

Our Sculptures Ourselves: A New Look at Public Art in Northeast Ohio

*Sample Lesson Plans: Portal by Isamu Noguchi

Connections, Relationships and Applications/Analyzing and Responding: Grade 5

Objective: Students will practice the thinking skill of analysis by comparing and contrasting *Portal* and *Caring*.

Activity: Students will make a list of similarities and another list of differences based on what they have already learned about *Caring* (p. 9-11) and this information (page 22, Thinking about the facts #1, *Our Sculptures Ourselves*):

“*Portal* by Isamu Noguchi was mocked by writers in the Cleveland newspapers. *Caring* by William King had similar reactions in Akron. Both sculptures were the first examples of large modern art in front of government buildings in Akron and Cleveland. They were both made of metal, use economy in their design, and were made by artists who studied in New York City. List 4 more similarities and differences.”

<u>Similarities</u>	<u>Differences</u>	
1. Both are in front of government buildings.	1. Portal is 36’ tall	Caring is 22’ tall
2.	2.	
3.	3.	
4.	4.	
5.	5.	

Creative Expression and Communication: Grade 3

Objective: Students will create sculptures in the style of *Portal* that demonstrate understanding of positive and negative space.

Activity: Create 3-dimensional sculptures using these possible materials: twist tops, clothes hangers, clay, * towel tubes, rolled paper

Historical, Cultural and Social Contexts: Grade 5

Objective: Students will practice the thinking skills of knowledge, comprehension, and evaluation by learning about Japanese American internment during WWII, understanding how Noguchi may have felt about being in a camp, and evaluating how such an experience may effect them, too.

Activity: Read aloud paragraphs 5 & 6 on p. 21 of *Our Sculptures Ourselves*. Then read #5 on page 23: “Noguchi was often described as a loner. He said that he could feel at home everywhere because he was at home nowhere. Use complete sentences to tell how his experiences during WWI and WWII may have changed his ability to fit in. Tell how you feel about fitting in, too.”

Valuing the Arts/Aesthetic Reflection: Grade 4

Objective: Students will reflect on and develop their own beliefs about *Portal* and its environmental design.

Activity (page 23, Thinking About the Facts #5, *Our Sculptures Ourselves*): “Environmental design is important to sculptors and architects. It is the way buildings, art, and plants fit together. You already know that Noguchi’s placement of *Portal* was brilliant. Now think about its size. Use complete sentences to tell why you think *Portal* should be bigger, smaller, or stay the same when compared to the surrounding buildings.”