LESSON/ACTIVITY: A Peaceful Path: Drawing a Landscape with Depth

S. Holland

LEVEL:

2nd grade and up

SUGGESTED TIME:

Discussion time plus 30 minutes to 1 hour for artwork

OBJECTIVE(S):

Students will

1. demonstrate understanding of Evan Turk’s use of overlapping, size proportion and line to create depth in the illustrations in *Grandfather Gandhi*.
2. create a landscape picture showing depth by using overlapping, diminishing size, and vanishing lines.
3. communicate ideas about a personal journey (literal or metaphorical) in a landscape artwork.

MATERIALS/TOOLS:

drawing paper
pencils
color media such as crayons
markers and/ or colored pencils

PREPARATION:

After having read *Grandfather Gandhi*, examine the cover art and find the pages in the book where a similar, more detailed image is repeated. Discuss the way Evan Turk shows space in the illustrations. Ask students what object is the farthest away, and what visual evidence tell them so. What can be seen that is a little closer, but still far away in the background? What do they see that is the closest object in the foreground? What makes it look close? The cover design does not have horizon lines but the page illustration has multiple horizon lines. Ask the students what these lines do in the picture to divide and show space. Focus on the path that
Grandfather and Arun are walking. How does the artist show that this is a long path leading into the distance? What is the mood of the illustration compared with other images in the book? Analyze why this image was chosen for the cover of the book. What kind of road or journey are Arun and his grandfather taking? Ask the students to think of a real or metaphorical journey they have taken or will take.

PROCEDURE:

Think of a real or metaphorical journey to illustrate and decide where it will take place. Visualize the people/objects and or symbols that will be included in the illustration. Draw at least one line (flat, hilly or mountainous) that crosses the paper, to show the horizon, dividing the land from the sky. Add more horizon lines if desired. Add a path, curved or straight that leads from the foreground into the distance, diminishing in size to a vanishing point on the far horizon. Add objects and details to the drawing, maintaining size and placement relationships and including overlapping to show depth/distance. Objects that are in the foreground are generally drawn lower down on the page, of larger size and with more detail and can overlap objects that are farther away. Objects that are farther away are drawn smaller and placed closer to the horizon; these objects may be partially overlapped, and may have less detail. Complete the drawing with color media.

VOCABULARY:

The **horizon line** is a theoretical line that represents the eye level of the observer. The horizon line is the same as the horizon (the edge of the land against the sky) a large flat plane like the ocean. Most of the time geographic features (hills) and other objects (trees and buildings) make the horizon above the horizon line. The **vanishing point** is that spot on the horizon line to which the receding parallel lines diminish. As things get further away, from us, they seem smaller and closer together. When they get far enough away, distances become ever tinier and so form a single point. **Overlapping** in art is the placement of objects over one another in order to create the illusion of depth. The **foreground** of a composition is the visual plane that appears closest to the viewer, while the **background** is the plane in a composition perceived furthest from the viewer. The **middle ground** is the visual plane located between both the foreground and background.

RESOURCES:

*Grandfather Gandhi* by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus, illustrated by Evan Turk. Other landscape images such as *Road with Cypress and Star* by Vincent Van Gogh or *The High Plains* by Thomas Hart Benton or landscape photographs.
**POINTERS/ PITFALLS:**

Students often draw everything at the same depth in an artwork because they are visualizing each object singularly or individually as they draw. Look at physical objects overlapping. Model how to draw overlapping objects, showing that one object can partially cover (block our view of) other objects. Children tend to color a stripe representing the sky across the top of the paper. Encourage them, if they are coloring the sky, to color all of the sky down to the horizon line.

**VARIATIONS:**

The drawing can include sign posts with text making the journey explicit. The drawing could represent goal setting with steps along the way and the ultimate goal on the horizon.