

**Kansas**

**Model Curricular  
Standards for  
Visual Arts**

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# **Kansas Curricular Standards**

## **for**

# **Visual Arts**

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# **The Mission of the Kansas Curriculum Standards for the Visual Arts**

The visual arts are a vital part of every Kansas student's comprehensive education.

## **Introduction**

The Kansas Curricular Standards for the Visual Arts are designed for all visual art students and educators whether experienced or in the preservice years of their teaching career. A range of benchmarks engages students in reaching their greatest potential in the visual arts. Quality activities involve students in thoughtful, creative, and *original* expression of self. In all cases, students will learn life-skills including critical thinking, astute observation, viewing from multiple perspectives, higher order learning, and authentic problem-solving skills. The purpose of the standards is to assist teachers in developing local curriculum, carrying out appropriate instruction, and assessing students' progress. The Kansas Curricular Standards for Visual Arts are aligned with the National Standards for the Visual Arts. They are meant to guide rather than dictate the structure and development of art education programs in Kansas schools. They are not designed to serve as a textbook or the curriculum for an art course or courses. These standards provide an outline of expectations for visual art education in Kansas.

The document has various features including words italicized that can be found on the glossary. In addition, this document provides teacher notes at the bottom of each page to assist in understanding the content presented (also see template page 1). Lesson plans and other useful resources are available in the appendices.

The Kansas Curricular Standards for Visual Arts should be used to assist school districts in developing local art curriculum. At the center of an art classroom is the actual instruction and what students do as a result of the guidance and direction of the teacher. Quality and comprehensive instruction benefits from a deep understanding of a sound curriculum that aligns with the state and national standards for art education and the district educational goals. In order for teachers to create curriculum that is based on these standards and goals, it is recommended that a local scope and sequence be developed along with local objectives. Because the standards are highly comprehensive, teachers must receive regular professional development in order to competently meet the challenges of a standards-based curriculum. Teachers must also have regular opportunities to evaluate themselves and their students in order to provide adequate information about the effectiveness of their instruction.

Research indicates that the arts, where they are robustly present in the curriculum, can “transform the contexts and conditions in classrooms and open new possibilities for teaching and learning” (Stevenson and Deasy, 2005). It is our hope, that by bringing the arts centrally into the school curriculum through standards-based art education, we can create powerful contexts and conditions for teaching and learning—a foundation for improved school performance on a range of measures. Research suggests ways in which “the arts can inform how we think about education itself and may provoke school leaders to examine the role that the arts play in their schools” (Lauren M. Stevenson, Principal’s Research Review, March 2006).

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## **Using This Document**

The Kansas Curricular Standards for Visual Arts are divided into five levels (basic, intermediate, proficient, advanced, and exemplary) that loosely correspond to the number of years a student has had art. These five developmental levels correspond as follows: Basic, which loosely coincides with 3 to 4 years of art education or pre-kindergarten through grade 2, intermediate loosely coincides with 5 to 6 years or grades 3 and 4, proficient with 7 to 10 years or grades 5 through 8, advanced with grades 9-12, and exemplary is directed toward advanced placed students or the college prep level.

Visual Arts education available in the school districts across the state varies greatly. Some Kansas elementary schools offer visual arts education each year of the student's elementary schooling. Others offer no visual arts instruction, but simply the opportunity to learn from the classroom teacher who may have no degree or certification in art. Visual arts education in the elementary school is sometimes integrated into the study of other disciplines. The situation can be similar in middle and junior high schools. Most high schools offer visual art classes. Not all students are required to take art. Others take one or two high school arts classes which in some cases becomes the only art education they experience during their elementary and secondary years. For all these cases, this document gives teachers a framework to use in determining their students' current level and ideas to accelerate them to a higher level. It is important to realize that individual students, regardless of the nature of their training, will be at different levels within the various standards. For example, a student could be working at the proficient level on Standard 5 and at the advanced level on Standard 1. Therefore, one should not expect all students to achieve the advanced or exemplary level in all of these standards. It is also important to realize that in classroom application, the progression of benchmarks may apply over virtually any sequence of grades. Benchmarks at each level build upon those from previous levels, but do not replace them. Teachers may find that older students with little or no art background may need instructional activities at the basic level in order to provide developmentally-appropriate experiences. Teachers will find activities at all grade levels to be developmentally appropriate. In the Appendices you will find model lesson plans, one for each standard within each level. These instructional approaches meet the state and national standards for visual arts.

