

Lesson Plan: Interpreting and creating symbols

Subject: Visual Arts

Target grade range: 6-8 (*adaptable to elementary and high school*)

Duration: 30-60 minutes. *Note: the two sections of the lesson may be completed during different class periods if needed.*

Skills: Critical analysis, creative thinking, curiosity about global history and cultures

Materials:

- Teacher lesson plan
- PowerPoint to project
- Blank unlined drawing paper
- Drawing implements (pencils, colored pencils, crayons, markers, etc)
- Optional writing paper or index cards

Note: Depending on teacher preference and availability of materials, you may opt to have students complete the art-making portion of the lesson using paint, clay, found objects, etc.

Learning goals:

- Students will understand the concept of symbolism.
- Students will practice analyzing symbols in historical artifacts and artwork.
- Students will recognize and appreciate elements of ancient Andean cultures.
- Students will create an imaginative and unique work of art.

“I can” statements:

- I can define and recognize symbolism.
- I can analyze symbols in historical artifacts and artwork.
- I can recognize and appreciate elements of ancient Andean cultures.
- I can create an imaginative and unique work of art.

Key vocabulary:

- **symbol:** a thing that represents or stands for something else.
- **symbolism:** using symbols to represent ideas or qualities.
- **zoomorphic:** showing humans as having features of animals or as non-human animals.
- **feline:** resembling a cat or having cat-like qualities.
- **artifact:** an object made by humans, usually of historical interest.
- **agriculture:** farming, including cultivating the soil to grow crops and raising animals.
- **mythical:** made-up, fictional, or appearing in legends.
- **shaman:** a religious leader believed to have important spiritual powers like the ability to communicate with the gods.

FL State Standards: VA.68.C.1.1, VA.68.C.3.2, VA.68.C.3.3, VA.68.C.3.4, VA.68.S.1.3, VA.68.S.2.2, VA.68.O.1.2, VA.68.O.1.3, VA.68.O.2.1, VA.68.O.2.4, VA.68.F.3.4, VA.68.H.1.1, VA.68.H.1.3, VA.68.H.1.4. Optional: VA.68.F.2.5

Part 1: Analysis and discussion of the objects

Note: Teachers may wish to add or review additional content depending on when/whether students visited the exhibition in person, completed the pre-visit video lesson, or other factors.

Background: Ancient Andean cultures like the Inca, Chavín, Moche, Nazca, Lambayeque, and Chimú believed in the existence of an upper world, a middle world, and a lower world. The upper world included the sky, the sun, and the gods; the middle world consisted of the here and now, where humans live; and the lower world contained the underground, the sea, death, and the ancestors. All three worlds interacted constantly and depended on each other in order to maintain balance and order.

Agricultural (or farming) societies like those living in the Andes were keenly aware of the need for just the right balance of sun, rain, heat, and darkness in order for crops to grow and sustain human life. That is, the ancient Andeans knew that nothing would happen in the middle world without the correct combination of influences from the upper world (sun, light, and heat) and lower world (nighttime, darkness, water, and soil). Andeans believed that they needed to help ensure a positive relationship among the three worlds by making offerings to the gods and performing rituals and ceremonies. Many of the funerary objects displayed in the exhibition at the Museum were symbolic of objects used in these rituals and ceremonies.

Symbols: When we look at the objects the Inca, Chavín, Moche, Nazca, Lambayeque, and Chimú left behind, we see a variety of symbols that represent each of the three worlds. What is a symbol? (A symbol is something that represents something else!) Many of these symbols involve animals. Animals appear on a great number of the ceremonial objects, and sometimes humans are depicted with animal features. These human figures with animal features are called “zoomorphic.” We’ll be focusing on zoomorphic figures for our activity today!

Certain animals represent each of the three worlds. Birds represent the upper world, felines (or cats) represent the middle world, and snakes and sea creatures represent the lower world. In addition to symbolizing a connection to one or more of the three worlds, animals can also represent specific characteristics or traits. For example, a fearsome predator like the jaguar could indicate a person who is very powerful, perhaps a ruler who has the power of life and death over his subjects. Important leaders are often shown as having fangs, whiskers, or wings, which can visually communicate the leaders’ power.

Looking closely at examples: Let’s look together at some examples of objects that include zoomorphic figures, or humans with animal features. *Note: Ten examples*

appear below, but educators may choose to shorten the list as desired. Images can be found in the accompanying PowerPoint.



