

**Enduring Idea:** Materialism

**Integrated Discipline:** Language Arts

**Unit Title:** Turning Trash to Treasure

**Unit Designer:** Molly D. Chance

**Unit Description:** Recently, a new piece of clothing was put on the market that sold out in a matter of days. The designer, in conjunction with the French fashion A.P.C. line, created the luxurious item using Egyptian cotton, a “reinforced neckline and shoulders”, and displaying an asking price of \$120. What was this item you may ask? It was a plain, white, loose fitting t-shirt. What made this item, which compared with one from the *Dollar Store* showed no visible difference, so special and worthy of such a high price? The designer was rapper and celebrity Kanye West. His name, along with A.P.C. is silkscreened inside the neckline. Is this item truly worth \$120? What makes an item valuable? What does it take for something to be considered a treasure? Is it a name, the items used in its creation, or its rarity? Are items that are valuable to us, valuable to everyone? In this unit, learners will look at how value is determined in today’s society. Learners will share objects they find to be valuable and will explore other perspectives on the idea of value through the use of material objects. Learners will further this exploration by taking a common, everyday object and by manipulating it, turning it in to something that they would consider valuable.

**Images:** 1. CMA 1964.1  
- *Sofa*, Duncan Phyfe, 1841, Rosewood, rosewood veneer, and rosewood-grained mahogany; secondary woods: ash, white pine; silk lampas upholstery (reproduction of original)  
2. 1966.59

3. CMA 2010.8.3

- *Bird Effigy Bowl*, Sara Ayers, 1980, pit-fired earthenware

4. CMA 2012.4

- *By the Windowsill*, Luigi Lucioni, 1932, oil on canvas

**Key Concept:** Value is placed on objects depending on culture/beliefs.

**Essential Question:** What determines value?

- CCSS Art:**
1. VA3-1.3 Use and combine a variety of materials, techniques, and processes to create works of visual art.
  2. VA3-3.2 Select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning through his or her artworks.
  3. VA3-5.1 Identify purposes for the creation of works of visual art.

**Integrated CCSS:** Language Arts

1. 3-1.7 Create responses to text through a variety of methods such as writing, creative dramatics, and visual and performing arts.
2. 3-4.2 Create writing that includes details that support a central idea.
3. 3-4.6 Use proofreading to edit for previously learned conventions.

- Learning Outcomes:**
1. The learner will define value by discussing material objects popular and commonly used in today's society.
  2. The learner will choose a common, everyday object and manipulate it in such a way to give it more value or seem more valuable.
  3. The learner will write 2-5 paragraphs explaining their object and why their additions added value to the object.
  4. The learner will participate in both a self and group critique reflecting on how their object visually represents materialism.

**Motivator:** Learners will be shown a variety of images. On individual notecards, learners will list if the item is valuable or not, how much they think it is worth, and how they came to their conclusions. After giving learners sufficient time to examine the objects and write their responses, learners will gather in small

groups to discuss their opinions. Toward the end of the class period, the teacher will reveal the true facts about the pieces shown and will discuss several points with learners.

1. What makes an item valuable?
2. What does it take for something to be considered a treasure?
3. Is it a name, the items used in its creation, or its rarity?
4. Are items that are valuable to us, valuable to everyone?

**Day Breakdown:** \*Based on ten 50 minute class periods

Day 1: Motivator (see above)

Day 2: Learners will choose between a variety of everyday, common objects. Learners will need to carefully consider each object and how it could be altered. Learners may consider additions such as branding, “valuable” materials, or a unique rare feature. Once learners have chosen their object, they may use the remainder of the class period to sketch their new design. During this time, the rubric will be handed out for learners to review.

Day 3: Learners will use Day 3 to finalize sketches. Learners will also use this time to create a product concept drawing. The teacher will show learners several examples of concepts drawings and will encourage learners to include text (determining color, size, materials used...), as well as including drawings of different perspectives/angles.

Day 4-6: Learners will use these days as studio time to work independently on their object. The teacher will circulate the classroom to assess learner progress (rubric review), as well as to address any questions or concerns.

Day 7: Similar to the style of a product pitch, learners will present their object in front of their peers. Learners will need to thoroughly describe their object, persuading the listeners of its valuableness. (Learners may want to want an example of an infomercial if they are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with a product pitch.)

Day 8: Learners will create a small fictional magazine article, which features their new product. Learners will utilize the information they share during the presentations introduced in the previous class. Learners do have the option creating illustrations or

images to coincide with their article.

Day 9: Learners will participate in a final group critique, as well as an individual critique to reflect on their artworks, as well as the successes and attempts at visually depicting the enduring idea of materialism through value. The learners will need to review the rubric in order to assess their progress, as well as that of their peers.

Day 10: Learners will use this day for making any final edits to their artworks. Any learner who has not finished their self-critique may also take this time to finish. By the end of the class period, all learners will be required to submit a final artwork.

**Materials:**

- Pencils and erasers
- Notecards
- Variety of objects (staplers, paper clips, bottle, sock...)
- Variety of paper
- Rhinestones/plastic or costume jewelry
- Glue
- Scissors
- Cardstock (magazine article)
- Colored pencils
- Markers

**Assessment:**

- Value notecards
- Product concept drawing
- Magazine article
- Project rubric
- Studio participation rubric
- Self-critique