

FAQs for Art in Action

What is Art in Action?

Art in Action is a structured and fully developed art program based on the belief that art education is basic to enriching students' lives by developing creativity, critical thinking, self expression, and cultural awareness and self esteem. Art in Action offers a discipline-based, sequential visual art curriculum that teaches art appreciation, art history, and art techniques and further assists educators with training and support, enabling them to integrate visual art into the learning experience of every student. Visit www.artinaction.org to view lessons, learn more about artists, answers to FAQs, and links to other art sites.

How does the program work?

The Art in Action program is taught in K-3 classrooms by trained volunteer parents (docents.) A guided discussion about an art masterpiece is followed by a demonstration of techniques and a hands-on art project. Each of the twelve lessons explores a different artist and a different medium. Docents provide biographical information about the artist and help students learn to analyze a work of art. Through open-ended interpretive questions, students are encouraged to share ideas about what they see and to respond to the observations of other students. As they examine a work of art they learn to look more closely, to articulate their ideas, and to support their theories. They then create their own works of art inspired by the concepts and techniques they have studied.

What will the students learn?

They will learn about twelve artists and create related projects, including lessons on portraits, still life, landscape, and abstract art using a variety of media. Your child will develop his/her creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression and build a solid foundation in drawing, painting, and sculpture techniques. Skills and concepts are developed sequentially and become increasingly complex as students gain experience and confidence in creative expression.

What type of parent volunteer/docent training is available?

Currently we have four programs in place: Kindergarten, grades one, two, and three. Art in Action instructors will come to Lafayette in September to provide training for each class. The training is recommended, and very helpful, but not mandatory. Additionally, all the lessons are available online at www.artinaction.org

**Optional training is provided in September in the school cafeteria.
Look on the school calendar for information when it will be this year.**

New this year Art in Action is offering free training via webinar throughout the month of September. If you can't make the trainings at school check out www.artinaction.org for more info on webinar trainings.

How do we schedule classes?

Each class will select a class coordinator who will meet with their teacher to determine a schedule for the year's lessons. The lessons usually take place at the same time and day (but don't have to) and are approximately two weeks apart. Lessons are about one hour in length and there are twelve lessons for the year. Once your class and teacher have agreed on a few good options, please e mail your top three requests to the Art in Action coordinator.

Where do classes take place?

Classes are held in the bungalow in the school yard, but can also be taught in the classroom if your teacher prefers, or if there is a schedule conflict in the bungalow.

How do we communicate with each other?

1. A list of volunteers will be compiled and shared at the beginning of the year, usually at back to school night. One parent will be the classroom coordinator and they will be responsible for setting up the lessons, recruiting volunteers and reminding parents of upcoming lessons. They don't necessarily need to be at every lesson though.
2. There will be an online calendar which will keep track of lessons and facilitate any schedule changes we may make.
3. The schedule will be posted in the dungeon, where we keep our supplies so you can coordinate and piggy back supplies with other classrooms.

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Where are supplies kept?

Our supplies are kept in the northwest corner of our dark and dusty (but beloved!) dungeon. This is the large storage room in the basement, near the boy's bathroom. For transporting supplies to and from the bungalow, we use a large cart, and we also have rolling racks for wet art. Supplies for cleaning up after each lesson are also found in the dungeon. There is a bathroom across from the auditorium with a sink that is available for us to use. Lynda Butler, a Lafayette parent who is a professional organizer, spent many hours a few years ago sorting out and arranging our supplies, but if there's something you can't find please let one of us know.

How do I prepare for a lesson?

Art in Action has been called cookbook art—if you can read a cookbook, you can teach these lessons! However, advance preparation for the lesson is necessary. Prepare for your class by reviewing the lesson ahead of time. Manuals for each grade are in the dungeon, and they can be taken home overnight. Lessons are also available online and this is the easiest and most efficient way to prepare for a lesson. You first need to create an account for yourself by going to www.artinaction.org/apply after which a coordinator will validate that you are part of the Lafayette Community. Some lessons require a bit of preparation—cutting construction paper, etc., and this is best done before class time. Docents (parent volunteers) are encouraged to share with each other any helpful tips or techniques they discover while teaching the classes.

What are typical glitches in the system?

Most problems stem from a lack of communication. Confirm with your teacher and other docents a few days before each scheduled class. Another reminder on the morning of the class is good, too. If you can't make it for some reason, please get a substitute. If that's not possible, talk with your class coordinator about other substitute parent docents or re-schedule the lesson.

What do we do with the finished lessons?

Each teacher has a labeled box in the dungeon for finished artwork. Place dry pieces in these boxes. At the end of the year, we'll have a month-long student art show in the auditorium. Later, students will create a portfolio of all their Art in Action pieces and take it home to share with their parents. **Teachers can use the Art in Action pieces to make hallway displays throughout the year, but all art should be returned to the teacher boxes.**

What else can I do?

Share your enthusiasm for Art in Action with other parents and encourage them to volunteer with you! Let them know Art in Action is a fun and enlightening way to be involved in their child's classroom. Communicate with your teacher to make sure he/she is happy with the program. Ask for his/her ideas or suggestions.

More questions?

Contact your room parents or the Art in Action coordinators for more information.