Frontal headdress with plumes
Gold and sodalite
25 x 6.5 x 30.5 cm
Chimú Culture (1100 - 1470 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML100006

1. Ask: what do you see? Do you see anything here that looks like or reminds you of an animal? What makes you say that? Share: This object is a headdress from the Chimú culture made out of gold. A powerful leader would have worn this on his head. We already noticed the appearance of a face. The face on the headdress has feline fangs, identifying the leader with big cats like jaguars and pumas. The nose is beaklike and the pieces that stick up on top evoke feathers, identifying the leader with birds. We can also see snakes on the lower part of the headdress. Ask: Why do you think this object has symbols of cats, birds, and snakes? What do these symbols communicate about the person wearing the headdress? What do the symbols tell us about the values of the people who created the headdress?



Frontal headdress with felines and condors
18-carat gold
22.4 x 0.1 x 25.6 cm
Thickness: 0.07 mm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML100770

2. Ask: What do you see? Do you see anything here that looks like or reminds of an animal? What makes you say that? Share: This object is another headdress,

this time from the Moche culture, and it is made out of 18-karat gold. The head again has the fangs of a feline, as well as eyes shaped like cat eyes. We also see two birds. Ask: What do you think these symbols mean? Who do you think might have worn this headdress?



Ai Apaec fighting the crab
Ceramic stirrup-spout bottle
26 x 23.3 x 15.5 cm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML010860

3. Ask: What is this object made from? What animal or animals do you see?
Share: This object is a ceramic bottle from the Moche culture. It shows a mythical Moche hero, Ai Apaec. Here, Ai Apaec is shown with feline fangs and clothing that shows other animal figures. Ai Apaec wears a feline headdress, snake head ear ornaments, a breastplate with a snake head, and a belt with a snake head. Ask: Based on these symbols, how do you think we could describe Ai Apaec as a character? Can you think of any other mythical heroes or characters who are associated with animals?



Ceremonial keros with face of Lambayeque ancestor
Silver
24.5 x 19.8 x 19.8 cm
Lambayeque Culture (700 - 1300 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML100758

4. Now we will continue through the remaining objects more quickly, but please do pause if you have questions or comments. *Ask*: What is different about this object? What animal or animals do you see? *Share*: This object is a cup, called a *queros* (pronounced KEH-rohs), from the Lambayeque culture. It is made from silver and shows the face of a Lambayeque ancestor with feline fangs.



Shaman drum
Ceramic
44.5 x 27 x 27 cm
Nazca Culture (100 - 600 CE)
Southern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML013683

5. *Ask*: Notice the size of this object. What animal or animals do you see? *Share*: This object is a ceramic drum from the Nazca culture. It shows a person who could be an ancestor or a shaman (a religious leader with spiritual powers like the ability to communicate with the gods). The person has a feline headdress, serpent hair, and a tunic showing another zoomorphic figure with a feline head and forked snake tongue.



Earmuffs showing a deified ancestor and pelicans

silver

Chimú Culture (1100 - 1470 CE)

Northern Coast

Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.

ML101653, ML101654

6. Ask: What do you notice about this object? What animal or animals do you see? Share: This object is a silver ear ornament from the Chimú culture. According to researchers, the ear ornaments show an ancestor who has turned into a god. The ancestor has feline eyes and a snakelike headdress and is surrounded by birds.



Crown with deified ancestor and felines

Silver 31 x 14 x 24 cm

Chimu Culture (1100 - 1470 CE)

Northern Coast

Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.

ML100829

7. Ask: What do you notice about this object? What animal or animals do you see? Share: This object is a silver crown from Chimú culture. It shows a figure with a feathered headdress, snake-head ear ornaments, and cats all around.



Pin (tupu) representing hummingbird
Gold 28.2 x 1 x 11.4 cm
Nazca Culture (100 CE – 600 CE)
Southern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML100238

8. Ask: What do you notice about this object? What animal or animals do you see? Share: This object is a gold pin, called a *tupu* (pronounced too-poo), from the Nazca culture that would have been worn by a powerful religious leader, someone very important. It is in the shape of a hummingbird. Hummingbirds have some unusual abilities, including that on cold winter nights they become so still that they look dead, but as the day warms up they come back to life and pollinate flowers as usual. Ask: Why might a religious leader wear a hummingbird as a symbol?



V-shaped frontal headdress with ancestral face
14-carat gold treated with depletion gilding, Conus fergusonii shell
35.5 x 0.1 x 36.8 cm
Moche Culture (100 – 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML100768

9. Ask: Notice the flatness of this object. What animal or animals do you see? Share: This object is a crown from the Moche culture made of copper, gold, and silver. It shows a human head with feline fangs and snake designs.



