 - What do you spy?
 - Look at the colors in this work of art. What colors do you see? Show us where you see each color by pointing. (Students can reply, “I spy yellow flowers,” for example.)
 - What shapes do you see in this work of art? Show us where you see each shape by pointing. (Students can reply, “I spy circles,” for example.)
 - Do you see any lines in the painting? What kinds of lines do you see? (Students can reply, “I spy a straight line.”) Where do you see them? Show us where you see each type of line by pointing. You may use the “Trace the Lines and Shapes!” handout provided to guide students in identifying some of the different kinds of shapes and lines found in the mural.

Examples of Shapes and Lines Found in the Mural



4. Model proper basic investigation techniques for group or partner work. Use the following prompts to help you get started:
 - I spy...something green! (Possible answers: the grass, trees, plants, clothing)
 - I spy...something in the shape of a circle! (Possible answers: the bandstand, planters, hats, wheels on the “Candied Pecans” cart, wheels on the automobiles)
 - I spy....something pink!
5. Give students a few minutes to play the game and investigate the image on their own. Encourage them to work with their partners or groups to identify what interests them most.
6. Tell students they will be creating their own work of art inspired by this mural. Just as Carmen Lomas Garza was inspired by real-life celebrations and events within her own culture, ask students to think about a fun time they may have had at a park, friend or family member’s birthday party, or at school.
7. Pass out a blank sheet of paper to each student. Have students use their crayons, markers, or colored pencils to draw and color their own murals individually. Supervise the students as they create their murals. Ask students questions about what colors they are using and why, what shapes they are drawing, and what kinds of lines they are drawing.
8. After everyone is finished, have students return to their groups or partners to play the “I Spy” game using their newly created works of art. You may wish to walk around the room and guide the investigation or complete this portion of the activity as a class, depending on the skills and abilities of your students. Encourage students to use the “I spy” phrases to tell each other what they see (i.e., “I spy a red circle on your paper” or “I spy a blue line on your paper”).

Closure:

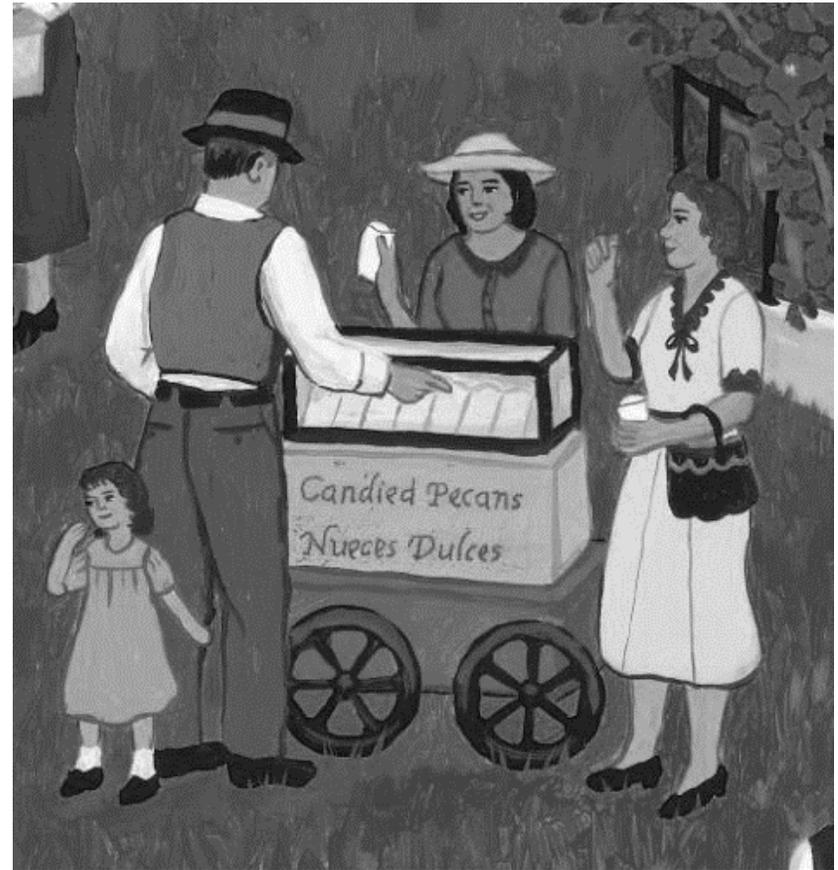
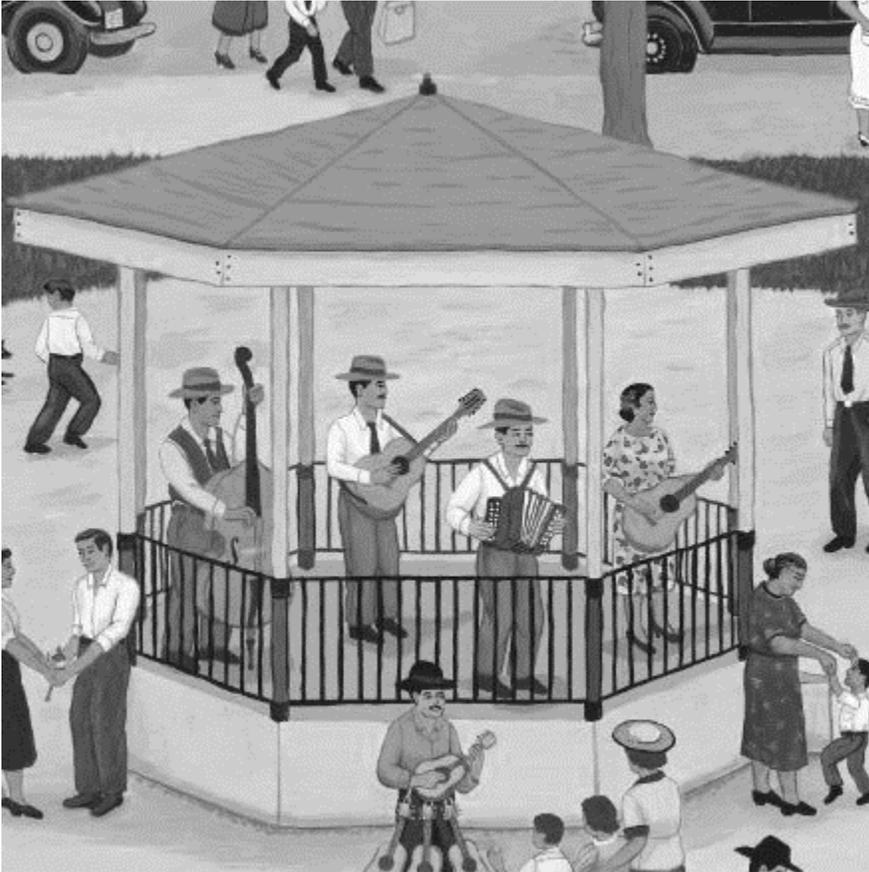
1. Ask students to share the ways in which their murals are similar to or different than Garza’s. Some students may point out similarities in color, shapes, clothing, or people, while others may focus on subject matter or setting.
2. Ask students to describe how their murals tell a story about an event or celebration in their life. Focus on asking basic guiding questions (who? what? when? where? why?) and help students relate their answers back to larger concepts such as community and culture.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Trace the Lines and Shapes!

