

Strategy 19

Gallery Walk

- Time:
40 minutes
- Grouping
Sequence:
Mobile groups
of 3, whole class

Smokey lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a town that boasts 245 art galleries. On any given Friday evening, a dozen of those galleries will be having an “opening.” This means that you can wander in for free snacks, a glass of Chardonnay, and ganders at brand-new artworks. What’s not to like?

But what exactly do you *do* in an art gallery or museum? Well, usually you walk around from picture to picture, talking quietly with your companions. When you stop in front of a painting, maybe you try to understand what the artist was aiming for, compare it to other pictures or other artists, or make judgments about the quality of the work . . . and then, you move on.

That’s exactly what happens in our school version of the gallery walk: the teacher or students post some kind of work, thinking, or art; then clusters of kids quietly circulate through the room, studying and responding to other people’s thinking.

There are countless variations of gallery walks, as you will see through the rest of this book. The fundamental process involves hanging up various graphic and/or textual displays, and then having kids interact around them in a purposeful way, often leaving behind written comments as they go. A gallery walk can stand on its own, as we describe here, or it can be the culminating activity for many other lessons.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Copy of article for each student, large chart paper, different colored markers, tape, large (4x6 if possible) Post-it notes. (If you don’t have any large sticky notes, you can instead hang a couple sheets of plain paper beside each poster when you get to Step 7.) You may want to use a projector to highlight discussion topics (see Tips).

Steps and Teaching Language

STEP 1 Plan the lesson Decide how you will form kids into groups of three. Assemble the materials noted above.

STEP 2 Explain the process

Today we are going to read an article and have a discussion about it. Nothing new there, right? But with this text we are going to respond mainly with drawing, and we are going to have our discussion while walking around. Sound good?

STEP 3 Kids read Invite students to read the article, “Motorcycle Helmet Use Laws,” using Sketching Through the Text (Strategy 5). The idea is to get kids to respond visually to the article, making drawings in the margins, which they can draw upon to create a quick poster.

STEP 4 Kids discuss their sketches

Now, in your groups of three, take about one minute each to share some of your sketches with each other. Each person, hold up a sketch you think is worthwhile, and explain the thinking behind it. Partners, listen carefully, and when it’s your turn, share a sketch you made about a different part of the article or that has a different point of view.

STEP 5 Make a common poster

Now, drawing on all your sketches and any other images that have popped up in your discussion, you are going to make a poster—another, bigger drawing—that represents your group’s responses to the helmet law article. This can be based on one person’s sketch or can be something completely new, or it can be a combination of your different sketches. You have to discuss this as a team and decide on a plan.

Don’t delegate the drawing to one person; everybody should be drawing a part of the poster. You can use cartoons, stick figures, diagrams, any kind of drawing you want. And you can put in labels or captions or talk balloons to help explain what you are showing. But don’t just draw a motorcycle or a helmet. You’ve got to show your thinking about the article, what you agree or disagree with. What would be good policies about helmets? OK—take seven or eight minutes to create your poster.

STEP 6 Circulate and confer Especially the first time kids do these graphic responses, your coaching will be vital. You’ll be lowering their art anxiety, urging kids to manifest reading responses in graphic form, and making sure everyone is holding a pen and using it. But you know what? Practically whatever kids draw can lead to great conversations when the gallery walk commences.

When groups are done, have them hang up their posters at well-spaced intervals around the room.

STEP 7 Start the gallery walk

Now, in your groups, you are going to go and look carefully at another group's poster, and talk over what they have created and how it responds to the article. Then, you'll write a response or comment for the authors to read later on. I want you to really shape those sentences together, not just delegate the work to one person. When you are done writing, your scribe will sign the entry with everyone's names and hang it right beside the poster you have been studying. Each time you switch posters, a new person should become your scribe and do the writing. Go alphabetically by last name.

STEP 8 Explain the timing

When we start, we'll take about two minutes for viewing and one minute for writing on each poster, and then we'll rotate clockwise around the room. But let's think ahead. The next poster you come to will have comments posted beside it, right? You need to read those ideas too, and maybe factor them into your response to the poster. So, at each stop, I'll give you a little more time for reading, talking, and writing.

Bring your copy of the article so you can refer to your own sketches and notes. Ready? Is there a poster that looks really interesting to you? Well, you better get to it—first come first served, and only one group at a poster at a time. Go!

