

Advanced-Level Activity

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- research the history of individual **labor unions** and interview representatives about benefits and challenges;
- document in a photographer's journal the process of preparing for and participating in a photography assignment;
- formally analyze artworks in preparation for a photography assignment;
- create an original photograph of a worker that uses **leading lines** to create emphasis.

Materials

- Reproduction of *Farm Workers, South of Tracy, California* by Dorothea Lange
- Reproduction of *Man with a Hoe* by Jean-François Millet
- Reproduction of *Sadie Pfeiffer, Spinner in Cotton Mill, North Carolina* by Lewis Wickes Hine
- Background Information and Questions for Teaching about the works of art
- Notebooks for photographer's journals
- Student Handout: *Conducting Your Interview* (optional)
- Digital camera, camera phone, or disposable camera

Lesson Steps

1. Display reproductions of *Farm Workers, South of Tracy California*; *Man with a Hoe*; and *Sadie Pfeiffer, Spinner in Cotton Mill, North Carolina* and ask students to look closely at them. Refer to grade-appropriate discussion questions about each of the artworks in steps 1–4 of the Beginning-Level Activity. Discuss types of work situations today that could be similar to those depicted in these works of art.
2. Inform students that they will be given the task of taking photographs of a worker who is a member of a labor union. As students prepare for the photography assignment, they will keep a photographer's journal and conduct research on labor unions.
3. Tell students that their first journal assignment is to generate a short list of types of workers they are interested in selecting for their photography project. Students should conduct independent research to determine which labor union represents each kind of job. After students complete their journal assignment, they should think of people they could ask to participate in the photography project.

4. Provide students with a list of local labor unions. You may wish to provide a variety of unions representing diverse jobs, such as electricians, janitors, teachers, hotel workers, writers, and animators. Students must choose one labor union, visit the union's Web site for information about its history, and visit or call the local chapter after school. If possible, students could interview a person who works for the labor union for additional information about its history. Students could either interview someone they know who belongs to that union or contact the union and ask it to connect them with one of its members. If students will be interviewing a worker, pass out the *Conducting Your Interview* handout and review the information. Allow students to practice the interview questions with a partner before they interview a member of the local labor union. As students are conducting research, they should reflect on the following questions in their photographer's journal: What did I learn about the labor union's history? What does the union want to see changed or improved?
5. Provide students with background information available on the Getty Museum's Web site about the photographers Dorothea Lange (www.getty.edu/education/for_teachers/curricula/dorothea_lange/background1.html) and Lewis Wickes Hine (www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/art/MakerDetails?maker=1601). Tell students that both individuals worked to create better conditions for workers. This practice continues among artists today. Let students know that they will reexamine the pictures by Lange and Hine to identify formal elements that can be used to create dynamic original photographs.
6. In preparation for the photography assignment, students should review formal **elements of design** and **principles of design**. For information about elements and principles, including the use of line in a two-dimensional image, visit "The Elements of Art" on the Getty Museum Web site (www.getty.edu/education/for_teachers/building_lessons/elements.html).
7. Display a transparency of the photograph *Farm Workers, South of Tracy, California* on an overhead, and discuss the **composition** of the picture using the following questions:
 - What do you notice first?
 - Where did the artist place the figures in the composition?
 - Notice the path that your eye follows. What do you notice second?
 - Where does your eye travel after that?
8. Ask students what types of lines they see in the photograph, and have students use a red dry-erase marker to draw on the transparency the lines they see.
9. Repeat steps 7–8 with the photograph *Sadie Pfeiffer, Spinner in Cotton Mill, North Carolina*.
10. Explain to students that the act of seeing is a dynamic and creative process. When looking at text in certain languages (like English), people read from left to right starting at the top of a page. When viewing a work of art, the path your eye travels is dependent upon how the elements of design are used by an artist. Point out the leading lines in both photographs that direct attention in a diagonal direction and create emphasis and a sense of movement.

HISTORICAL WITNESS

★ SOCIAL MESSAGING ★

11. Tell students that they will have time during school, after school, or during the weekend to photograph a member of a labor union. Students may choose to photograph a union worker on their school campus, at a family member's place of employment, or in the community. Remind students to shoot multiple exposures and practice using leading lines in their compositions to create emphasis and movement. Ask students to shoot in black and white when possible. After students develop their film or download the images to their computer, they should select and print one image to turn in for the assignment. Students should write in their journals about the experience of taking the photographs and explain why they selected the final image.
12. Ask students to work with a partner and discuss their original photographs using the following guiding questions:
 - What do you see first? What do you notice about the person?
 - What is the person holding/touching?
 - What can you tell about the person by the way he or she is dressed?
 - What do you notice in the background? Where is the person? What makes you say that?
 - What is the person doing?
 - How is this worker different from the other workers we have discussed?
 - What else catches your eye? What else does that tell you about the photograph?
 - What do you think this person is thinking?
 - What is the **point of view** of the photographer?
13. After discussing the photographs with their partners, students should share their work with the whole class. Ask students if they have any suggestions for a new law or policy that would help to improve the conditions of any of the workers depicted in the photographs.

Assessment

Assess the photographer's journals based on their inclusion of thoughtful responses to all prompts. Also assess students' ability to formally analyze works of art in class discussions. Finally, assess their original photographs based on whether leading lines were used to create emphasis.

Extension

Explain to students that many U.S. businesses hire workers in other countries. Have students research the advantages and disadvantages of hiring overseas workers. Discuss how **labor laws** in other countries differ from labor laws in the United States today.

