Making Connections
Unit Overview

Grades
Middle School–Upper School

Unit Goal
This unit uses artwork to help students develop the critical thinking skill of making connections and to explore the value this pattern of thinking brings to developing a deeper understanding of people, events, and issues.

Curricular Connections
An example of how making-connections can be used to deepen understanding in the classroom is provided. The students use making connections to understand why the 19th century founders of American industry came to be called ‘robber barons’ or ‘captains of industry,’ and what role they played in laying the foundation on which the United States could grow into a leading industrial nation. They will also make connections between the founders of industry in the 19th century and contemporary tech moguls to better understand the industrial and economic landscape of America today.

Essential Questions
• What does it mean to make connections?
• What kinds of connections can be made?
• What is the process of connection-making?
• How can making connections deepen our understanding of issues, events, and peoples?

Duration
This unit requires an estimated 75 minutes, plus optional metacognitive breaks. These breaks provide students an opportunity to reflect upon their thinking (metacognition) in order to better understand that thinking pattern and transfer it to other content areas and to the world outside of school.

Artworks
Several pairs of artworks from the Renwick Gallery can be used to support this unit. This guide focuses on:
• Joan Parcher’s Graphite Pendulum-Pendant
• Jennifer Crupi’s Ornamental Hands
Arc of Learning

Step 1 + Introduction (10 minutes)
Students speculate about the nature of connection-making based on their own experience of making connections.

Step 2 + Identifying Personal Connections to Jewelry (5 minutes)
Students gather their previous knowledge about jewelry. This step serves as the baseline to which they will compare their new and deeper understanding about jewelry.

Step 3 + Looking at Artwork 1 (10 minutes)
Students examine Jennifer Crupi’s Ornamental Hands closely and carefully and explore how the artwork is constructed using a thinking pattern called Parts-Purposes-Connections.

Step 4 + Another Look at Artwork 1 (10 minutes)
Craft works are traditionally designed with the human body in mind. In this step, students imagine the artwork in action.

Step 5 + Looking at Artwork 2 (10 minutes)
Students closely observe Joan Parcher’s Graphite Pendulum-Pendant. Using the thinking pattern used here is Nouns-Adjectives-Verbs.

Step 6 + Another Look at Artwork 2 (10 minutes)
Students imagine this second artwork in action. Consider playing some music and invite your students to move to the music so that they are reminded of the many movements their bodies can make.

Step 7 + Connecting Artworks 1 and 2 (10 minutes)
Students connect the two artworks and see whether making their own connections extends their understanding of the artworks and, in this case, jewelry. In many ways, this is the most critical learning experience of the unit. Connecting two items often cuts past the differences and focuses on the commonalities, which are the defining features and help us arrive at the conceptual understanding.

Step 8 + A Little about the Artworks (5 minutes)
Students read information from experts about the artworks. Will this help them add new connections? How will this information add to their understanding of both the artworks and jewelry, more generally?

Step 9 + Reflection (5 minutes)
Students consolidate their thinking by reflecting on the process of connection-making and speculate about how they might transfer this process to other topics.
Essential Questions

• What does it mean to make connections?
• What kinds of connections can be made?
• What is the process of connection-making?
• How can making connections deepen understanding of people, events, and issues?
Joan Parcher, *Graphite Pendulum-Pendant*, 1994
Jennifer Crupi, *Ornamental Hands: Figure One*, 2010
Step 1 ✫ Introduction

Warm up...

... if you are in the classroom: Look at all of the objects around you in the classroom; pick two that you feel are connected. Think of the many ways in which the items are connected. Pick two other items to connect and consider what connects them.

... if you are in the museum: Look at the artworks around you. Choose two artworks that you feel are connected. Find as many ways in which the artworks are connected as you can. Next, pick two other artworks to connect.

In this space, make a list of all the kinds of connections you discovered.

Reflect...

Answer the questions below based on the warm up thinking exercise.