Owl god
Ceramic pitcher
38.5 x 16.5 x 27.2 cm
Moche Culture (100 CE - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML012866

10. Ask: Notice the complexity of this object's design. What animal or animals do you see? Share: This object is a ceramic pitcher from the Moche culture. The pitcher shows the powerful Moche owl god, a human figure with the head and wings of an owl standing under a snake with two feline heads.

Discussion questions:

- How did ancient Andeans view animals? What did you see or hear that makes you say that?
- How do we view animals in OUR society today?
 - How do we interact with animals in our everyday lives?
 - For what purposes do we use animals?
 - Where do we see images of animals in popular culture?

Part 2: Art-making activity

- Step 1: Choose an animal that you identify with or that you would like to identify with! List the unique characteristics of this animal.
 - For your list, think about both its physical traits (i.e. what it looks like) and its behavioral traits (i.e. its special powers). What makes this animal special?
 - *Optional: give students time to conduct additional research into their chosen animal.*
- Step 2: Design two symbols that can represent this animal.
 - Use the animal's unique characteristics you listed before to generate your symbols. Draw them!

- *Optional: Show your drawings to a partner and see if they can guess which animal you chose. If they can't guess, you might want to think a little more about your symbols and how to make them clearer!*
- Step 3: Now that you have clear visual symbols for your animal, create a self-portrait that incorporates those symbols.
 - Just like in the Andean objects that we looked at together, you can include your symbols directly on yourself (e.g. you might have the fangs of a cat or wings of a bird), on your clothing (e.g. you might wear a shirt with a snake on it), in the background around you (e.g. you might be riding the back of a turtle or surrounded by butterflies), or a combination of any/all of these methods.
 - *Students can use any materials that you have available—you may opt for simple pencil and paper, or even have students create a sculpture, depending on your supplies.*
- Step 4 (*Optional*): On a notecard or sheet of paper, write a short statement explaining your choice of animal and its key characteristics.
 - Share the symbols you designed and explain how you developed them.
 - Place your statement next to your artwork. Walk around the room to read and look at your classmates' work.

Additional resources:

- Bernier, Hélène. "Birds of the Andes." In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/bird/hd_bird.htm (June 2009)
- "Animals in Ancient Andean Art," from the Chicago Humanities Festival. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuQlbhMB8Y4>. Featuring curators from the Art Institute of Chicago.
- "The Moche of Ancient Peru: Media and Messages." Online exhibition from the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University. <https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/node/2473>
- Cummings, Nathan and Alan Reed Sawyer. *Ancient Peruvian Ceramics: The Nathan Cummings Collection*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1966. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/Ancient_Peruvian_Ceramics_The_Nathan_Cummings_Collection

Lesson plan: Analyzing ancient and everyday artifacts

Subject: Social Studies

Target Grade Range: 6-8 (*adaptable to elementary and high school*)

Duration: 30-60 minutes

Skills: Critical analysis, directed writing, creative thinking, curiosity about global history and cultures

Materials:

- Teacher lesson plan
- PowerPoint to project
- Writing paper
- Pens/pencils
- Assorted objects

Learning goals:

- Students will recognize and appreciate elements of ancient Andean cultures.
- Students will practice and improve writing skills.
- Students will connect global historical concepts to their own everyday lives.
- Students will learn about historical research methods and consider how we learn about the past.

“I can” statements:

- I can recognize and appreciate elements of ancient Andean cultures
- I can improve my writing skills.
- I can connect global historical concepts to my everyday life.
- I can learn about historical research methods.

Key Vocabulary:

- **archaeology:** the study of human history using material evidence from the past (material evidence = artifacts and other things you can see and touch).
- **archaeologist:** a person who studies human history by finding and analyzing artifacts and remains.
- **artifact:** an object made by a human.
- **civilization:** a complex human society where a large number of people share common elements like a government, religion, division of labor, art and architecture, and others.
- **elite:** having high status.
- **complementary duality:** an important concept in the Andean worldview that stressed how opposing forces needed each other for a balanced whole.