Directions: Trace the shapes and lines you can see in the pictures using different colored markers, colored pencils, or crayons.



Create a Classroom Art Museum

In this culminating experience, students will curate their newly created works of art in a classroom museum exhibit. Students will share their artwork with their classmates and act as docents or guides in a “tour” of the exhibit, reinforcing skills taught in the “Complete the Picture!” and “I Spy...” activities.

Before you begin, you’ll need to ensure you have the following materials and spaces:

- An adequate display area – student artwork can be displayed on walls or easels throughout the room or hung above student seating areas. Be creative!
- Display materials (tape, pins, string, wire, etc.)
- Small labels to attach to student artwork
- Student artwork

Be sure to introduce the following important vocabulary word during the lesson:

- Docent: A lecturer or tour guide in a museum.

Directions:

1. Tell students that the artwork they have just created will be put on display in your classroom “museum,” just like real museums display paintings or other objects. It may be helpful to show pictures of museum art exhibits or relate the exercise to student experiences at art or cultural institutions in your area.
2. Ask students to come up with a name for their artwork, and assist them in writing that name on a label that will identify the piece to the rest of the class.
3. Hang or display the student artwork along with its corresponding label.
4. Tell students that they will be going on a tour of their classroom “museum” to learn about all the different types of art.
5. Ensure you have adequate space to walk around your room as a group. As you walk around and tour your classroom, each student will act as a docent and tell the rest of the class about the artwork they created. This is a great way for students of any skill level to demonstrate what they know and have learned throughout these lessons.

Closure:

1. Reinforce the three “Big Picture” Understandings with your students (page 3).
2. Discuss some of the ways in which student artwork is similar or different, making sure to refer to shapes, color, or lines.
3. Most importantly, how does each student tell a story about their culture through their work of art?

References

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *A Plaza in Texas in the 1930's*. 2015. Acrylic and oil on birch plywood. 36 in. X 48 in. UTSA Institute of Texan Cultures. San Antonio, Texas. Reproduced and used by permission. ©2015 by Carmen Lomas Garza.