What did you learn about connection-making by making these connections? What does it mean to make a connection?

What things did you consider when connecting items?

If you were to describe step-by-step what you did to make a connection, what would these steps be?
Step 2 • Identifying Personal Connections to Jewelry

Soon we are going to look at connections between two pieces of jewelry to learn about connection-making and how it can help us deepen our understanding of objects, issues, or even people. Before we do, reflect on your personal connections to jewelry.

Consider . . .

- If you are wearing jewelry, what pieces of jewelry are you wearing? Why do you wear these items?
- If you are not wearing jewelry, why not?
- Who around you is wearing jewelry? What kind of jewelry are those people wearing? Why might they choose to wear those items?
- Have you seen pieces of jewelry that you consider unusual? Where did you see these pieces of jewelry? Who was wearing them? Why might they choose to wear those items?

Write . . .

In the space below, write all that you know about jewelry. You may want to talk about the kinds of jewelry, who wears it, why you think jewelry is worn, or the materials used.
Step 3 ✤ Looking at Artwork 1

Look closely at *Ornamental Hands* by Jennifer Crupi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts</th>
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<th>Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the many different parts of this piece of jewelry?</td>
<td>What might be the purpose of each part?</td>
<td>How are the various parts connected to one another?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What kinds of connections have you noted?
**Optional: Metacognitive Break**

*Think about Parts-Purposes-Connections...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did Parts-Purposes-Connections help you explore the artwork?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did your thinking differ in each step of Parts-Purposes-Connections?</td>
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<tr>
<td>When else might you use this pattern of thinking to learn?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 4 ✧ Another Look at Artwork 1

Look again at *Ornamental Hands* by Jennifer Crupi. This time, pretend you are wearing the artwork.

*Consider . . .*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What effect might wearing the artwork have on your body? How might stand and/or behave?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>How might your body affect the artwork if you did have a chance to wear it?</td>
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</table>

![Image of ornamental hands]
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>What kind of a connections does this line of thinking reveal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What message(s) might the artist be trying to convey through this piece of jewelry?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What questions might you want to ask the artist about the piece of jewelry she has created?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 5 ✶ Looking at Artwork 2

This second piece of jewelry, a necklace called *Graphite Pendulum-Pendant*, was made by Joan Parcher. It’s about the size of a chicken egg.

*Look Closely* . . .

Working with a partner, take turns naming the parts of the artwork using nouns. Record your nouns in the space provided.

Next take turns to provide words to describe (adjectives) each of the parts (nouns) and record them.

Finally, take turns naming the actions/movements (verbs) that each part could m

<table>
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Formulate your observations into statements about the artwork. For example: “the oval black pendant hangs.” Share your statements with those around you and listen to the ones they have come up with.

If you could ask the artist two questions about her artwork, what might they be?
Optional: Metacognitive Break

Think about Nouns-Adjectives-Verbs . . .

How did using Nouns-Adjectives-Verbs help you observe the artwork?

What kinds of thinking did you find yourself using?

When else might you find Nouns-Adjectives-Verbs to be a useful learning tool?
**Step 6 + Another Look at Artwork 2**

*Look Closely . . .*

Look again at *Graphite Pendulum-Pendant* by Joan Parcher. This time, pretend you are wearing the artwork. The dark, graphite section is 1.5 inches wide and is the same material as a very soft pencil lead.

*Consider . . .*

Think about all the movements you make in a day if you were wearing this artwork around your neck.

How might your moving body affect the artwork?

What affect might have on your back? Your clothing?

*Track . . .*

Prettend that you are wearing *Graphite Pendulum-Pendant* as you make all those moves. What are the different kinds of marks the pendant might leave on your clothing with your different movements? Track some of those marks here.

What new kinds of connection have you discovered?