FL Standards: SS.6.G.2.In.d, SS.6.G.2.Su.a, SS.6.G.2.Su.d, SS.6.G.2.Pa.a, SS.6.G.2.Pa.d, SS.6.G.2.Pa.f, SS.6.G.3.1, SS.6.G.3.Pa.a, SS.6.W.1.3, SS.6.W.1.6, SS.6.W.1.In.c, SS.6.W.1.In.e, SS.6.W.1.Su.c, SS.6.W.1.Pa.f, SS.6.W.2.3, SS.6.W.2.Su.j,

Part 1: Analysis and discussion of objects from the exhibition

Note: Teachers may wish to add or review additional content depending on when/whether students visited the exhibition in person, completed the pre-visit video lesson, or other factors.

Background: Ancient Andean civilizations like the Inca, Chavín, Moche, Nazca, Lambayeque, and Chimú did not have written languages, so they didn't leave behind any written records for us to read and learn about them from their own point of view.

Ask: Without written records, how do we learn about people who lived in the past?

Share: We can learn much about people from the “stuff” they leave behind. Ask:

What do **archaeologists** do? Share: Archaeologists learn about history by finding and analyzing objects made by people in the past, or **artifacts**. When looking at an artifact, archaeologists ask many questions: what materials were used to create the object? What does the object look like? How might the object have been used? Who might have used it? Where was it found? What condition was it in when found? How old is it? Ask: Can you think of any other questions an archaeologist might ask about an object? Share: Archaeologists systematically look for clues in, on, and around the object to help answer those questions.

Many of the objects archaeologists have found to learn about ancient Peru come from graves, where dead people were buried. Ask: Why do you think this is? (*Hint:* think about where graves usually are and how that location might help protect objects from weather, curious humans, or other damage!)

Let's look together at some artifacts from the exhibition *Machu Picchu and the Golden Empires of Peru*. We will examine each one and think like archaeologists to ask and answer questions about the artifacts and the people who made them.

Looking closely at examples:

Note: Images can be found in the accompanying PowerPoint. Object titles are included here, but teachers may not wish to share this information with students right away (in order to give students a chance to make their own guesses). Teachers may wish to share only a few of the objects.



Nose ornament decorated with rampant felines and rearing serpents

Gold 6.9 x 0.5 x 13.5 cm

Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)

Northern Coast

Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.

ML100751

1. Ask: What do you notice about this object? How would you describe the level of detail in the object? Share: Archaeologists have found nose ornaments in the tombs of many rulers of ancient Peru. This is an example of one such nose ornament from the Moche culture. It is made out of gold. Ask: How do you think archaeologists knew that this was a nose ornament? Share: Sometimes one person was buried with lots of different nose ornaments with different shapes and decorations. Archaeologists think that this type of jewelry was special for people of high rank. Based on the large size, archaeologists note that the nose ornament would have covered the wearer's mouth, giving them a mysterious and unusual appearance. This could symbolize the special powers of a leader and help set them apart from the rest of the population. This nose ornament has dangling pieces at the bottom that would shake when the wearer breathed or moved, making the metal shimmer and producing a jingling sound.



Hunter's ceremonial spear-thrower

Gold, wood, sodalite

9.6 x 3 X 65 cm

Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)

Northern Coast

Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.

ML100186

2. Ask: What do you notice about this object? Share: This Moche artifact is a spear-thrower. It is made out of gold, wood, and a stone called sodalite. Ancient Peruvians could hunt animals from a distance using this projectile-launching weapon. It would have been used to launch a spear about three feet long with a sharpened point or a sharp stone at the tip. This spear thrower is made from wood of the kiawe tree and plated with sheets of gold. The handle has carved wood plated in gold and inlaid with blue sodalite stones. Archaeologists say that ancient Peruvians would have used this spear-thrower during ceremonial deer hunts, when a deer would be killed and offered to the gods as a sacrifice. Ask: What do you notice about the decoration? Share: The scene carved on the handle shows a condor (a large bird) pecking at a man who is laying down on the ground (possibly dead). Archaeologists see this as a reference to offering sacrifices to the gods, and they believe it reinforces the sacred nature of the deer hunt.



Rectangular feathered banner

Cotton fibers, macaw feathers

78.3 x 230.1 cm

Wari (600 CE - 1300 CE)

Southern Coast

Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.

ML600003

3. Ask: Can you tell what this object is made of? Share: This Wari artifact is a banner made out of cotton along with blue and yellow guacamayo (pronounced gwah-kah-MY-oh, also known as macaw) feathers. The banner was part of an offering that included several similar banners and was found in the area of Ocoña, Arequipa in Southwestern Peru. The banners were found rolled up and folded inside large ceramic jars. Archaeologists believe this banner likely hung on temple walls or decorated ceremonial spaces. Ask: What do you think the colors could represent? Share: Archaeologists believe the blue feathers represent the sky and water and the yellow feathers represent the Sun and dry land. Blue and yellow, like water and sun, are opposites but complementary.



