

THEME SEVEN: PROTEST AND PERSUASION



THEME IN LIFE

We all choose which traditions to follow and which to challenge.

THEME IN ART

Art can protest, persuade, and promote.

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

When people are not satisfied with things the way they are, they sometimes become revolutionaries. They work to change things by criticizing the old ways and replacing them with new ways. There are many different kinds of revolutions. In political revolutions the old powers are overthrown and new people take over the government. In economic revolutions wealth changes hands. There are also scientific, industrial, agricultural, artistic, and religious revolutions in which old ideas are replaced with new ones.

In many cultures art makers use their artworks to bring attention to revolutionary ideas. Sometimes a painting, sculpture, or building can show an idea just as well, or better, than words can.

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

Question about Artworks:

FOCAL POINT:

How did the artist organize elements within the artwork to draw your attention to one or several focal points?

Question about Artworks in Context:

ART MAKER'S LIFE:

What were the important events in the artist's life?

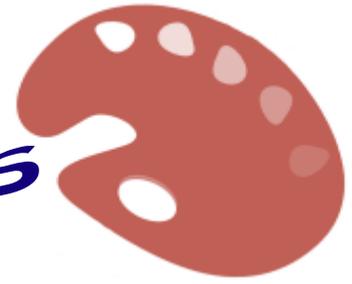
KEY CULTURES

19th Century European

20th Century Mexican and Mexican American



THE REVOLUTIONARIES



Vako was fifteen years old. He lived in the Queen's capital city. Over one hundred and fifty years earlier, Vako's family had made their way to the capital to escape the wars in the south. Vako's real name was Ravak, an old Southland name, but he preferred to be called by his less-old-fashioned nickname, Vako. Like most Southlanders, Vako's parents were artisans working in the royal carpentry and textile shops.

Even though he, his parents, grandparents, and even his great grandparents were born in the royal city, they were not citizens. The Queen and the other citizens of the land called his people outlanders. Many in the city were called outlanders: the River People who sailed the great ships and worked in the storehouses; the Meadow People, who tilled the fields and tended the sheep and cattle; even the Highlanders who had lived in the high mountain valleys long before there was a royal family or a capital city.

The city and the lands around it were ruled by a royal family, advised by regional lords. Vako had heard stories of a lord who lived many years ago who believed in the rights of outlanders and argued at court that outlanders should be allowed to become citizens. Some old timers even whispered that one of the great lords had married an outlander. But all dreams of citizenship for outlanders were crushed when the old King died and was succeeded by his daughter, the present Queen. She feared that the prosperity of her citizens was threatened by the increasing prosperity of outlanders. Even though outlanders had always been poorer than citizens, a few had managed to work and save enough money to start small businesses in recent years. Nearly all young outlanders learned the Queen's language. Many had learned to read and write in that language and a few of the brightest had even been allowed to attend the royal university. The Queen had stopped all that. She tightened her grip on the land with her new laws: laws prohibiting land ownership by outlanders, laws limiting outlander education to five years, laws making marriage between citizens and outlanders a crime, and laws against gatherings of over five outlanders who were not members of the same family.

When artisans threatened to stop working in the royal workshops if their children were not allowed to stay in school, the Queen began sending her soldiers each day to the artisans' homes to round up their children to work in the fields. Vako's family had a large, carved cabinet that had stood in the kitchen for generations. His father constructed a secret compartment in the cabinet where Vako squeezed himself to hide when the soldiers came. His arms and legs ached when the soldiers left and he was able to emerge from the tight compartment. At night he heard the sounds of rebellion: an explosion in the shipyards, insults shouted by hidden outlanders as citizens passed in their carriages, gun battles in outlander neighborhoods, and sometimes the awful screams of wounded and dying people. Vako dared not leave the house when the sun was up, but at night he ventured outside, at first only in his own neighborhood. He came to know the best hiding places and grew more confident as he made his way quietly and cautiously through the dark streets of the capital. One night, he watched secretly as his own father made a special wheel for the Queen's carriage that would fall to pieces after just a few miles. Once he saw a group of Highlanders break into a pasture to steal sheep they believed had been stolen from their mountain valleys by royal herders.