What message might the artist be trying to convey through this piece of jewelry?
**Step 7 + Connecting Artworks 1 and 2**

*Consider the two artworks together...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connect</th>
<th>Extend</th>
<th>Wonder</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>What are the many ways in which the two artworks are connected?</td>
<td>In what way do the connections you see between the two artworks extend your understanding of jewelry in general?</td>
<td>What questions do you still have about the artworks? About jewelry?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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*Making Connections: Student Edition*
Optional: Metacognitive Break

Think about Connect-Extend-Wonder . . .

What did you discover by connecting ideas? How did this shift your understanding of the artwork?

How did looking at the two artworks together extend your thinking about the artworks and jewelry, more generally? How did this shift your understanding of the artwork?

What might be valuable about wondering? How might wondering shift your understanding of the artwork?

On what other occasions would you find it useful to use Connect-Extend-Wonder?
Step 8 ✦ A Little About the Artworks

Read the text below, seeking new connections or extensions.

*Graphite Pendulum-Pendant* by Joan Parcher

Instead of traditional gemstones or precious metals, Joan Parcher uses materials gathered from a dump. She hopes to remind the viewer that one person’s trash is another’s treasure. Her works challenge the notion of preciousness and the tradition of jewelry as ornament. The pendant sways on the wearer’s body, smearing a dark stain across the chest and making the wearer a part of the artwork. The piece continually disintegrates as the material scrapi the surface of the clothing, shattering our idea of jewelry as a precious heirloom.

*Ornamental Hands* by Jennifer Crupi

Jennifer Crupi said that seeing Joan Parcher’s work had a big impact on her work. It made her look at jewelry in a new way and look closely at the relationship between the jewelry and the body. She was particularly inspired by the fact that Parcher’s pendant documents the wearer’s movement their clothing. In so doing, the pendant emphasizes that jewelry acts on the body. In response, she began to create work that was designed to shape the body. *Ornamental Hands* forces the wearer into hand positions considered beautiful and elegant, as documented in the paintings on its stand.

What new connections or extensions can you add to your Connect-Extend-Wonder on page 17 as a result of this information?
Step 9 ✦ Reflection

Now that you have connected two pieces of jewelry, what new insights do you have about jewelry, generally? Write about these new insights below.

Compare your new ideas with those you wrote on page 8. Did your thinking shift? If so, why?

Consider the practice of connection-making:

- What is the process by which you make connections?

- How can connection-making help you develop a deeper understanding of people, events, and issues?

- What topic might you use the practice of connection-making to understand better?
**Making Connections**

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**Grades**
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**Curricular Connections**
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**Essential Questions**
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- What kinds of connections can be made?
- What is the process of connection-making?
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**Duration**
This unit requires an estimated 75 minutes, plus optional metacognitive breaks. These breaks provide students an opportunity to reflect upon their thinking (metacognition) in order to better understand that thinking pattern and transfer it to other content areas and to the world outside of school.

**Artworks**
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- Jennifer Crupi’s *Ornamental Hands*
Arc of Learning

Step 1 + Introduction (10 minutes)
Students speculate about the nature of connection-making based on their own experience of making connections.

Step 2 + Identifying Personal Connections to Jewelry (5 minutes)
Students gather their previous knowledge about jewelry. This step serves as the baseline to which they will compare their new and deeper understanding about jewelry.

Step 3 + Looking at Artwork 1 (10 minutes)
Students examine Jennifer Crupi’s Ornamental Hands closely and carefully and explore how the artwork is constructed using a thinking pattern called Parts-Purposes-Connections.

Step 4 + Another Look at Artwork 1 (10 minutes)
Craft works are traditionally designed with the human body in mind. In this step, students imagine the artwork in action.

Step 5 + Looking at Artwork 2 (10 minutes)
Students closely observe Joan Parcher’s Graphite Pendulum-Pendant. Using the thinking pattern used here is Nouns-Adjectives-Verbs.

Step 6 + Another Look at Artwork 2 (10 minutes)
Students imagine this second artwork in action. Consider playing some music and invite your students to move to the music so that they are reminded of the many movements their bodies can make.

