



Lesson Activities

John Luke



John Luke's Murals

Ask children if they know what a mural is. Explain to them that a mural is a piece of art which is painted onto a wall. It can be inside or outside.

Display John Luke's mural for Belfast City Hall on the whiteboard (you can find this in the John Luke video). Explain that the central figure in the sketch is Sir Arthur Chichester reading out the town charter in 1613 (this is when Belfast was founded). To his left you can see women weaving linen cloth and to the right, you can see men building ships. Ask the children to think about why these activities are included in the design for the Belfast City Hall mural?

Explain to the children that the linen and shipbuilding industries were very important to the growth and development of Belfast. These industries helped make Belfast a rich city with a growing population in the nineteenth century. When John Luke was designing the mural in 1951, the textile industry and the shipyards still employed many thousands of people in Belfast, so they were very important to the city.

Murals in your area

Ask children to think about the murals they see around them, in a local area or town.

Ask the children to talk about the sorts of things that are featured in murals. They may mention scenes from historical events like World War 1, historical people like King William III. Some children may mention that the murals have a political message or feature paramilitary groups.

After each suggestion, try to get children to think about why these things were included in the mural. Are the historical events or people important in some way to the people of that area? Children may mention that some of the images featured on murals are frightening to them. Ask them to think why this might be. They may find that some images on murals are used to tell you something about the identity and history of the area.



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A mural for the school

In this activity students design a mural for the school. In order to make it a more meaningful activity, it would be helpful if you choose an area in the school where the mural would be displayed – it means the children can keep the shape of the display in mind when designing.

This activity will need to take place over several sessions.

Divide the class into groups of four and give them the following task. They are going to design a mural for the school. Explain to them that there is a 'brief' for the design – in other words, there are some instructions about what their design should include and how it should be presented.

The design brief is:

- The mural design must fit the site where it is to be displayed (for example, if it is for a long low wall, or a high gable wall – how will your design fit this shape?)
- The mural must describe the values that are important in the school (is it a friendly school, are people helpful to each other?)
- The mural must show the things that are important to the whole school, not just to their particular group.
- The mural must be colourful and make an impact!

Tell each group that they will have 30 - 40 minutes to research and plan their mural (if you have more time, encourage children to ask other pupils and staff about what they would like to see featured in the mural). Then give them 60 – 90 minutes to complete their design on a large sheet of paper (A1 or A2). At the end they will be given 5 – 10 minutes to display their design to the rest of the class who will judge how well their design meets the brief.

Display the design brief or print out a few copies of it (see Resource 1) so that children can refer to it when researching and creating their design.



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Presentation of the murals

Before the groups start the presentation, explain that while one group presents, the other groups must keep in mind how well each design meets the brief. Go through the elements of the brief to make sure that the children understand what each item means. Give each group a set of score sheets (Resource 2) and tell them at the end of each presentation they must decide as a group to award a mark out of five for each item on the brief. (Groups do not mark their own presentation.)

Ask the first group up to present their design. After their presentation, give the other groups a few minutes to discuss and agree their scores – then collect the scoresheets and tot up the total marks. When all the groups have presented their designs you can announce the winning design.



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What Next?

