



The New Nation: The World of William S. Mount

Social Studies Focus

Students will learn about the artist William Sidney Mount and the time in which he lived. They will use an 1840 map of lower Manhattan to locate the shops, rooming houses and galleries visited by Mount. Students will plot actual routes and decide whether to walk, take a horse-drawn streetcar or omnibus, or hire a carriage. In the Art Museum, after an introduction to the artwork, they will use the paintings as documents to gather notes for a newspaper article about life in the year 1850.

Art Focus

Students will study Mount's paintings, focusing on principles of art including perspective, color and composition. In the studio, students will sketch a still life, and then mix pigments to create paint, experiment with mixing colors on a palette and then paint their sketch.

How does *The New Nation* program fit into my curriculum?

The New Nation supports standards in **art, social studies** and **language arts**. The program provides excellent practice for document-based questions: students view and use documents including paintings, maps, transportation schedules and routes to learn about life in early 19th century America. The social studies focus helps students develop map skills.

Prepare your class for your visit.

- Introduce the students to William Sidney Mount. Ask students to use the Internet to locate copies of his paintings.
- Divide the students into five approximately equal groups; students will work cooperatively during the program.

Post-Visit Activities

- Using their notes from the paintings, have students complete a newspaper article about life in America in the year 1840
- Ask students to sketch a genre scene from today and compare it to one of Mount's paintings.

Related Reading

- Cummings, Robert. *Just Look: A Book about Paintings*. (Scribner, 1979)
This book is an introduction to the various elements that contribute to the overall effect of a painting. The elements discussed include perspective, light, color and mood.
- Howard, Nancy Shroyer. *William Sidney Mount: Painter of Rural America*. (Davis Publications, 1994)
This book examines the paintings of an artist who captured the simple pleasures and hard work of 19th century American farm life.
- Pekarik, Andrew. *Painting: Behind the Scenes*. (Hyperion Books for Children, 1992)
This work discusses painting from an artist's viewpoint and uses specific examples to point out how to discover the details in a painting.