*Ritual mortar representing
feline-bird-snake*

Granite

8.8 x 12 x 9.3 cm and 9.8 x 5.1 x
5 cm

Chavin Culture (1250 BCE -
100 BCE)

Northern Highlands

Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.

ML300029, ML300030

4. Ask: What do you notice about this pair of objects? Share: These are a mortar and pestle from the Chavín culture, made out of granite, a type of stone. Ask: Does anyone know what a mortar and pestle are used for? (Or, do you have a guess?) Share: Archaeologists think this small mortar and pestle was used to crush plants, seeds, or roots that would release hallucinogenic, mind-altering substances to enable travel between different dimensions.



Antaras, Andean pan flutes
Ceramic 32.6 x 1.5 x 18.5 cm and 43
x 1.8 x 20.1 cm
Nazca Culture (100 – 600 CE)
Southern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
MLO40216, MLO40217

5. Ask: What do you notice about these objects? Share: These Nazca artifacts are musical instruments called *antaras* (pronounced on-TAH-russ) or pan flutes. They are ceramic pieces, made of clay. Archaeologists have learned about how and where these objects were used by looking at artwork. (For example, another object in the exhibition, ML100812, shows a person playing an antara.) Archaeologists believe antaras were played during ceremonies in many different cultures. Artwork shows antaras being played during sacrifices, researchers concluded, in order to make contact between the lower world and upper world. The antara is also seen being played by warriors before a battle.



Inca quipu
Animal fibers
Inca Culture (1438 – 1532
CE).
Southern Highlands
80 x 0.5 x 168 cm
Museo Larco, Lima
ML600004

6. Ask: How do you think this object was used? Share: This Inca artifact is called a *quipu* (key-poo) and it is made out of cotton string. There is one primary string on top, from which 238 other strings hang. The strings are blue, green, brown, cream, and white, and they have knots on them. Archaeologists have

determined that quipus were a way for the Inca to record information. The colors of the strings, as well as the different knots and the distances between them, communicated information about population, trade, and other subjects.



Warrior's earflares
Gold and turquoise
4 x 12.7 x 4 cm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML100786, ML100787

7. *Ask:* What do you notice about this pair of objects? *Share:* These Moche artifacts are ear ornaments (sometimes called ear muffs) made out of gold and turquoise. Archaeologists believe they would have been worn by a warrior in ceremonial battle. The precious materials and intricate design suggest that such warriors were powerful and respected. From the side, we can see a carving that shows a warrior dressed for combat, wearing ear muffs just like these. Spanish chroniclers report that Inca nobles wore such large ear ornaments and their earlobes were so stretched out that the Spanish referred to them as “orejones,” or “big ears.”



Duality

Ceramic stirrup-spout bottle

25.1 x 14.5 x 14.7 cm

Moche Culture (100 CE - 800 CE)

Northern Coast

Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.

ML010816

8. Ask: What are the possible uses for this object? Share: This Moche artifact is a ceramic bottle. This shape of bottle is known as a “stirrup-spout” bottle because it reminded the invading Spanish of stirrups (where you put your feet when riding a horse). The bottle was found in the grave of a Moche elite. Archaeologists believe that this bottle would have been used in ceremonies. The two-colored design represents the concept of complementary duality. Ask: What does “duality” mean? What does “complementary” mean? What, then, is complementary duality? What examples can you think of?

Discussion questions

- What questions would you ask the archaeologists who found and studied these objects?
- What other information would you want in order to understand more about these objects and the people who made them?

Part 2: Writing and thinking activity

- Step 1: What kinds of artifacts will WE leave behind? Select objects from around the room to create a display of everyday “artifacts.”
 - For example, a cell phone, pencil, textbook, globe, ruler, sneaker, backpack, penny, water bottle, or anything else available in the classroom.
 - Set the objects in a visible location.

