

Designing with Nature: Adventures in Stained Glass



Section 1: Lesson Preparation

Grade Level: 1st – 3rd

Unit/Subject: Visual Arts | Art History

Lesson Summary & Focus

Students will explore the Gilded Age by focusing on Louis Comfort Tiffany and the studio's production of stained-glass lamps. Students will have a chance to explore the subject further by creating a stained-glass dragonfly from tissue paper.

National/State Learning Standards

VA.1.H.2.2: Identify objects of art that are used every day for utilitarian purposes.

VA.2.F.2.1: Identify work created by artists and designers.

VA.2.H.2.2: Identify objects from everyday life that have been designed and created using artistic skills.

Specific Learning Target Objectives

- By reading the corresponding essays, students will explore the Gilded Age and Tiffany Studios' production of utilitarian art.
- Students will design their own stained-glass dragonflies and explore color, composition, and geometric patterns throughout the creation process.

Academic Language

Key terminology will be taught through topic-related reading passages and vocabulary reference sheets.

- Gilded Age
- Tiffany Studios
- Art Nouveau
- Stained Glass

Resources/Materials

- Corresponding reading passages exploring stained glass, the Gilded Age, and Tiffany Studios.
- Matching Vocabulary Worksheet (Object to Word)
- Dragonfly Tissue Paper Activity
- Exit Ticket Question

All materials are located at the end of this lesson plan.

Section 2: Instructional Planning

Anticipatory Set

- I will begin the lesson by having students read the passages aloud in small groups.
- I will use the matching vocabulary worksheet to review key terms from the passages.

Means of Representation

- Students will read passages out loud in small groups.
- I will use the vocabulary worksheet as a reference for students' discussions of the topic.

Means of Engagement

- Students will work collaboratively to read the passages and review the terms through the matching vocabulary worksheet.
- I, the educator, will pose questions to guide students in a class discussion on the Gilded Age and Tiffany Studios.
- I will introduce the hands-on activity to engage students in exploring design, color, composition, and geometric patterns.

Means of Expression

Summative assessment:

- Vocabulary matching worksheet
- Dragonfly stained glass activity

Formative assessment:

- Classroom discussion on reading passages
- Exit ticket

Reading Passage: Stained Glass and the Gilded Age

What Is Stained Glass?

Stained glass is colored glass used to make beautiful windows and decorative objects. Light can pass through the glass, making the colors and designs stand out.

The earliest known examples of stained glass are beads made in Egypt between 2750 and 2625 BCE. Egyptians and Romans also made small stained-glass objects, such as cups, containers, and jewelry. Over time, artists began using stained glass to create colorful windows with pictures, patterns, and scenes.

How Is Stained Glass Made?

Long ago, stained glass was made by melting sand and wood ash at very high temperatures. When the glass became liquid, artists added small amounts of powdered metals to create different colors. For example, cobalt could be added to make blue glass, while iron could be added to make green glass.

Today, glass is made from sand, sodium carbonate, and limestone. These materials are heated to about 1,832 degrees Fahrenheit until they melt into a liquid. Chemicals can then be added to change the color of the glass. The colored glass is cooled until it becomes hard and ready to use.

The Gilded Age and Louis Comfort Tiffany

The **Gilded Age (1865-1914)** was a time when the United States experienced rapid economic growth, new inventions, and the growth of large industries such as oil and railroads. During this time, some business owners became very wealthy, while many workers earned low wages and worked long hours. For example, an oil company worker might work 10-12 hours a day and earn about \$8-\$10 a week. In comparison, the owners of the company could earn thousands of dollars in the same amount of time.

As some people became very wealthy, a new class of millionaires emerged. Many of these wealthy families built large homes and decorated them with expensive furniture, artwork, and stained-glass windows. As stained glass became more popular, an American artist named **Louis Comfort Tiffany** began creating beautiful stained-glass artwork that could be displayed in homes across the country.

In 1885, Tiffany established the **Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company**. The company created colorful and creative stained-glass windows, lamps, vases, and other useful works of art. Tiffany's lamps became especially popular because they combined the beauty of art with the new technology of **electricity**. His designs helped make stained glass a popular form of art in American homes.

The Dragonfly Lamp

Inspired by the **Art Nouveau** movement, Tiffany lamps celebrated the beauty of nature. Artists used flowing lines, curves, and designs of flowers, plants, and insects. One of the most famous Tiffany designs is the **Dragonfly Lamp**, created in 1904 by **Clara Driscoll**.

