

### Learning to Look:

Introduce the painting to the students, guiding their looking and using open-ended questions to elicit their personal responses.

- ▶ *This is not the time to focus on the background information; save it until the students have shown interest in the information, generated some questions and tried to answer their questions through looking!*



**“Take a few minutes to look quietly at the image.”**

Older students could write down their thoughts while looking.

**“What do you see?”**

This is an opportunity for everyone to offer an idea, as each new thought enables everyone to see new things. Precise verbal descriptions help to clarify and identify details and usually allow for “correction” of any unsubstantiated ideas.

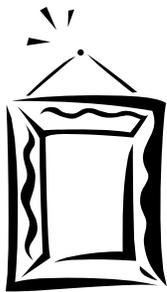
- ▶ *Teacher facilitates the discussion but should not be an expert on what “should” be seen, or how the painting “should” be interpreted!*

**“How does the artist help us to see that?”**

Colors used, placement of objects in the composition, use of light and shadow to highlight details, use of strong or dynamic lines, size of objects, and other decisions made by the artist can help us to “read” the painting.

**“What questions do you wish you could ask the artist?”**

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### Looking to Learn:

The suggested activities are strategies to enhance student observation and analysis skills while having fun looking and learning.

**Make copies of the worksheets** for use by individuals or groups of students.

**Project the image and outline selected features** on blackboard or large paper.

Students can then add appropriate details or “continue the story” in mural-form.

**Create a museum-in-the-classroom** (or hallway) so students can see each other's work and share their ideas.

# Art Alive! – Lessons for the Primary Classroom

*Summer Street Scene in Harlem*, 1948  
Jacob Lawrence, American, 1917-2000  
Oil on canvas  
91.5



**LET'S LOOK:** What do you see?  
What in the painting makes you say that?  
How does the artist help you to see that?  
What questions do you have?

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES:**

### **Five Senses**

*Ask students to imagine and describe textures, smells, sounds, and tastes they “see” in the artwork. What specific details are they “reading?”*

*Using the line drawing of the painting, students can fill in the missing details that they think are important.*

### **Then What Happened?**

*Introduce the artwork as if it were a scene from a storyboard. Ask the students to imagine how the story might continue (group activity).*

*Using the storyboard worksheet, the students can draw additional or alternate scenes using details gleaned from the brainstorm session.*

### **Art in Action**

*Translate the painting into theater: students can take turns in the role of the characters, creating a few moments of dialogue or action.*

*Experiment with still poses and action scenes.*

*Photograph the students in their poses and compare with the painting.*

## **TARGETED SKILLS:**

description, details, vocabulary,  
point of view

story structure, details, sequencing

description, inference, prediction,  
point of view

# Art Alive! – Lessons for the Elementary Classroom

*Summer Street Scene in Harlem*, 1948  
Jacob Lawrence, American, 1917-2000  
Oil on canvas  
91.5



**LET'S LOOK:** What do you see?  
What in the painting makes you say that?  
How does the artist help you to see that?  
What questions do you have?

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES:**

### **Yesterday & Today**

*Ask students to imagine the painting as a scene from the past. What clues or details indicate that it is an historical scene? How might the scene have changed since it was painted?*

*Use the line drawing worksheet to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of the scene. Students can draw in the details or use pictures from magazines.*

### **What's in a Name?**

*Introduce the name of the painting and ask students to find all the details that fit the title.*

*Ask students to rename the painting and explain their choice.*

*Divide the class into groups and ask each to create a new title based on a different characteristic of the painting: color, location, action, time, etc.*

### **Musical Moods**

*Ask students what sounds they hear in the painting. What colors or lines or characters are they "hearing?"  
Try to recreate various sounds from the scene.*

*Ask students what music they would use if this was a scene in a movie.*

*Listen to examples of music from the time and place of the painting.*

## **TARGETED SKILLS:**

details, description,  
vocabulary, inference  
compare / contrast

inference, details,  
prioritizing, description,  
point of view

details, compare/contrast,  
description

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### **About the Painting:**

The painted canvas crowded with intense “hot” colors, sharp angles and repeated rhythms mimics the busy, crowded city streets of New York, the subject of the painting. The figures are reduced to flat shapes, and the bright colors in both foreground and background serve to flatten the whole scene, seemingly forcing all of the action into mere inches of space. In the foreground (more accurately described as the bottom of the painting!) a group of young boys tests out a go-kart, some running alongside, some clinging to the frame as the vehicle rockets along the sidewalk. Immediately behind / above them to the right, a muscular man bends exaggeratedly over a block of ice, his efforts bent on shaving ice destined for snow cones -- note the bottles of flavored syrup and the white paper cups. The remainder of the space is crowded with various people, all dressed in bright stripes, hats and turbans, turning, walking, talking, and interacting. This truly is a thin slice of city life.

