

Little People, BIG DREAMS

TEACHERS' GUIDE



Georgia O'Keeffe

Little People, BIG DREAMS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Even as a child, Georgia O'Keeffe was a keen observer of the natural world. She took notice of what others did not, finding beauty in even the smallest details. With practice and training, she turned this gift into a career as an artist, creating paintings that were unlike anything that had come before. Today, Georgia's art continues to provide inspiration, perspective, and a compelling reminder that wonder is all around us.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. What is Georgia O'Keeffe known for?
2. How old was Georgia when she decided to be an artist?
3. How did Georgia prepare to become an artist?
4. What subject matter did Georgia paint?
5. What was the reaction of the people who attended Georgia's first exhibition?
6. What title did Georgia receive?

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. One of the illustrations depicts young Georgia looking out the window from her school classroom. Ask the students why they think she was distracted. Have any of them ever been distracted in the classroom? How did they deal with that situation?

2. The book explains that Georgia spent time in big cities like Chicago and New York, where the people “didn’t have time to notice beauty in the little things about them.” Ask the students if they agree that people in cities are too busy to notice beauty in little things. Why or why not?
3. Georgia, a painter, eventually married Alfred, a photographer. So many people today have access to cameras and regularly take pictures. In light of that, ask the students what they think of photography as artwork. What makes a photograph a work of art instead of an everyday picture?
4. Georgia was known as the “Mother of American Modernism.” Ask the class to discuss the idea of Modernism. What does it mean in general? What do they think it means in the world of art?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. As a child, Georgia was inspired by the natural world around her. Select a day, weather-permitting, to take the class outside to observe their environment. Have them select a subject and sketch it, getting close and paying attention to even the smallest details. Back in class, have the students paint their subjects.
2. Have the class organize an art gallery exhibition like those that showcased Georgia’s work. Discuss with the students what details they need to consider, like how high the works are placed, how they are spaced apart, and which pictures should be grouped together. Help the students set up their exhibit. If possible, have another class walk through the room to attend the gallery exhibit!
3. As mentioned in the Discussion Topics, Georgia’s husband was a photographer. Assign the class a photography project. Ask them to use a camera or electronic device at home to take photographs. Encourage them to experiment with cropping, zooming, filters, and other ways to edit a photograph. Have students select their favorite shots to bring in to class.
4. Encourage the students to explore Georgia’s artwork. Using sources such as the school library or on websites such as www.okeefemuseum.org, let the students view her art, learn more about her, and dream of someday becoming famous artists!

