

Commemorate Canada - 100th anniversary of the birth of artist Jean-Paul Riopelle

Overview

Students will complete a puzzle and art activity to learn about the Canadian artist Jean-Paul Riopelle, his source of inspiration, and his impact on the Canadian art world and society.

Time required

75 minutes

Grades

6-12

Subjects

History, Geography, Art

Learning goals

Students will be able to:

- Identify who Jean-Paul Riopelle was and why he was important to Canadian art history.
- Appreciate the influence that the Canadian wilderness had on Riopelle.
- Understand the impact Riopelle had on French-Canadian society.
- Create a piece of art in the style of Riopelle, inspired by Canada's ecozones.

Materials

- Projector/SMART board
- Print or digital copy of "[Honouring the 100th anniversary of the birth of Jean Paul Riopelle](#)" from *Canadian Geographic*
- Devices with internet access
- Word search puzzle
- Pens/pencils
- Teacher answer sheet: Word search
- Art from nature activity sheet
- Paper (8X11")
- Art paper (thicker paper may be required if using paint)
- Scissors
- Art supplies: pencil crayons, chalk, acrylic paint, water colours, paint brushes, etc.

Lesson implementation

Minds on

Explain to students that today, they will be learning about the French-Canadian sculptor and painter Jean-Paul Riopelle (1923-2022) who was one of the best-known Canadian artists around the world in the twentieth century. They will have the chance to learn about what inspired him to paint, and how he influenced Quebec society.

On a projector or SMART board, show students a few examples of Riopelle's work. [The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec](#) has good digital examples of his work. Ask students if they notice any common themes (e.g., subject matter, colours, style) in his works. How do they think Canada is represented in his work?

Next, play for students the *Canadian Geographic* GeoMinute on Jean-Paul Riopelle (found on Canadian Geographic Education's [Commemorate Canada page](#)). Examine the art pieces again and ask students if any of their answers have changed.

Action

Students will now complete a word search puzzle and small art activity to learn more about Jean-Paul Riopelle and to think about the inspiration behind his work. Explain that for the word search puzzle, they will need to read the *Canadian Geographic* article "[Honouring the 100th anniversary of the birth of Jean Paul Riopelle](#)" to learn about Jean-Paul Riopelle and use the information in the article to help them finish the prompts to complete the word search in pairs. Once they have finished the word search, students will work individually to create a small piece of art focused on nature, choosing a terrestrial ecozone for inspiration. In the art activity, students will have the opportunity to think about how geography can inspire people to create art, just as Riopelle was inspired and nourished by Canada's wilderness.

Define the following terms before students begin:

Abstract art: This form of art does not portray real images, or representations of real things. Colour, shapes, and different forms are used. Abstract art may represent reality in some way, or it may not.

Figurative art: Figurative art has a connection with reality and is representational of real life (e.g., objects, people, places, animals); however, subjects can still be presented in exaggerated or distorted ways.

Quiet Revolution: The Quebec Liberal Party, under Premier Jean Lesage, instituted numerous political, societal, and cultural changes in Quebec in the 1960s, a movement which became known as the Quiet Revolution. Lesage and his party wanted francophones in positions of leadership throughout Quebec and this was achieved through these changes.

Automatism: An art process that seeks to let the subconscious, not rational and logical thought, guide the creation of art. The term was originally used in physiology — think about our physical bodies and how we do certain things automatically without trying, like breathing or dreaming. The *Automatistes* art group in Quebec created art in this style.

Refus Global manifesto: Published in 1948, this anarchist manifesto was signed by 16 Quebec artists from the Automatistes Group. It was created to speak out against traditional values in Quebec society at the time.

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Connection to the Canadian Geography Learning Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Spatial significance

Inquiry Process

- Interpret and analyze
- Evaluate and draw conclusions
- Communicate

Geospatial Skills

- Spatial representations

Divide students into pairs and distribute a **Word search puzzle** and a device to each pair. Ask students to follow the instructions on the paper. Once completed, students should return their puzzle to the teacher. Next, each student should be given their own copy of the **Art from nature activity sheet** and a device, along with any art supplies they will need to create their piece. Go over the instructions on the **Art from nature activity sheet** to ensure all student questions are answered. When students are ready to begin the art activity, pull up an image of [the terrestrial and marine ecozones in Canada](#) on a projector or SMART board for reference.

Conclusion and consolidation

Place student art around the room and allow the students to have a gallery walk to explore each other's works of art. Ask students why they chose the symbols, colours, and shapes they did.

Extend your geographical thinking

- Students can research examples of how geography and wildlife has influenced other Canadian artists, such as the Group of Seven.

