

Grades 9–12

Cathy H. Amos
Paulding County High School
Paulding County, Georgia

Six Degrees of Separation

A.P. Art History

Georgia QCC:	9–12 Fine Arts Visual Arts Comprehensive: Historical and Cultural Context 19/Art History and Criticism: Connections 3,4,5
Multiple Intelligence:	Spatial: mapping / Logical: problem solving, analyzing, reasoning, classifying
Character Education:	Diligence, Creativity, Patience, and Perseverance
Bloom's Taxonomy:	Synthesis: hypothesize, infer / Evaluation: decide, verify, select

Goal

Students will discover and discuss relationships of key figures of the Renaissance.

Objective

Students will link an artist from the early Italian Renaissance with an artist from a later period and another area of Europe with six degrees of separation or intermediaries.

Essential Question

Who would Verrocchio invite to a party? And so on and so on . . .

Materials

- Internet lab
- Books
- Media Center resources

Preparation

Prepare a list of Italian artists from 1400–1440 and another list of artists from around 1600. Make sure each artist has at least one good link to another artist listed to avoid an immediate dead end. One artist from each group will be needed for each team in the class. List names of artists on cards.

Lesson

1. Motivation

Most art history students know that Verrocchio was Leonardo's teacher. But where does it go from there? Or where did it all begin? Who was in the Renaissance Rat Pack? Were they rich and famous? Would they be on Entertainment Tonight?

It seems that it is a small world and it is said that each person can be linked to another individual with six degrees of separation. This interesting notion will be explained to students.

2. Activity

The students will be paired into teams for this activity to promote friendly competition. Each team will randomly select an early artist card and late artist card. The game rules are: link the two artist using only 4 other individuals. Each relationship link must be documented through an Internet source or book. Students may make assumptions if they can back up their ideas through documented evidence. Extra points will be given for creative solutions that involve individuals other than artists. Students should look at patrons, writers, models, rulers, religious figures, or any other known or logical relationship.

3. Wrap Up

Students should be able to complete this assignment during one 50-minute visit to the Internet lab. This game could be timed for competition between teams. The lesson will be most effective at the end of the unit on the Renaissance because the students need to have the proper background for an efficient search.

Students could report their findings in a variety of ways: posters, graphic organizers, mind mapping, or other visual materials. A participation grade based on creative solutions and spirited research will be assigned using the following rubric:

- A - creative solutions using unique relationships with documentation or sound arguments
- B - good solutions using documentation or sound arguments
- C- fair or questionable solutions using some argument
- F - unfinished or impossible solutions using little or no argument

Solutions for all the teams may be combined on the board the following day to illustrate the networking that was in effect 500 years ago. Finally, the students can discuss what it means and why it matters. Where can they see influence? Where is the greatest change?