<http://carmenlomasgarza.com/>

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Art

§117.2. Art, Kindergarten. (b) Knowledge and skills. (1) Perception. The student develops and organizes ideas from the environment. The student is expected to: (A) glean information from the environment, using the five senses; and (B) identify colors, textures, forms, and subjects in the environment. (2) Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student is expected to: (A) create artworks, using a variety of colors, forms, and lines; (B) arrange forms intuitively to create artworks; and (C) develop manipulative skills when drawing, painting, printmaking, and constructing artworks, using a variety of materials. (3) Historical/cultural heritage. The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture as records of human achievement. The student is expected to: (A) identify simple subjects expressed in artworks; (B) share ideas about personal artworks and the work of others, demonstrating respect for differing opinions; and (C) relate art to everyday life.

§117.5. Art, Grade 1. (b) Knowledge and skills. (1) Perception. The student develops and organizes ideas from the environment. The student is expected to: (A) identify similarities, differences, and variations among subjects, using the senses; and (B) identify color, texture, form, line, and emphasis in nature and in the human-made environment. (2) Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student is expected to: (A) invent images that combine a variety of colors, forms, and lines; (B) place forms in orderly arrangement to create designs; and (C) increase manipulative skills, using a variety of materials to produce drawings, paintings, prints, and constructions. (3) Historical/cultural heritage. The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture as records of human achievement. The student is expected to: (A) identify simple ideas expressed in artworks through different media; (B) select artworks that show families and groups; and (C) identify the use of art in everyday life.

§117.8. Art, Grade 2. (b) Knowledge and skills. (1) Perception. The student develops and organizes ideas from the environment. The student is expected to: (A) identify variations in objects and subjects from the environment, using the senses; and (B) identify art elements such as color, texture, form, line, and space and art principles such as emphasis, pattern, and rhythm. (2) Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student is expected to: (A) express ideas and feelings in artworks, using a variety of colors, forms, and lines; (B) create effective compositions, using design elements and principles; and revised August 2014 (C) identify and practice skills necessary for producing drawings, paintings, prints, constructions, and modeled forms, using a variety of art materials. (3) Historical/cultural heritage. The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture as records of human achievement. The student is expected to: (A) identify stories and constructions in a variety of artworks; (B) compare ways individuals and families are depicted in different artworks; and (C) identify different kinds of jobs in art.

§117.11. Art, Grade 3. (b) Knowledge and skills. (1) Perception. The student develops and organizes ideas from the environment. The student is expected to: (A) identify sensory knowledge and life experiences as sources for ideas about visual symbols, self, and life events; and (B) identify art elements such as color, texture, form, line, space, and value and art principles such as emphasis, pattern, rhythm, balance, proportion, and unity in artworks. (2) Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student is expected to: (A) create artworks based on personal observations and experiences; (B) develop a variety of effective compositions, using design skills; and (C) produce drawings, paintings, prints, constructions, ceramics, and fiberart, using a variety of art materials appropriately. (3) Historical/cultural heritage. The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture as records of human achievement. The student is expected to: (A) compare content in artworks from the past and present for various purposes such as telling stories and

documenting history and traditions; and (C) relate art to different kinds of jobs in everyday life. (4) Response/evaluation. The student makes informed judgments about personal artworks and the artworks of others. The student is expected to: (A) identify general intent and expressive qualities in personal artworks; and (B) apply simple criteria to identify main ideas in original artworks, portfolios, and exhibitions by peers and major artists.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading

§110.11. English Language Arts and Reading, Kindergarten. (b) Knowledge and skills. (21) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to: (A) listen attentively by facing speakers and asking questions to clarify information; and (B) follow oral directions that involve a short related sequence of actions. (22) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to share information and ideas by speaking audibly and clearly using the conventions of language. (23) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including taking turns and speaking one at a time.

§110.12. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 1. (b) Knowledge and skills. (27) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to: (A) listen attentively to speakers and ask relevant questions to clarify information; and (B) follow, restate, and give oral instructions that involve a short related sequence of actions. (28) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to share information and ideas about the topic under discussion, speaking clearly at an appropriate pace, using the conventions of language. (29) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including listening to others, speaking when recognized, and making appropriate contributions.

§110.13. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 2. (b) Knowledge and skills. (28) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to: (A) listen attentively to speakers and ask relevant questions to clarify information; and (B) follow, restate, and give oral instructions that involve a short related sequence of actions. (29) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to share information and ideas that focus on the topic under discussion, speaking clearly at an appropriate pace, using the conventions of language. (30) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including listening to others, speaking when recognized, and making appropriate contributions.

§110.14. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 3. (b) Knowledge and skills. (29) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to: (A) listen attentively to speakers, ask relevant questions, and make pertinent comments; and (B) follow, restate, and give oral instructions that involve a series of related sequences of action. (30) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to speak coherently about the topic under discussion, employing eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation, and the conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively. (31) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate in teacher- and student-led discussions by posing and answering questions with appropriate detail and by providing suggestions that build upon the ideas of others.