## Major Objectives of Art Education

Art is a special way of knowing and a way in which people explore and understand their world.

Art is and has been a universal language for all cultures and periods in history. It conveys knowledge and meaning not learned through the study of other subjects. Art education represents a form of thinking and a way of knowing that is based in human judgment, understanding, and exploration.

Through education in art, students

- learn about the power of visual images to influence human behavior, their aspirations, and those of society
- explore their own potential to think creatively, to solve problems with ingenuity, and to respond to events and experiences with confidence
- discover their artistic heritage and learn to understand the culture of which they are a part and those of others with whom they live
- understand that they can effect improvement in the environment and that they can *shape* their lives, their communities, and their nation

Our nation's economy thrives upon a creative and innovative workforce and we must foster creativity in our schools and in our students to compete in the global marketplace. The arts help all students learn to succeed in school and beyond. Students who participate in the arts are more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, to be elected to class office, to participate in math and science fairs and to receive awards for school attendance. Compared with their peers, students in the arts read for pleasure twice as much and perform more community service. In addition, arts education has a positive impact on deterring delinquent behavior in at-risk youth and can improve the developmental growth of all children. What students learn through the arts and curricula infused with creativity helps prepare them for the real life demands of today's economy. Creative programs help students learn how to collaborate with others, enhance critical thinking skills, communicate clearly in a variety of media, produce results in real-time and think outside the box.

## **What Constitutes a Quality Art Education?**

### **Artistic Integrity**

Substantive student learning based on high standards cannot be accomplished by random enrichment activities, sporadic exposure projects, or arts entertainment methods.

### **Communication and Language**

Art is a language of visual images that everyone needs to learn to be successful in school and beyond. In art classes, students make and study visual images. Increasingly, these images affect human needs, daily behavior, hopes, opinions, and ultimate ideals. Complete literacy includes the ability to understand, respond to, and talk about visual images. Therefore, to carry out its total mission, art education stimulates language spoken and written about visual images. Art teachers work continuously on the development of critical skills. By doing so, they encourage spoken and written language skills. By teaching pupils to describe, analyze, and interpret visual images, they extend the power of verbal and written expression.

### **Preserving Our Artistic Heritage**

The unique genius of America's visual artists, designers, architects, and photographers has left us an incredible artistic and cultural legacy. Many of these artists were influenced or taught by art educators in our schools and communities. Art instruction not only transmits and preserves our artistic and cultural heritage but also perpetuates this heritage for our nation's future young citizens.

### **Global Understanding**

One cannot know art without a global understanding of the home and family, work and play, the individual and society, nature and the environment, war and peace, beauty and ugliness, violence and love. Art of the past and the present deals with these durable human concerns. When we study the art of many lands and peoples, we introduce our students to the expression of a wide range of human values and concerns. Art education sensitizes students to the fact that choices shape all human efforts and that visual images can affect their personal choices. All students should be given the opportunity to see how art can express the highest aspirations of the human being.

### **Invention and Wisdom**

Art education has the capacity for invention that carries a civilization to new plateaus. Our search for new solutions depends on our ability to think creatively and look at situations in a new light, to fabricate alternatives, to craft workable strategies, and to conceive our vision of our world and ourselves.

# Standards Usage Template

**Standards:** General statements that address the categories of topics which students are expected to achieve.

**Benchmarks:** Specifically, what a student should know and be able to do regarding the standards.

Specific Level Knowledge Base Indicators	Instructional Examples
<p><b>The student...</b></p> <p><u>The knowledge and skills</u> a student demonstrates.</p>	<p><b>The teacher has students...</b></p> <p><u>Suggestions and ideas</u> for classroom activities that would fulfill the benchmark and indicator requirements. These examples are intended to provide guidance and are only some of the many possibilities for fulfilling the benchmarks.</p>
<p><b>Notes:</b>     <u>Clarifications</u>            For example, all italicized terms are defined in the glossary (see Appendix G).</p>	