Clara Driscoll was an important artist and designer at Tiffany Studios. She led the Women's Tiffany Studios Glass Cutting Department and designed many of Tiffany's most successful lamps. For many years, people did not give Clara the credit she deserved. She was eventually recognized for her work and was once the **highest-paid woman in America**, earning about \$10,000 a year.

The *Dragonfly Lamp* was not made as just one single piece of artwork. Tiffany Studios made and sold many dragonfly lamps. Because each lamp was handmade, every one was a little different and unique.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think artists added different chemicals or metals to glass to give it different colors instead of leaving it clear?

Answer: Adding color helps artists make different shapes and objects stand out. Colors can also make a window or object more interesting and beautiful.

2. What are some objects, besides lamps, that can be both useful and artistic? This is called functional art or utilitarian art.

Answer: Vases, tea sets, jewelry, clocks, jewelry boxes, decorative fountains, and some furniture are examples of functional art.

3. Tiffany Studios was inspired by the Art Nouveau movement. Artists in this style used flowing lines, flowers, insects, and other designs from nature. Based on these examples, what do you think Art Nouveau means?

Answer: Art Nouveau is an artistic style inspired by nature. Artists used flowers, animals, insects, organic shapes, and curving lines in their artwork.

- Art Nouveau means "New Art."
- Time period: About 1890-1910

4. Let's look closely at the images of the Dragonfly Lamp from the Lightner Museum. What do you notice?

- What colors do you see?
- What shapes do you see?
- Do you notice any patterns?
- What parts of the lamp remind you of nature?

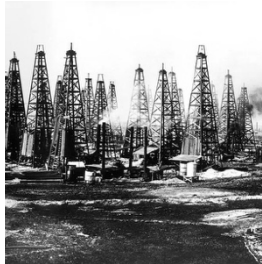
5. Who designed Tiffany Studios' famous Dragonfly Lamp?

Answer: Clara Driscoll designed the Dragonfly Lamp. She was the head of the women's glass-cutting department at Tiffany Studios.

Vocabulary Worksheet

Draw a line to match the word with its definition or image.

Art Nouveau



A period of rapid economic growth, technological innovation, and the rise of large industries such as oil and railroads.

Stained Glass



A stained glass studio created by Louis Comfort Tiffany

Gilded Age



Art inspired by the natural world

Tiffany Studios



Colored glass used to make beautiful windows and decorative objects

Hands-on Dragonfly Suncatcher Activity

Using the materials, students will create their own dragonfly stained glass design.



Materials Needed:

- Tissue Paper
- Parchment Paper
- School Glue
- Paint Brush
- Plastic Cup
- Sharpie
- Access to Water

Instructions:

1. Choose the tissue paper colors you would like to use.
2. Cut the tissue paper into small squares or rectangles
3. Mix one part glue and one part water into the cup.
4. Using a Sharpie, draw a shape, insect, animal, or anything else you want on the parchment paper.
5. "Paint" some of the glue mixture onto the parchment paper inside the dragonfly outline.
6. Add the tissue paper squares onto the glue-covered parchment paper until the area is covered.
7. Once you have covered the parchment paper with tissue paper, add a layer of watered-down glue on top of the tissue paper.
8. Let your creation dry! Once dried, you can cut out your dragonfly following the outline.
9. Hang or tape your dragonfly in a window and watch the light pass through the colors!



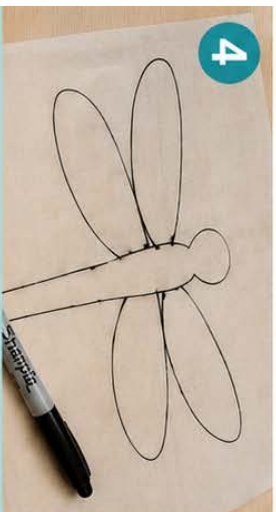
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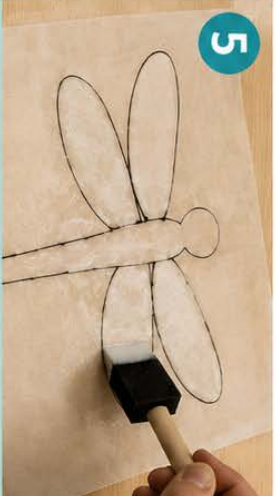
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Clara Driscoll, designer (American, 1861-1944);
Tiffany Studios (American, operated 1902-1932)
Dragonfly Lamp, c. 1905
Leaded Glass, bronze

Exit Question

If you were to design a Tiffany stained-glass lamp, which natural motif would you depict?

Can you sketch your idea below?