

## Harriet Tubman Tempera Paintings

A HANDS-ON ART  
ACTIVITY DESIGNED BY  
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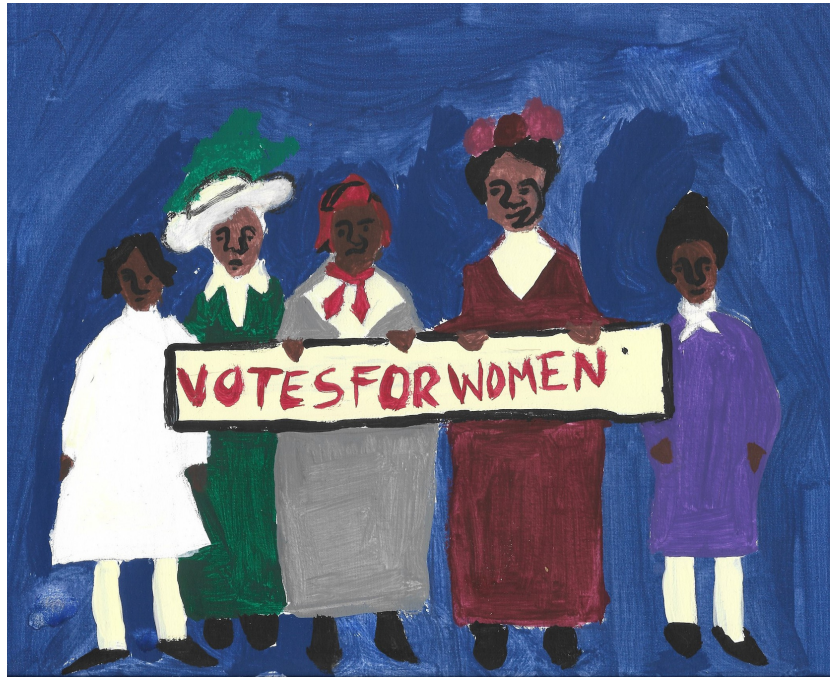


Image Credit: MoNA Example

### Materials

- *Forward* and *A Time to Rest* images by Jacob Lawrence (included at the end of this lesson)
- [Video on the life of Harriet Tubman](#)
- Practice paper
- Tempera paint cakes or tempera paint
- Pencils
- Water
- Cups
- Paint brushes
- Thick white paper or cardstock

### Description

This project will introduce students to the elements of color, shape, and form. Students will be encouraged to use big shapes that do not have to have a lot of minor details. These elements will be used to create a painting that depicts a portion of Harriet Tubman's life, inspired by Jacob Lawrence's own series of paintings about her life.

## Instructions

- 1) Introduce students to the life of Harriet Tubman by showing them the suggested video about her life.
- 2) After watching the video, show students *Forward* and *A Time to Rest* by Jacob Lawrence (both part of his series: Harriet Tubman and the Promised Land) and use Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to talk more and think deeper about the art and Harriet's life.
  - VTS is an inquiry-based method of facilitating discussion. Tips and resources on VTS are included at the end of this lesson.
  - Ask the students what stage of Harriet's life was Lawrence trying to depict in this piece.
- 3) Students will then choose an event in Harriet's life to depict in their own paintings.
  - These paintings will be done in a similar style to Lawrence's, so encourage students to use geometric shapes, vibrant colors, and not too much detail to create these scenes.
- 4) Pass out supplies to students so that they can sketch their ideas and then paint their final pieces. They can use the practice paper to experiment with color intensity, hues, forms, and shapes.
- 5) Once students have finished their sketches, they can get started on their final paintings on the thicker paper.
- 6) After students have finished painting their scenes, allow them to share with the class what they made. The other students can guess what part of Harriet's life they depicted.

## Relevant Vocabulary

✓ Line

✓ Texture

✓ Shape

✓ Space

✓ Form

✓ Value

✓ Color

## Learning and State Standards

Fulfills [Washington State Arts Learning Standards](#):

- **Third Grade: VA:Cn11.1.3** Recognize that responses to art change depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made.
- **Fourth Grade: VA:Cr1.2.4** Collaboratively set goals and create artwork that is meaningful and has purpose to the makers.
- **Fifth Grade: VA:Cn11.1.5** Identify how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society.
- **Sixth Grade: VA:Cr2.1.6** Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design.
- **Seventh Grade: VA:Cr3.1.7** Reflect on and explain important information about personal artwork in an artist statement or another format.
- **Eighth Grade: VA:Cr2.1.8** Demonstrate willingness to experiment, innovate, and take risks to pursue ideas, forms, and meanings that emerge in the process of art-making or designing.
- **High School: VA:Re7.1.I** Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.

# Visual Thinking Strategies

MoNA's Education programs utilize Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which is a research-based teaching method that promotes aesthetic development including critical thinking and communication skills. Here in the MoNA, we use VTS to engage students and general visitors with art encouraging them to observe closely, think critically and discuss respectfully; however, VTS can be effectively used across curricula. This approach teaches its participants how to take the time to observe closely, describe what they see in detail and provide evidence for their observations. Students learn that their reflections and thoughts are valued and appreciated in this inclusive teaching method.

In order to facilitate a VTS discussion, you first encourage viewers to take a quiet moment to observe the work you are going to explore. Then you ask the following questions and paraphrase the responses without adding any of your own judgements. You can insert additional vocabulary and point to specific parts of the artwork.

*What's going on in this picture?*

*What do you see that makes you say...?*

*What more can you find?*

## Visual Thinking Strategy Links

If you are interested in learning more about VTS, [here is their website](#). If you already know and love VTS, but want help finding great images to use in your classroom, here is a [fantastic gallery](#). You can also visit this website for additional resources: [www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators](http://www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators)

# About the Artist: Jacob Lawrence



Portrait of Lawrence

Source:

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000) was an African American painter who specialized in the cubism style. Born in Atlantic City, New Jersey to southern migrants, he spent the majority of his life in New York City. His art was inspired by the Harlem Renaissance and depicted African-American life with vivid color. He moved to Seattle, Washington in 1970 and he taught at the University of Washington until 1983. He is most famous for his series of paintings known as the *Migration Series*. This series of paintings depicts the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural south to the urbanized north in the United States.

**"WE HEAR ABOUT MOLLY PITCHER. WE HEAR ABOUT BETSY ROSS, THE NEGRO WOMAN HAS NEVER BEEN INCLUDED IN AMERICAN HISTORY."  
-JACOB LAWRENCE**





*Forward*, Jacob Lawrence

**Image Source:** The North Carolina Museum of Art



*A Time to Rest*, Jacob Lawrence  
Image Credit: National Gallery of Art