One night, Vako wandered beyond the city walls into the surrounding farmlands. He joined a group of Meadow People walking toward an empty granary. He saw other small groups

converging on the granary from all sides. Finally, he saw the person who drew them all together. A small woman dressed in poor peasant clothes was speaking with a Meadowland accent to the people crowded around her. Her voice was clear and firm, yet, at the same time, somehow also gentle and sweet. Vako listened for over an hour as Garna described her vision of a land where people lived and worked in harmony, a land made richer by the varied contributions of its people: citizens, Meadow People, River People, Southlanders, and Highlanders alike. Vako was enthralled. He had heard many voices on his nightly roamings, but none as revolutionary as Garna's. Her vision was not of anger and revenge, but of balance and harmony. As the eastern sky lightened with the dawn, Vako made a vow. As he hurried back to the city and on through the dark streets to reach his home and his hiding place, Vako promised himself that he would make his own contribution to Garna's dream.

Now instead of roaming the streets at night, Vako set to work drawing sketches and collecting materials for his plan. He shared his ideas with trusted friends. Before long he discovered that he was the leader of his own team of revolutionaries. After weeks of planning, his team was ready. Each person had a vital role to play. The entire plan must be completed in just one night.

Finally a perfect night with a full moon was chosen to carry out the plan. The royal workmen repairing the city gates had left their scaffolding in place when they quit for the day. Quietly and cautiously, Vako and his friends approached the gates carrying sections of cloth stitched together from rags and old sacks. The work area was so cluttered that no one noticed as they draped the rags over the scaffolding, blocking the view of the gates from the street. As soon as the ragged draperies were in place Vako and his friends set to work furiously. Just before the eastern sky began to grow pink, the exhausted revolutionaries gathered up their colors and returned to their homes, all except Vako. He waited, hidden behind a crate, gripping a bundle of cords in both hands.

The Queen's carriage slowed to make its way past the scaffolding as it headed into the country for her morning drive. At the last moment Vako pulled the bundle of cords and the ragged drapes fell to the ground. As the Queen and her companions stared up at the gates, Vako slipped away through the back streets to his home. Everyone on the street stared up at the huge colorful image that covered the city gates. They saw that the edges of the gates were dark and dull and filled with images of pain and violence. But as their eyes moved inward, the onlookers saw lighter and brighter colors. The shapes, lines, and colors worked together to draw attention to one section on the upper right section of one gate. On this section Vako had made his image of Garna's dream: a dream of different peoples living and working together in harmony.

At first the Queen was shocked and very angry. Some of the lords advised her to destroy the image immediately. Her shock began to wear off as she noticed several citizens gazing at the gates and pointing out details. Whenever they had a chance, outlanders also looked at the gates with great interest. When she saw no anger in the outlanders' eyes and heard no violence in their voices, the Queen decided to let the image stay for at least a few days. People came from far and wide to admire the image on the gates. River People and Southlanders were seen smiling and talking to each other as they stood before the gates. Meadow People walked the long way back to fields so that they could have another look at the gates. Having heard about the image, a Highlander came down from the mountains to see what all the fuss was about. After a few weeks the rain began to wash off the colors and the sun faded those that remained. But the people remembered.

When the Queen was told that a woman from the Meadow People wanted to see her, she did not turn her away, but instead invited Garna into the palace and they began to talk.

ACTIVITIES

UNIT ORIENTATION



Introduce students to the Theme Title, the Theme in Life, the Theme in Art, and the Key Inquiry Questions to help focus their attention as you (or they) read the story.

STORY



Present the Story:

- Read or ask students to read *The Revolutionaries*.

DISCUSSION OF THEME AND KEY QUESTIONS



Discussion of the Story's Theme:

Discuss how the story relates to the theme.

- What conditions in the Queen's city do you think outlanders wanted to protest?
- What ways did outlanders protest before Vako organized the painting on the city gates?
- How do you think Vako's mural changed the minds of outlanders? Citizens?

Students' Experience with the Theme:

Help students identify how the theme relates to their own lives.

- Are there conditions in your school, neighborhood, community, state, or country that you think should be changed? Why?
- Do you know people, or have you seen people on TV, who act like revolutionaries and protest situations that they think are bad or wrong? Are some of those revolutionaries peaceful persuaders?
- What wars can you name that are called revolutions or rebellions? Can you explain what conditions led to those wars?