Modifications

- Teachers can provide a word bank of words for the word search.
- Teachers and students can fill out the missing words on the word search puzzle as a class before students individually complete the word search.
- The *Canadian Geographic* article can be read as a class to check for understanding.
- The requirements for the artwork activity can be expanded according to what the teacher needs to assess.

Assessment opportunities

Students can be assessed on:

- The completion of their word search puzzles.
- Their ability to follow directions in the art activity.
- Their completed artwork and reflections.
- Their answers during the discussions.

Students can complete a self and peer assessment of their artwork.

Additional resources

- *Canadian Geographic*: [Honouring the 100th anniversary of the birth of Jean Paul Riopelle](#)
- Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec: [Riopelle, Jean-Paul](#) (French only)
- Art Canada Institute: [Life and Work: Jean-Paul Riopelle](#)

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Word search puzzle

Instructions: Read the *Canadian Geographic* article, "[Honouring the 100th anniversary of the birth of Jean Paul Riopelle](#)." Next, complete the clues below, using the article for hints. These are words that you will find hidden in the word search grid. Can you find all nine words? Words can be down, across, or diagonal.

1. Riopelle used this animal in his art (two words, plural): S _ _ _ _ _
2. Riopelle was part of this art movement in Quebec: A _ _ _ _ _
3. The 1948 anti-establishment manifesto Refus Global is said to have help launch this movement in Quebec (two words): Q _ _ _ _ _
4. What nickname was Riopelle given by André Breton? The peerless T _ _ _ _ _
5. Riopelle's technique is self-described as "going towards N _ _ _ _ _"
6. Even when he lived in France, what did Riopelle seek by visiting Canada, particularly Quebec and the Arctic? W _ _ _ _ _
7. Even though Riopelle's art had many different styles, he is most famous for this style: Mosaic-style A _ _ _ _ _
8. Riopelle developed a bit of a wild reputation. What did he allegedly toss his paintings into in Paris? F _ _ _ _ _
9. There are no hidden M _ _ _ _ _ in Riopelle's work.

P I G M J M E I E E W I C T B Z G U Q H
X H D S S C H T F Z V A J K J Y S F I F
A G S N O W G E E S E D N Q R O D K V G
Z T X H H E Z O Q L O C M U H B K O J N
K O Q T J H N A T U R E B I M T P D S G
W J A T V S O U H A W E Q E E R O Y N N
W I L D E R N E S S L C E T S A T T D N
K Y E T O P W Z Z Q D Z S R S P F F M J
H O D Z A S C P P Q D O U E A P T O Q H
J B F E B U C B Y E F H E V G E R R B C
C V U I M I T H H L E D M O E R A Z V G
T N A C R K J O U W Z S G L S N Q M U O
F Q B L G E C B M O D K S U N L A W R X
H Q S M F U P G V A D A P T J U J H K V
U P T E N Z F L G U T L D I Y D G G L O
I C R R F A T J A U W I U O T O M Y R D
T W A K J V N W X C P F S N I A B E T H
X L C B V T Z D R Y E T J T E V V A Z Z
H H T O B J A R Q I B P Y D E J U X Y P
N S E C X K N U L N S J V E A S R M J N

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Art from nature activity sheet

In this activity, you will have the chance to think about different terrestrial ecozones in Canada and the nature that represents those areas as inspiration for your art.

Materials needed:

- At least one 8X11" sheet of paper
- Two pieces of paper for creating your artwork (thicker paper may be required if you are painting)
- Pencil and eraser
- Scissors
- Art supplies of your choice: pencil crayons, chalk, paint, paintbrushes, etc.

Read through all of the instructions before beginning.

1. Look at the map of the ecozones in Canada that your teacher has displayed.
2. Choose an ecozone in Canada you would like to visit.
3. Research the type of nature and wildlife that would be found in that ecozone.
4. Choose a species from that ecozone (e.g., an animal, plant, insect, fish) that you would like to represent in your art.
5. Using a piece of paper, draw an outline of the species that you chose. The size of the outline should be small enough that it can fit on your piece of second paper.
6. Cut out the outline.
7. Tape your outline onto your piece of paper and colour around the cutout. Get creative! You can also fill in the rest of the paper if you like. The colours, shapes, forms, and marks you make are up to you!
8. Remove your cutout to reveal the outline of your plant, animal, or insect.
9. Don't forget to sign your name!
10. Write a few sentences on a separate sheet of paper about why you chose this symbol and why you chose the ecozone you did.

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Teacher answer sheet: Word search



1. SNOW GEESSE
2. AUTOMATISTES
3. QUIET REVOLUTION
4. TRAPPER
5. NATURE
6. WILDERNESS
7. ABSTRACT
8. FIREPLACE
9. MESSAGES