



The Rest of the Story

Grade Level: 3–7

Essential Understandings: All art forms help us express, interpret, and understand the world. Sometimes paintings tell stories. Sometimes poems paint pictures.

Activity Description: Students will examine, analyze, and discuss several pieces of Russell art before choosing one to use as inspiration to write a story.

Time: 3–4 class periods

Objectives: Students will

- Practice close reading by analyzing paintings.
- Find evidence to support their claims.
- Recognize common emotions, experiences, and expressions.
- Understand that sometimes paintings tell stories.
- Write a narrative based on a Russell painting.

Standards

Art Content Standards—Grade 4

5.3 Students will recognize various reasons for creating works of art.

5.4. Students will recognize common emotions, experiences, and expressions in art.

6.2 Students will identify interrelated elements among the Arts and other subject areas.

Common Core Standards

CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.W.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Materials

Images from the Montana's Charlie Russell packet or the [Russell Images PowerPoint](#):

- *York*
- *Indian Hunters Return*
- *Free Trapper*
- *Inside the Lodge*
- *Bronc to Breakfast*
- *Waiting for a Chinook*
- *Laugh Kills Lonesome*

[Montana's Charlie Russell PowerPoint](#) and script

Projector

Copies of the Reading Russell's Art Worksheet

Writing notebooks or paper

Pens/pencils

(continued)

Montana's Charlie Russell: Art in the Collection of the Montana Historical Society

The Rest of the Story (continued)

How Buffalo Lost His Crown (a story with Russell illustrations from the packet CD or online here: <http://mhs.mt.gov/education/docs/Russell/HowBuffaloLostCrown.pdf>), optional

[About Visual Thinking Strategies](#)

Pre-Lesson Preparation

- Review About Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS).
- Arrange to project *Laugh Kills Lonesome*.
- Copy worksheets (one per student)
- Set up Gallery Walk stations with one painting per station (use all the paintings in your materials list except *Laugh Kills Lonesome*, which you'll use to model the lesson).

Procedure

Step 1: Use VTS to lead students in a discussion of *Laugh Kills Lonesome*. Talk about how this painting portrays an era in Montana history (the open-range). Talk about how it conveys the artist's feeling about that era (nostalgia). Talk about how the painting tells a story. It is an example of narrative art, which is art that illustrates or tells a story. Pass out the worksheets. As a class, complete the worksheet for *Laugh Kills Lonesome*. (Read your students the text from the back of the painting.) Talk about what story this painting is telling. What likely happened before the moment depicted here? What happened afterward?

Step 2: Introduce students to Charlie Russell, using the grade-appropriate *Montana's Charlie Russell* PowerPoint.

Step 3: Divide students into six groups and have

them do a "gallery walk" of the following paintings, set up in stations around the room: *York, Indian Hunters Return*, *Free Trapper*, *Inside the Lodge*, *Bronc to Breakfast*, and *Waiting for a Chinook*. Have students visit at least three stations and, on separate sheets of paper or in their notebook, answer the questions in Part A of the worksheet for each station.

Step 4: Allow students to return to their favorite painting to complete the second half of the worksheet for that painting. (You may want to print reference copies of the paintings, so students don't have to share the image with too many people.) Have them use the notes from their worksheet to write a story to accompany the painting.

Step 5: Work with students to write, edit, and then type or neatly rewrite their stories. Post the pictures on the wall along with the students' work, or arrange for students to share their stories with younger students.

Extension Activity: Read *How Buffalo Lost His Crown* by John H. Beacom and illustrated by Charles M. Russell (reprinted in *Montana The Magazine of Western History* in Spring 1979 and available for download here <http://mhs.mt.gov/education/docs/Russell/HowBuffaloLostCrown.pdf>.) As a class look at how Russell illustrated the story, and talk about the connection between illustrations and text.

Reading Russell's Art

Part A

At each station, look at the painting. Then answer these questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. Who are the main character(s) in this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?
2. What time of year do you think it is? What is the temperature? What do you see that makes you say that?
3. If you were in the painting, what might you smell? What do you see that makes you say that?
4. If you were in the painting, what might you hear? What do you see that makes you say that?
5. Name an emotion someone in the painting is feeling. What do you see that makes you say that?
6. Turn the painting over and read the information on the back. What is the painting's title?

Part B

Return to your favorite Russell painting and answer the questions below.

1. What is the painting's title?
2. What happened just before the moment captured in the picture?
3. What is happening in the picture itself?
4. What do you think will happen next?

Read the information on the back of the picture.

5. How does the title help you understand what story Russell wanted to tell?
6. How does the written description change or reinforce your interpretation of the picture?