STEP 9 Monitor groups As kids work, circulate and confer, coaching and questioning groups as needed. As always, you are looking for great quotes or examples that you can use to feed the discussion later.

STEP 10 Regather and debrief Once students have rotated through some or all of the posters—don't let the energy flag—have them return to their own posters. There, they should read and discuss all the written comments. Then, engage everyone in a standing whole-class discussion of the issues raised by the article. Try to dig out the agreements, controversies, and range of ideas that emerged from the various posters. Don't plod through every poster. Maybe just ask: *Was there a particular poster that really got you going? Which one made you think hardest or argue the most?* Let the responses spark an authentic conversation.

GALLERY WALK is used in
Text Sets 4, 6, 8

Tips and Variations

- **GET THE RIGHT ARTICLE** This activity lives or dies by the debatability of the article you choose, and its ability to put pictures in kids' heads as they read. This motorcycle topic sure delivers! Be ready for kids to ask for red markers as they draw their motorcycle crash pictures. Ugh. But just as we invite *graphic* responses (in both senses of the term), we recognize that sometimes students (read: boys) need to joke about life and death stuff, at least at first.



- **PUSH STUDENTS TO THINK DEEPLY ABOUT THE TOPIC** Below are some questions that our students have come up with during gallery walks on this article. You can freeze people at any point in a gallery walk, and either toss out discussion topics or let kids volunteer them. Some questions that have engaged our students:

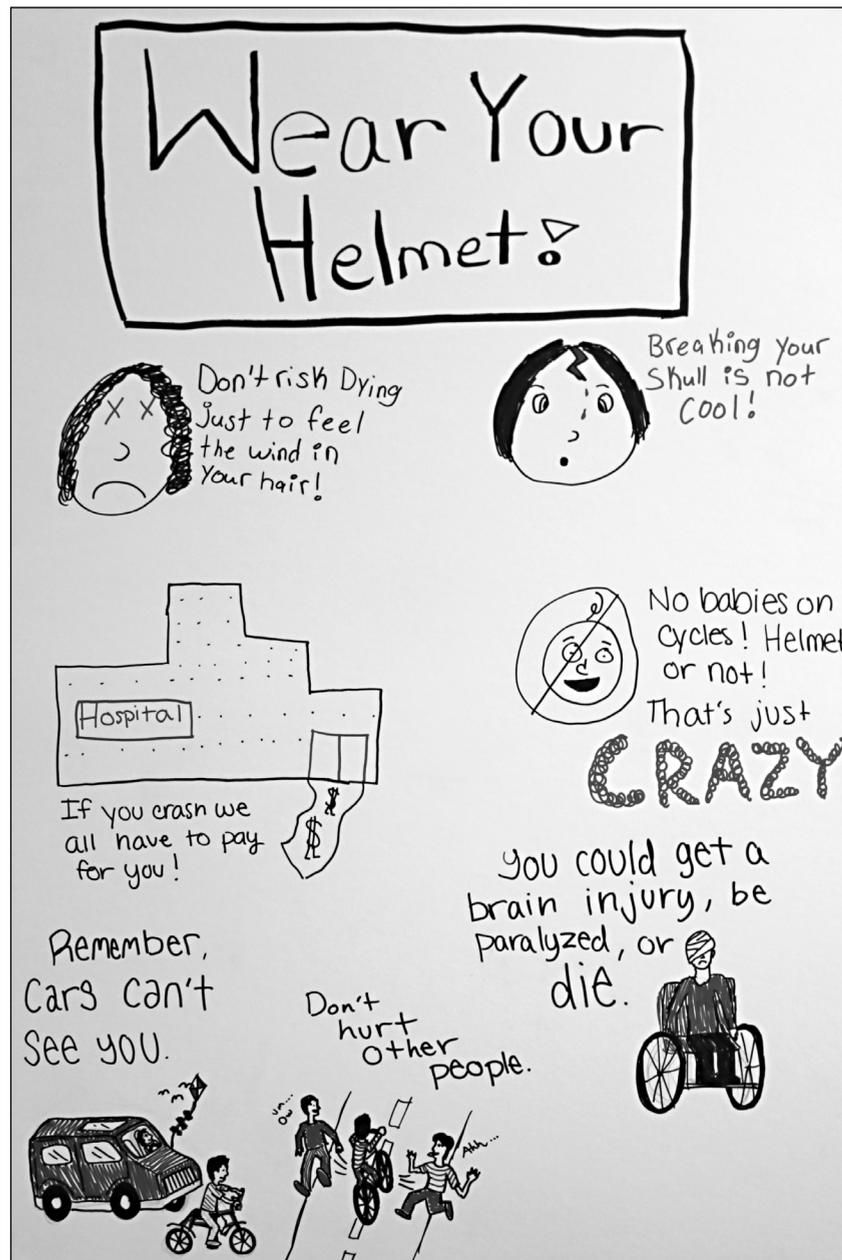
1. Who knows about the motorcycle helmet laws in our state? Are they appropriate?
2. Why do you think that car crashes have been going down and motorcycle crashes going up?
3. Why do you think that motorcycle riders love their sport so much?
4. Why do you think that so many motorcycle riders are against helmet laws?
5. Motorcycle riders have a saying: “There’s only two kinds of riders, the ones that have been down, and the ones that are going down.” What do you think that means?
6. Should people be able to do dangerous things if they want—like rock climbing, hang gliding, or riding a motorcycle without a helmet?
7. Is it fair for the public to pay the police, fire, and hospital costs of people who get injured doing dangerous things?
8. If you could ride or own a motorcycle someday, would you?
9. If there is a mandatory helmet law in a state, what should be the fine or punishment for ignoring it?