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Joan Parcher, *Graphite Pendulum-Pendant*, 1994
Graphite, sterling silver, and stainless steel, Smithsonian American Art Museum,
Museum purchase through the Renwick Acquisitions Fund, 1995.12
Jennifer Crupi, *Ornamental Hands: Figure One*, 2010
Step 1 ✦ Introduction

Warm up...

...if you are in the classroom: Look at all of the objects around you in the classroom; pick two that you feel are connected. Think of the many ways in which the items are connected. Pick two other items to connect and consider what connects them.

...if you are in the museum: Look at the artworks around you. Choose two artworks that you feel are connected. Find as many ways in which the artworks are connected as you can. Next, pick two other artworks to connect.

In this space, make a list of all the kinds of connections you discovered.

Reflect...

Answer the questions below based on the warm up thinking exercise.

What did you learn about connection-making by making these connections? What does it mean to make a connection?

What things did you consider when connecting items?

If you were to describe step-by-step what you did to make a connection, what would these steps be?
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Write . . .

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What kinds of connections have you noted?
Optional: Metacognitive Break

Think about Parts-Purposes-Connections . . .

How did Parts-Purposes-Connections help you explore the artwork?

How did your thinking differ in each step of Parts-Purposes-Connections?

When else might you use this pattern of thinking to learn?
Step 4 ✧ Another Look at Artwork 1

Look again at *Ornamental Hands* by Jennifer Crupi. This time, pretend you are wearing the artwork.

*Consider . . .*

What effect might wearing the artwork have on your body? How might stand and/or behave?

How might your body affect the artwork if you did have a chance to wear it?
### Connect, Interpret, and Question . . .

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Step 5  +  Looking at Artwork 2

This second piece of jewelry, a necklace called *Graphite Pendulum-Pendant*, was made by Joan Parcher. It’s about the size of a chicken egg.

*Look Closely . . .*

Working with a partner, take turns naming the parts of the artwork using nouns. Record your nouns in the space provided.

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If you could ask the artist two questions about her artwork, what might they be?
Optional: Metacognitive Break

Think about Nouns-Adjectives-Verbs . . .

How did using Nouns-Adjectives-Verbs help you observe the artwork?

What kinds of thinking did you find yourself using?

When else might you find Nouns-Adjectives-Verbs to be a useful learning tool?
Step 6 ✦ Another Look at Artwork 2

Look Closely . . .

Look again at *Graphite Pendulum-Pendant* by Joan Parcher. This time, pretend you are wearing the artwork. The dark, graphite section is 1.5 inches wide and is the same material as a very soft pencil lead.

Consider . . .

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What affect might have on your back? Your clothing?

Track . . .

Pretend that you are wearing *Graphite Pendulum-Pendant* as you make all those moves. What are the different kinds of marks the pendant might leave on your clothing with your different movements? Track some of those marks here.

What new kinds of connection have you discovered?

What message might the artist be trying to convey through this piece of jewelry?
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Optional: Metacognitive Break

Think about Connect-Extend-Wonder . . .

What did you discover by connecting ideas? How did this shift your understanding of the artwork?

How did looking at the two artworks together extend your thinking about the artworks and jewelry, more generally? How did this shift your understanding of the artwork?

What might be valuable about wondering? How might wondering shift your understanding of the artwork?

On what other occasions would you find it useful to use Connect-Extend-Wonder?
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Read the text below, seeking new connections or extensions.

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What new connections or extensions can you add to your Connect-Extend-Wonder on page 17 as a result of this information?
Step 9 ✪ Reflection

Now that you have connected two pieces of jewelry, what new insights do you have about jewelry, generally? Write about these new insights below.

Compare your new ideas with those you wrote on page 8. Did your thinking shift? If so, why?

Consider the practice of connection-making:

What is the process by which you make connections?

How can connection-making help you develop a deeper understanding of people, events, and issues?

What topic might you use the practice of connection-making to understand better?