Inquiry into the Story:

Use the key questions to further analyze the story.

- How was Garna able to get so many people to focus on what she had to say?
- How did Vako focus many people's eyes on the city gates?
- How did Vako organize his mural to draw everyone's attention to the section showing Garna's dream?
- Besides the events in the story, what might have happened in Vako's life to make him become a leader one day?
- What do you suppose Vako might have done after the mural faded away and he went on with his life?

Inquiry into Students' Experience:

Use the key questions to help students make connections to their own experiences.

- What do you do when you want someone's attention?
- How do advertisers and politicians try to capture your attention?
- How might you act, speak, or dress to stand out in a particular group?
- What are the three or four most important things that have happened to you in your life? How did they change or affect you?
Ask a parent, friend, or neighbor the two questions above.
- Have you seen a movie or read a book about a person who achieved great things in response to a particular difficulty in her/his life?

TRANSFER TO DIVERSE CULTURES



The following instructions are written for students who are able to work independently. If you teach younger students, the instructions offer helpful guidelines as you gather and present information in order to optimize transfer potential for your students. Depending on the grade level of your students and their access to appropriate library and Internet sources, you can choose to build transfer across cultures either 1) through student investigation or 2) through your own investigations and presentations to students.

Inquiry about Artworks:

- Assign a team of students to locate reproductions of paintings by nineteenth century European revolutionary artists, especially artists who made social comments, such as Jacques Louis David, Honoré Daumier, and Francisco Goya. Analyze how they organized lines, shapes, and colors to focus viewers' attention on particular parts of their artworks. Have them display the reproductions for their classmates and point out the focal points within them. Assign other teams to similarly investigate one of the great twentieth century Mexican revolutionary muralists (Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco) or a prominent Mexican American artist (such as Carlos Cortez Koyokuikatl, Judith Francisca Baca, Ester Hernández, Yolanda López, or Rupert Garcia).

Inquiry about Artworks in Context:

- Assign a team of students to research late eighteenth and early nineteenth century European history focusing on social and military upheavals and revolutionary leaders. Have them share their findings and, when possible, explain how conditions of this era led some painters to paint as they did. Assign other teams to similarly investigate events in the history of twentieth-century Mexican Americans in the United States especially in the 1960s and 1970s. Prepare them to share their findings and, when possible, explain how conditions of this era led some Mexican American artists to work as they did.

TRANSFER TO STUDIO



- Review the unit themes and key questions to help students transfer what

they have learned to their own art making.

Thematic artwork:

- Challenge students to relate the theme to their own experience or an imaginary experience to develop an idea for their own artwork. For example, ask students to make a linocut that focuses fellow students' or community members' attention on an important condition or that persuades others toward the student artist's point of view, idea, or proposal. Have students paint a mural in the school or community. Remind them to organize lines, shapes, and colors to guide viewers' attention to one or several focal points within the mural.

Story Illustration:

- Since *The Revolutionaries* is not illustrated, you might consider asking students to use their imaginations to make their own illustrations, focusing on Vako emerging from the cabinet, Garna speaking in the countryside, or Vako's mural on the city gates.

Exhibition:

- Display student artwork with Unit Information (Theme Title, Theme in Life, Theme in Art, and Key Questions), sample student reports, and reproductions of artworks from diverse cultures. If your students make story illustrations, display a copy of *The Revolutionaries*.

INTERDISCIPLINARY TRANSFER



Science:

- Scientific revolutions such as Copernicus' notion of the earth revolving around the sun, Darwin's theory of evolution, Einstein's theory of relativity, or contemporary biogenetic and information technology revolutions

History:

- The French Revolution, the American Revolution, the Nat Turner Uprising, the War of the Secession (as the Civil War is known in some parts of the South), the Bolshevik Revolution, the Mao Mao Revolt of East Africa, Mahatma Ghandi's Non-Violent Revolution, Martin Luther King's Civil Rights Movement, the Sexual Revolution, Anti-Vietnam War Protests, and Mao Tse Tung's Cultural Revolution

The Arts:

- How the climax of a work focuses an audience's attention in a play, story, poem, movie, TV show, dance, or musical performance

Language Arts:

- How to plan a speech to focus listeners' attention