- Step 2: Choose one object from among the modern artifacts. Imagine that this artifact will be displayed in a museum of the future. Write a descriptive label to accompany the object.
 - Don't forget to write in the past tense! Your audience is far in the future.
 - Include: What was the object made out of? Where did it come from? How was it made? How did people use it? What design elements of the object provide evidence for how it was used? What does the object tell us about the people who made and used it?
 - *Optional*: Create a detailed drawing of the object. You may wish to label the drawing to indicate important elements of its design.
- Step 3: Continue thinking about the same object. Imagine that you are the archaeologist of the future who first discovered this artifact. Write a paragraph describing your experience finding and analyzing this object.
 - Include: What shape was the object in when you found it? Consider its materials and whether they would have disintegrated over time or remained intact. How would this impact your ability to analyze the artifact?
 - Consider: If you had little (or no) other information about the society that used this object, what could you learn *just* from looking at the object? What questions might you have about the object if you didn't have any additional context?
- Step 4 (*Optional*): As a class, create a museum exhibit using your objects (or drawings) and descriptive labels.
 - Consider how to curate or organize your exhibit. How will you decide which objects to display next to each other? Will you group items by how they look, what they're used for, or something else entirely?
 - Come up with a title for the exhibition. How will that title influence the way visitors to your museum interpret the artifacts?

Additional resources:

- American Museum of Natural History. "Archaeology: Clues From the Past." Interactive web page.
<https://www.amnh.org/explore/ology/archaeology?fid=29456>
- National Park Service. "Archaeology for Kids." Interactive web page.
<https://www.nps.gov/archeology/public/kids/index.htm#>
- Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. "Webinar- Natural History at Home: How Archaeologists Learn From Objects Left Behind." Video.
<https://naturalhistory.si.edu/education/teaching-resources/social-studies/webinar-trash-treasure-how-archaeologists-learn-about>
- National Geographic. Video on the Inca Empire.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnMa-Sm9H4k>

Lesson Plan: Heroes, storytelling, and graphic narratives

Subject: ELA; Visual Arts

Target grade range: 6-8 (*adaptable to elementary and high school*)

Duration: 45-60 minutes. *Note: this lesson can be split across multiple class periods and extended into a longer project*

Skills: Critical analysis, creative thinking, creative writing, curiosity about global history and cultures

Materials:

- Teacher lesson plan
- PowerPoint to project
- Lined paper for brainstorming
- Blank unlined drawing paper (or optional template)
- Drawing implements (pencils, colored pencils, crayons, markers, etc)

Learning goals:

- Students will analyze and create characters, setting, and plot.
- Students will organize ideas to combine pictures, captions, and dialogue.
- Students will recognize and appreciate elements of ancient Andean cultures.
- Students will create an imaginative and original graphic narrative.

“I can” statements:

- I can analyze and create characters, setting, and plot.
- I can organize my ideas to combine pictures, captions, and dialogue.
- I can recognize and appreciate elements of ancient Andean cultures.
- I can create an imaginative and original graphic narrative.

Key vocabulary:

- **symbol:** a thing that represents or stands for something else.
- **mythological:** based in myths or legends. Fictional.
- **hero:** someone admired or idealized for acts of courage, strength, or intelligence.
- **narrative:** story.
- **graphic narrative:** a story partially told through images.

FL State Standards: LAFS.68.RH.1.2, LAFS.68.RH.3.7, LAFS.68.WHST.4.10, LAFS.6.L.1, ELA.612.F.2.1, ELA.6.C.1.2, ELA.6.C.1.5, ELA.8.C.1.2, VA.68.C.1.1, VA.68.C.3.2, VA.68.C.3.3, VA.68.C.3.4, VA.68.S.1.3, VA.68.S.2.2, VA.68.O.1.2, VA.68.O.1.3, VA.68.O.2.1, VA.68.O.2.4, VA.68.F.3.4, VA.68.H.1.1, VA.68.H.1.3, VA.68.H.1.4, VA.68.F.2.5

Part 1: Analysis and discussion of objects from the exhibition

Note: Teachers may wish to add or review additional content depending on when/whether students visited the exhibition in person, completed the pre-visit video lesson, or other factors.

Introduction: *Ask:* What is a hero? *Share:* Cultures around the world past and present have their own unique heroes. Some heroes are gods, some are historical figures, some are mythical, and some are real living people. Today we will be learning about an important hero from the Moche culture of ancient Peru, Ai Apaec. We will analyze objects from the Boca Raton Museum of Art's exhibition *Machu Picchu and the Golden Empires of Peru* to learn about Ai Apaec and his story. Then, we will use what we have learned as inspiration to create hero stories of our own.

Background: Ai Apaec is the name given to a character who appears in many artistic representations from the Moche culture. We don't know what the Moche would have called him, because they did not have a written language (so there are no Moche history books for us to read to find out his name). Ai Apaec is a made-up name borrowed from the Moche language and chosen by Rafael Larco Hoyle, a collector and researcher who found a lot of the ancient objects that depict this figure.