- **GOING DEEPER** Another important, if distant, variation of Gallery Walk is the “science fair” version. We know, we know, most science fair projects are deadly, but hear us out. In this iteration, only three or four groups put up their posters at once, and the creators of each display stand beside their work and formally present it. The other students put their own posters aside and become the audience. At the teacher’s signal, the audience distributes itself equally among the presenting groups.

The duty of each presenting team is to give a one-minute “spiel” or presentation on their thinking, explaining the graphic, and then answering questions from the visiting students. The visitors are required to pose questions and jot down what they are learning so they will be ready to report back later. This process takes five minutes max. Then the teacher calls for audience members to thank the presenters, move along to a different poster group, and repeat the cycle. Each group will present its poster twice, to two sets of visitors. Then everyone switches roles; the groups that have been serving as the audience post their charts, and the

process repeats. Students don't hear a presentation from every group, but by both presenting and serving as an audience twice, they still get to delve more deeply into the topic.

If kids have engaged in a larger study, reading multiple sources, and dug more deeply into a topic, you can ramp up the gallery walk into a wonderful show-what-you-know event. When we use this variant, we also require each presenting group to create an attractive, engaging handout for all visitors—so their performance includes a prepared speech, answering questions on the spot, and writing a brochure.



Students create a poster

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Motorcycle Helmet Use Laws

March 2010

Compared with cars, motorcycles are an especially dangerous form of travel. The federal government estimates that per mile traveled, the number of deaths on

In the event of a crash,

unhelmeted motorcyclists are three times more likely than helmeted riders to suffer traumatic brain injuries.

motorcycles in 2009 was about 37 times the number in cars. Motorcyclist deaths have been rising in recent years—more than doubling by 2008 from the record low in 1997. In 2008, more motorcyclists died in crashes than in any year since the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

began collecting these fatal crash data. In contrast, passenger vehicle occupant deaths reached a record low in 2008.

Motorcycles often have excessive performance capabilities, including especially rapid acceleration and high top speeds. They are less stable than cars in emergency braking and less visible to other motorists. Motorcyclists are more prone to crash injuries than car occupants because motorcycles are unenclosed, leaving riders vulnerable to contact with hard road surfaces.

Helmets decrease the severity of head injuries, the likelihood of death, and the overall cost of medical care. They are designed to cushion and protect riders' heads from the impact of a crash. Just like safety belts in cars, helmets cannot provide total protection against head injury or death, but they do reduce the incidence of both. The NHTSA estimates that motorcycle helmets reduce the likelihood of crash fatality by 37 percent. Helmets are highly effective in preventing brain injuries, which often require extensive treatment and may result in lifelong disability. In the event of a crash, unhelmeted motorcyclists are three times more likely than helmeted riders to suffer traumatic brain injuries.

Only 20 American states have laws requiring riders to wear helmets, while the rest have no laws or only require young riders (usually under 18) to wear helmets. Laws requiring motorcyclists to wear helmets are in effect in most countries outside the United States. Among them are Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, and Venezuela.



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