



LESSON PLAN

# Passionate Pursuits



RELATED PHOTO ESSAY

## **The Beauty of Craft**

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**Class:** 60 minutes

## Key Idea

All sorts of artisans create beautiful, appealing alternatives to mass-produced consumer goods and entertainment. Communities can become more vibrant and resilient when handmade goods and services are created locally.

## Background

This photo essay depicts six different craft makers based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Their works are examples of how locally made goods and services can contribute to dynamic and diverse communities.

- **Potter** Sandy Simon creates earthenware using a potter’s wheel, a technology that was first developed in Mesopotamian times.
- Pomo **basket weaver** Edward Willie gathers and dries plants from a local forest for his striking baskets.
- La Tania, a **Flamenco dancer** originally from Mallorca, Spain, demonstrates this traditional dance form that uses rhythmic movements and expressive improvisation to convey meaning.
- **Decorative ironworker** Carla Hall practices a craft that arose in the 16th century—making decorative utensils, architectural features, and art from molten iron.
- Matt Kreutz, an **artisan baker**, makes his bread using an old-fashioned wood-fired oven.
- Kazuaki Tanahashi, a **Japanese calligrapher**, follows an ancient art that gives the calligrapher just one chance to draw kanji characters, requiring intense concentration and skill to create beautiful forms.

Two recent social movements involve the use of low-technology or traditional skills to produce objects or experiences. The **maker movement** is a trend toward individuals creating self-made—and often unique and customizable—products. Compared to mass production, these products are less resource-intensive to create and distribute, and require no mid-

## SUBJECT AREAS

### HIGH SCHOOL

- Art
- Economics
- English Language Arts
- Environmental Science
- Photography

### COLLEGE

- Art
- Environmental Studies

## THEMES

- Beauty of simplicity
- Rethinking technology
- Appropriate technology
- Self-reliance and resiliency

## MATERIALS

- Access to the photo essay online (or printed copies of it)
- (Optional) Copies of one or more articles on the reskilling or maker movements (from “Resources” below)

## PREPARATION

- (Optional) Make copies of the photo essay



dlemen. The **reskillers movement** is fueled by a desire to learn basic skills that were once commonplace but that are becoming lost. Skills such as gardening, repairing things, and making do with less help both people and their communities be more resilient and self-sufficient.

### Connections to National Standards

Common Core English Language Arts. SL.9-10.1 and SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and instructor-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 [or 11–12] topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. D2.Eco.2.9-12. Use marginal benefits and marginal costs to construct an argument for or against an approach or solution to an economic issue.

Next Generation Science Standards. HS-LS2-7. Design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity.

### Lesson

#### SETTING THE STAGE

Introduce the photo essay by asking students what comes to mind when they think of the word “technology.” How would they define this term? Explain that students will be looking at a photo essay that shows six different artisans plying their crafts using varying types of technology. You may want to share with them that technology is often defined as a tool or method created to solve problems, and that traditional and nonmechanical forms of technology—such as needles, ovens, and brushes—are sometimes referred to as low-technology.

#### ENGAGING WITH THE STORY

Direct students to view the photo essay in pairs or groups of three. Invite them to look for things that all or some of the artisans—or their crafts—have in common and to write down their thoughts about this.



## Delving Deeper

1. Ask students what they noticed from the photo essay. What characteristics did the artisans or crafts share? What technology is involved with each craft? Did students' ideas of technology shift after viewing the photo essay?
2. How are artisans who employ low-technology methods contributing to reducing the impact of human activities on the environment?
3. Distribute the articles for students to read about the reskilling and the maker movements (or briefly describe these movements to students).
4. Lead a discussion, asking such questions as:
  - What do individuals gain when people learn crafts such as those in the photo essay or articles? What does society gain?
  - What might be the downsides of people learning these crafts?
  - Some people describe the maker movement as aiming to move us from a consumer to a producer society. What might be the pros and cons of such a change?
  - The photo essay itself is a product of an individual's craft. How does its form impact the message it conveys?

## Reflecting and Projecting

Give students one of the following reflective writing prompts to demonstrate their understanding of the story. (Note for teachers: Just as quotes from a book or text are used to prove an analytical thought, students use the photo essay to justify their reasoning.)

1. Students identify a craft they would be interested to learn, and explore what would be involved in learning it. How might society or the environment be affected if more people learned a craft? (C3.D2.Eco.2.9-12)
2. If craftsmen, like the ones highlighted in the photo essay, were considering to quit their craft, what would you say to convince them to continue? (CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.1 and SL.11-12.1)



## Resources

Brit Morin, "[What Is the Maker Movement and Why Should You Care?](#)"  
*Huffington Post*, May 2, 2013.

Adrienne Burke, "[How the Maker Movement Is Reinventing Retail.](#)"  
*Forbes*, September 25, 2013.

TransitionNetwork.org, "[The Great Reskilling.](#)"