We can recognize Ai Apaec because he has the fangs of a cat and he wears a special cat-themed crown, bird feathers, and ear ornaments that represent snakes. His outfit can tell us a lot about him right away: the feathers in his crown give him the power to travel to the upper world; his snake earrings and belt allow him to enter the lower world; and the step design on his shirt shows that he can make the passage between the worlds (like a pass to allow entry). The clothing he wears communicates his hero status, because only a very important and powerful figure would have the ability to travel among the different worlds.

Archaeologists and historians have looked at the many artistic representations that show Ai Apaec and used them to reconstruct a number of mythological narratives. One of those narratives is the story of Ai Apaec rescuing the sun. In this story, Ai Apaec leaves the middle world on a mission into the upper world in search of the sun, which has plunged into the sea. When he sees that the sun has left both the middle and upper worlds, he travels down into the ocean to rescue the sun. While in the ocean, Ai Apaec must confront dangerous opponents, and he dies in battle. In death, he descends into the lower world, where he recovers his powers and is reborn. He rescues the sun and brings it back to the upper world to give light again. By going on this long and difficult journey, Ai Apaec manages to ensure the survival of his community.

Let's examine the following objects from the exhibition to learn more details about the different steps of Ai Apaec's heroic journey.



Ai Apaec flying over the mountains
Ceramic stirrup-spout bottle
26.2 x 18.8 x 15 cm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML003197

1. Share: First, Ai Apaec travels into the upper world to look for the sun. Ask: What details do you notice about this object? Share: This artifact shows Ai Apaec on the back of a giant bird. In the story of his journey, he climbs onto the back of a turkey buzzard to reach the upper world where the sun lives. The turkey buzzard transports Ai Apaec out of the middle world and into the upper world, along with two companions: a lizard and a dog. The constant help of the lizard allows Ai Apaec to move between worlds, and his faithful dog protects him, warning him of danger. When they arrive in the upper world, they see that the sun has already left and they chase its fading light to the edge of the ocean.



Ai Apaec fighting the crab
Ceramic stirrup-spout bottle
26 x 23.3 x 15.5 cm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML010860

2. Ask: What do you notice about this object that continues the story? Share: At the edge of the water, Ai Apaec encounters a giant crab who guards the entry to the sea. Ai Apaec fights with the crab, but not in order to kill him. Ai Apaec wants to borrow his shell for protection and take on the powers of the crab, including the strong, hard legs that will allow him to climb over rocks and sand to follow the sun into the ocean.



Ai Apaec as a crab
Ceramic stirrup-spout bottle
24.5 x 20 x 18 cm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML003187

3. Ask: What do you notice about this object? Do you think Ai Apaec won the battle? How do you know? Share: Ai Apaec wins the battle against the giant crab and puts on his shell, which turns him into a crab. He gains the ability to walk underwater and his able to enter the inner world of the ocean.



Ai Apaec as a pufferfish
Ceramic stirrup-spout bottle
25.5 x 22.3 x 16.2 cm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML003434

4. Ask: There are many details on this vessel. What stands out most for you?
Share: While in the ocean, Ai Apaec runs into the dangerous sea urchin, whose sharp spines poison anyone who steps on him. Then Ai Apaec encounters a pufferfish, who has a powerful crown with special powers. The crown is the Owl Crown, which grants its wearer night vision and the power to see in the dark depths of the ocean. Ai Apaec fights the pufferfish to win the Owl Crown.



Head of Ai Apaec with Owl crown
Ceramic stirrup-spout bottle
31.7 x 18.2 x 16.1 cm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML003022

5. Ask: What do you notice about this object? How has Ai Apaec changed?
Share: Ai Apaec wins the battle against the pufferfish and puts on the Owl Crown. His body is transformed into the body of a pufferfish, and he descends farther into the lower world to continue searching for the sun.



Ai Apaec inside the Strombus snail
Ceramic stirrup-spout bottle
23 x 19.7 x 19.7 cm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.
ML003208

6. Ask: What do you notice about this object? How has Ai Apaec changed now?
Share: Ai Apaec keeps going deeper into the ocean and runs into the Strombus, a giant snail. The Strombus snail has a huge, spiraling shell that was prized by the ancient Andeans. The shell, when played like a trumpet, was believed to communicate the voices of the gods, and the spiral design represented the cycles of life. Ai Apaec battles the Strombus snail and takes the shell to bring with him. He'll use the shell later as an offering to the gods of the upper world in exchange for rain. Ai Apaec climbs inside of the shell for protection. Ask: For how much longer will this epic hero story go on? How do you envision the ending of this story?