### **About the Artist:**

Jacob Lawrence still stands as one of the premier artists of his generation, not only among African Americans. He was a product of the 1920s artistic and social movement known as the Harlem Renaissance, and benefited greatly from the art programs and workshops founded during the Great Depression. Lawrence’s work featured scenes from daily life and stories of the African American community, taken from his observations of family, friends and the world around him. Color plays an equal role to image in Lawrence’s works, as he experimented with the meanings and emotional symbolism of colors and their reactions against each other.

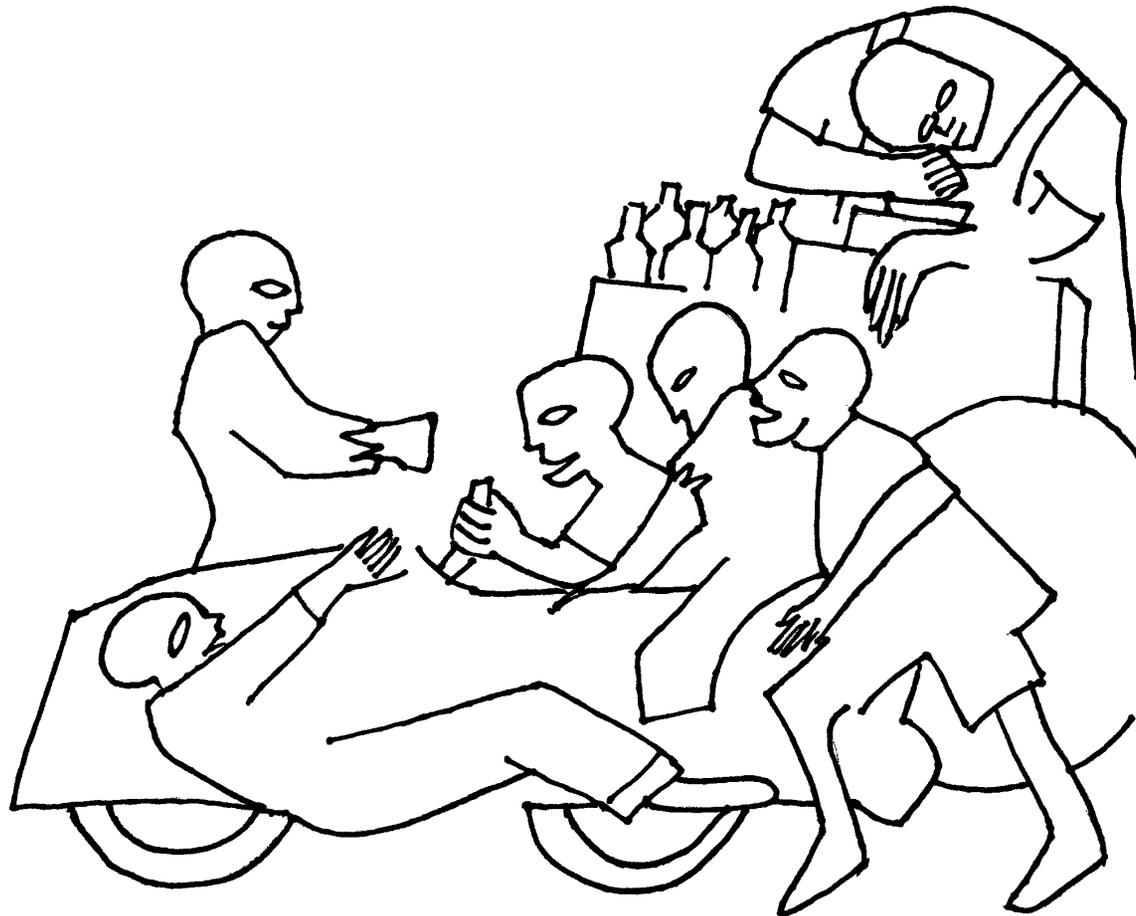
### **Additional Information:**

Lawrence’s work was inspired by the outburst of African American artistic creativity of the Harlem Renaissance, especially the sounds of jazz music.

Lawrence was the first African-American artist to have his work exhibited in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Then What Happened?* A Storyboard Worksheet**

Sketch out your story scene by scene, just as movie makers do.

Develop your story idea by placing the painting in as a beginning, middle or ending scene, and then draw two other scenes that fill in the story.

JACOB LAWRENCE

*Summer Street Scene in Harlem, 1948*



Story Title: \_\_\_\_\_

