

# AMERICAN MUSEUM OF WESTERN ART

THE ANSCHUTZ COLLECTION

## Inspired by Actual Events



William Tylee Ranney, *The Last Shot*, ca. 1850.

## Background Information

Many of our nation's first storytellers came in the form of artists. Some of these artists traveled west with teams of surveyors and explorers and shared their experiences through art. Other artists retold dramatic stories from the frontier, shaping Americans' perceptions and imaginations of the West. These images would, for generations, create the sense that the West was full of adventure.

In this painting, the artist is retelling a dramatic true event. According to the tale, a trapper was making his way through rushing river waters, when he was spotted by a group of Native Americans. With nowhere to hide, what do you think might have happened to him?

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## Look Closer



William Tylee Ranney, *The Last Shot*, ca. 1850.

In the medium of paint, artists can only capture a moment in time—only a piece of the story. Artists make choices to emphasize certain parts of the story, and leave out other details that may not help get their point across. Observe the painting closely and consider what part of the story the artist may be representing. Take a look at the figure's facial expression and pose(1). Observe his surroundings(2), and the changing weather(3). Follow the Trapper's gaze to identify the impending danger(4). Notice how the artist has used the trapper's horse and its position in the water to emphasize his perilous situation(5).

## Discussion Questions

- What event do you think the artist is representing here?
- Do you think it's the beginning, middle, or end of the story? Why?
- What do you think may have happened right before this scene? What do you think will happen next?

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- What details do you notice that the artist might use to help tell the story?
- What does the artist emphasize in this painting?
- How does the artist help you to connect to the story he is retelling through this painting?

## Activity

What exciting event has happened to you, or someone you know, recently? Use the worksheet attached to describe your story. Include characters, and describe the beginning, middle, and end. If it helps, highlight the main character(s) and make note of each part of the story. Then, draw a picture that depicts all or part of the event. Are there particular details you emphasized? What did you leave out of the drawing?

Materials:

Beginning, middle, and end worksheet

Pencils

Highlighter

Colored pencils/crayons/markers/watercolors

## Resources

<http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egp.art.048>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/h/history-painting>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/n/narrative>

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Beginning, Middle and End

What exciting event has happened to you, or someone you know, recently? Describe your story, and include details about what happened, including characters, action, and scene. On the back of this sheet, draw a picture that depicts all or part of the event.

What happened at the beginning of your story?	What happened in the middle?	What happened at the end?

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## Grade levels: P-12 CO Standards

### Visual Arts (2009)

P 1.1; P 2.1; P 3.1; P 4.1

K 1.1-2; K 2.1-2; K 3.1; K 4.1

1 1.1-2; 1 2.1; 1 3.1; 1 4.1

2 1.1-2; 2 2.1; 2 3.1; 2 4.1

3 1.1-2; 3 2.1-2; 3 3.1-2; 3 4.1-2

4 1.1-3; 4 2.1-2; 4 3.1-2; 4 1.2

5 1.1-3; 5 2.1-2; 5 3.1, 3; 5 4.1-2

6 1.1-3; 6 2.1-2; 6 3.1-2; 6 4.1-2

7 1.1-3; 7 2.1-2; 7 3.1-3; 7 4.1-2

8 1.1-3; 8 2.1-2; 8 3.1-2; 8.4.1-2

HS 1.1-3; HS 2.1-3; HS 3.1-3; HS 4.1-3

### Reading, Writing and Communicating (2010)

P 3.1-2

K 3.1-2

1 3.1-2

2 3.1, 3

3 3.1, 3

4 3.1, 3

5 3.1, 3

6 3.1, 3

7 3.1, 3

8 3.1, 3

9 3.1, 3

10 3.1-3

11 3.1, 3

12 3.1-3