

# Climate Justice and Action Through Art

Sila and the Land  
Grades 1-6  
Activity



## Main Objective

Learners are provided an opportunity to create art, think critically about the elements of art, and connect art to a local and global context. The activities can be done in multiple sessions but should be done together.

## Learning Outcomes

(Suggested level grades 1-6)

After completing this activity, learners will:

- Understand texture as an element of art and how it appeals to our sense of touch and evoke feelings
- Explore an outdoor environment to create their own 3D art piece
- Understand the current problems with pollution and climate change by making connections to the unnatural materials in our land and waters
- Create their own rock painting exercise and connect it to teachings from 'Sila and the Land' book



## Length of Activity: 3-5 hours

We recommend planning for each step to take at least one hour-long class.

**Step 1:** Preparation & Outdoor Exercise (1 hour)

**Step 2:** 3D Art & Art Show (1-2 hours)

**Step 3:** Read Aloud & Rock Painting (1-2 hours)

## Materials Required

- Internet enabled device(s)
- Attached 'Exploring Textures' and 'Thinking About My Art' worksheet as a Google Doc or printed handout
- Three items that are natural and made, such as: wood, plastic, stone, metal
- Sila and the Land book (or virtual read-aloud)
- Common art supplies (paint, paint brushes, etc.)

## Step 1: Preparation & Outdoor Exercise

Introduce texture as an element of art by selecting three items which are natural and made, such as: wood, plastic, stone, or metal.

Seat learners in a sharing circle and allow them to pass around these three items. Each learner should have an opportunity to describe the object by its texture and how that texture makes them feel.

- *Optional Video: [The 7 Elements of Art Explained: A fun and Easy Guide for Kids!](#) (13 minutes long)*
  - *Explanation of Texture: 9:10 - 10:30*

Educators can provide learners with the definition of texture, and explain that it is one of the seven elements of art. Highlight that texture deals with our sense of touch and can also evoke feelings such as pleasure, discomfort, or familiarity.

## Outdoor Exercise

Using the **Exploring Textures Worksheet**, allow learners to explore outside around school to identify various textures in the environment.

- Once completed, the educator can have the learners share their findings in a group discussion.

## Step 2: 3D Art & Art Show

Learners will now create their own 3D art using natural and/or made materials found in a water source environment (local park, pond, creek, etc.). or any natural environment. Learners can collect any natural and/or made materials they find to bring back to the classroom to complete their art piece.

Provide learners with the worksheet called **Thinking About My Art Worksheet** so that they can fill in the questions as they create their own art pieces. This worksheet can be finished after this exercise as well.

Allow learners to create art pieces that incorporates texture into the story of the art. Learners can be as creative as they like! They can use things they found in the environment and glue them together to create a 3D structure or utilize pieces from the environment to create an image that pops right out of the page!

## Art Show

Learners will become the artists, the educator will be the art curator, and the environment will become a gallery!

After they have created their pieces, the class can now come together and pretend they are at an art show, viewing each of the created art pieces. The artists of each creation can describe their piece to the class including its texture, and how it makes them feel, or how they wanted others to feel for example.

- The objective here is to provide learners with an opportunity to draw connections between materials and textures that exist in our natural environment and to use those things to create art that tells a story or sends a message.

## Sila and the Land Reading

Educators may notice that the majority of these art pieces contain lots of unnatural materials when they were found in a natural environment. This will be great to use as a discussion point for topics of pollution and sustainability.

To prepare for the next step, Read 'Sila and the Land' (or virtual read-aloud) and go over what Sila learned from the Wind and the Eagle in the book.

Then have learners remove all of their unnatural materials, such as plastics and waste, from their art pieces to be disposed of appropriately. They can fix their art pieces after this removal if they choose to. Have a quick group discussion about waste found in our environment.



## Step 3: Rock Painting

Have learners go outside and each select their own rock to be brought back to school as it will become their canvas. This can be done during collection of nature/made items in Step 2 as well.

Provide learners with paints and brushes to create their own inspired art on the rock that they selected previously. Give learners time to reflect upon what they have learned about the materials they found in the environment, and their textures as they decide what they would like to express in their own art. This could be another time for a group discussion/modelling expectations.

## Connections to Sila and the Land

As learners are painting, or after they are done, draw connections from the teachings of the Wind and the Eagle in *Sila and the Land*.

Remind the class or ask them what the Wind taught them.

- *The Wind taught Sila to always stand up for what is right, and to never back down to challenges that get in your way.*

Example Follow-Up Questions:

- *Now, how many of you had to get rid of unnatural materials in their art pieces?*
- *Do we think it is right for all of that unnatural material to be in our natural environments? Why?*
- *How could we stand up against it like what the Wind was teaching us?*



This can lead the Educator to go over what the Eagle taught Sila which was to start making change for a better world; for you and the generations coming after you. Ask the learners:

- *If we can all agree that we stand up against all the unnatural materials in our waters and our forests, then do we think we should do something about that?*
- *How can we protect our environments from waste and unnatural materials that are damaging to the environment?*
- *The Eagle mentions climate change, and that us humans are damaging our land through our heedless actions, and our water through pollution. If we never do anything about pollution, and stopping climate change then how do you think your future family, neighbours, and community would feel about that?*

Encourage learners to continue this conversation at home.

## Conclusion

Once the rock art pieces are completed, return outside and find a safe place to put the rock pieces. Educators can tell learners that these new art rock pieces represent hope for our future and that they can be the change and stand up for what they believe is right.