Flaring ceramic bowl with representation of episodes of mythological epic of Ai Apaec
Ceramic 24.9 x 44.6 x 44.4 cm
Moche Culture (100 - 800 CE)
Northern Coast
Museo Larco, Lima-Peru.

7. Ask: What do you notice about this object? Share: This bowl has many more detailed images than the others we have seen. Let's look more closely! Ai Apaec continues even farther down into the ocean and encounters the most fearsome god of the lower world: part shark, part sting ray, and part sea lion. Ai Apaec loses this battle, dies, and travels to the world of the ancestors, where he will be reborn and return the sun to the sky.

Discussion questions:

- In the story of Ai Apaec, who are the characters?
- What is the setting?
- What is the plot?
- If this story was a movie, what kind of movie would it be? (E.g. drama, comedy, action, thriller, etc.)
- What could be a possible title for the story of Ai Apaec?
- How do the images and symbols on the artifacts help communicate without words?

Hero stories: Heroic figures like Ai Apaec have appeared in societies all over the world, often following very similar story paths. These stories can involve many different steps, but they usually include a hero going on an adventure, facing enemies or a major crisis, and coming home changed or transformed. Sometimes this story structure is called the “hero’s journey.”

Discussion questions:

- Which heroes from movies, books, comics, or television have stories that remind you of Ai Apaec’s? Why? (*Possible examples: Harry Potter; Luke, Finn, or Rey from Star Wars; Black Panther; Percy Jackson; Moana; Mulan; Dorothy from Wizard of Oz; Alice in Wonderland; Katniss from Hunger Games; etc.*)
- Why do you think so many cultures around the world tell hero stories?
- What lessons can we learn from hero stories?

Part 2: Writing and illustrating a hero’s story graphic narrative

Storytelling activity: Students will create their own graphic narrative based on a hero of their own choice or invention. Share: We will draw inspiration from the transformational journey of the hero Ai Apaec to write and illustrate our own hero stories. We will focus on the elements of story (plot, setting, characters) and practice writing in complete, descriptive sentences. We will use our illustrations to add details to our stories, just like the Andean artifacts depicting Ai Apaec helped us learn more about him and his journey.

- Step 1: Choose a hero who will be the main character of your narrative.
 - *Teachers may opt to narrow the focus based on their own preference and learning goals: for example, create your own superhero; choose a hero from a movie/TV show/ book; or imagine yourself as a hero figure.*
- Step 2: Decide what journey your hero will take.
 - What problem will they solve? What will they do to save the day? How will they transform?
 - *Examples: Your hero’s journey could be something challenging but ordinary, like you making an important transformation in your own life*

(for example, graduating from elementary school and entering middle school or learning to ride a bike). The journey could also be more sensational, like a saving a city from a catastrophic weather event or preventing a giant asteroid from hitting the planet.

- Step 3: Break down your hero's journey into five parts:
 - Introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
 - Summarize each part and write it down using complete sentences. Try to limit each part of the journey to 2-3 sentences.
- Step 4: Share your story summary with a partner for feedback.
 - Does your partner understand the characters, setting, and plot? If not, try to clarify your writing.
 - If your partner does understand, you can still challenge yourself to edit your sentences to make them as exciting and descriptive as possible while remaining within the 2-3 sentence limit.
 - Based on your partner's feedback, you can also start brainstorming how you will share more elements of story through your drawings!
- Step 5: Using blank paper or the graphic narrative template, draw a picture to accompany each part of your narrative. How can you use your drawing to add more details to the story?
 - Remember all of the details we saw in the images of Ai Apaec—what can you add to your hero's appearance, apparel, and facial expressions to communicate more about them?
- Step 6: Share your graphic narrative with a partner. Don't forget to add a title and sign your name!

Additional resources:

- Dumbarton Oaks: Moche Archive, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections. <https://www.doaks.org/resources/moche-iconography>
- Buffalo and Erie County Public Library: Graphic Novel Resources for Educators. <https://www.buffalolib.org/get-graphic/teachers>
- Storyboard That: A free resource for creating a digital version of the graphic narrative, for teachers who wish to add a technology component. <https://www.storyboardthat.com/>