Art Alive!

Grades 1-4

Program Description

Students participating in this program learn about the three generations of American artists who lived and painted at Weir Farm National Historic Site, and experience the authentic, untouched landscape that inspired them. The program begins at the Burlingham House Visitor Center where students meet a park ranger who takes them on an interpretive tour of the landscape, the historic Weir painting studio, and the historic Young sculpture studio. Along the way, students are shown artwork of the site, and discuss connections between the artwork and the modern landscape. Following the tour, students are given an opportunity to follow in the artistic tradition of Weir Farm National Historic Site by sketching in the landscape using chalk pastels, graphite pencils, and colored pencils. This experience of creating art *en plein air* allows the students to become part of a unique and enduring artistic tradition and to forge their own personal "impression" of Weir Farm National Historic Site.

Instructional Objectives

The student will be able to:

- recognize Weir Farm National Historic Site as being part of the National Park System
- recognize the importance of preserving places of natural, historical, and cultural significance
- identify the three artists who lived and painted at Weir Farm National Historic Site
- discuss personal responses to specific artwork
- compare and relate artwork of the site to the modern landscape
- recognize a studio as an artist's workspace
- create artwork using a variety of media that demonstrate a personal connection the site

Ties to the Connecticut Curriculum Framework

Visual Arts Content Standards Met

1.B Describe how different media, techniques, and processes cause different effects and personal responses

1.C Use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, feelings, experiences and stories

2.A Identify the different ways visual characteristics are used to convey ideas

2.B Describe how different expressive features, and ways of organizing them, cause different responses

3.A Discuss a variety of sources for art content

3.B Select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning

4.A Recognize the visual arts have a history and different cultural purposes and meanings

4.B Identify specific works of art as belonging to particular styles, cultures, times, and places

5.A Identify various purposes for creating works of art

5.B Describe visual characteristics of works of art using visual art terminology

5.C Recognize that there are different responses to specific works of art

5.D Describe their personal responses to specific works of art using visual art terminology

6.E Identify and recognize that visual works of art are produced by artisans and artists working in different cultures, times, and places

Social Studies Content Standards Met

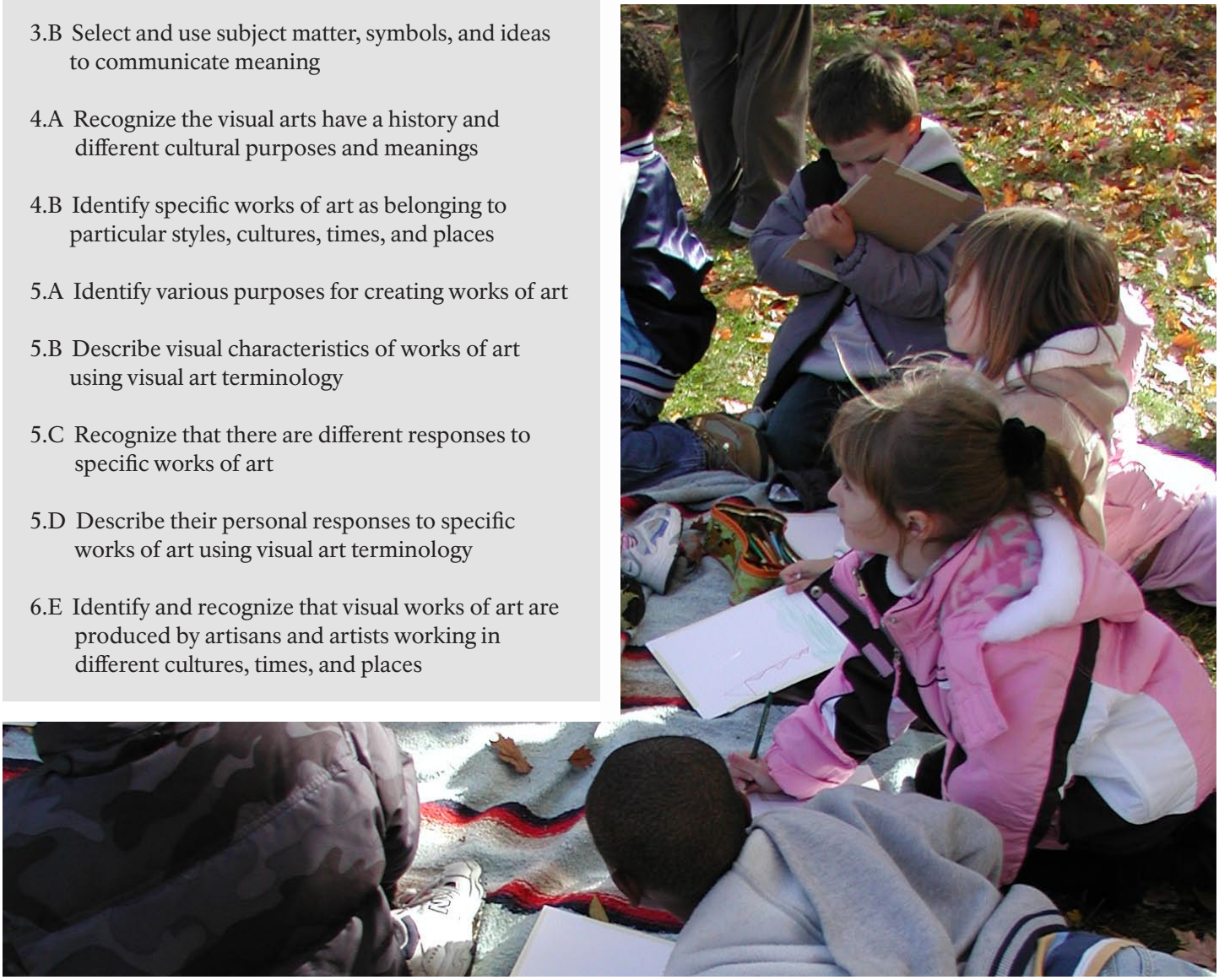
9.K-2.1 Define and identify natural and human characteristics of places

9.3-4.1 Explain how human and natural processes shape places

9.K-2.3 Locate places within their own and nearby communities in Connecticut

9.K-2.2 Observe and verbally share how places and regions are identified, defined, and bounded

9.3-4.32 Observe and verbally share how places and regions are identified, defined, and bounded

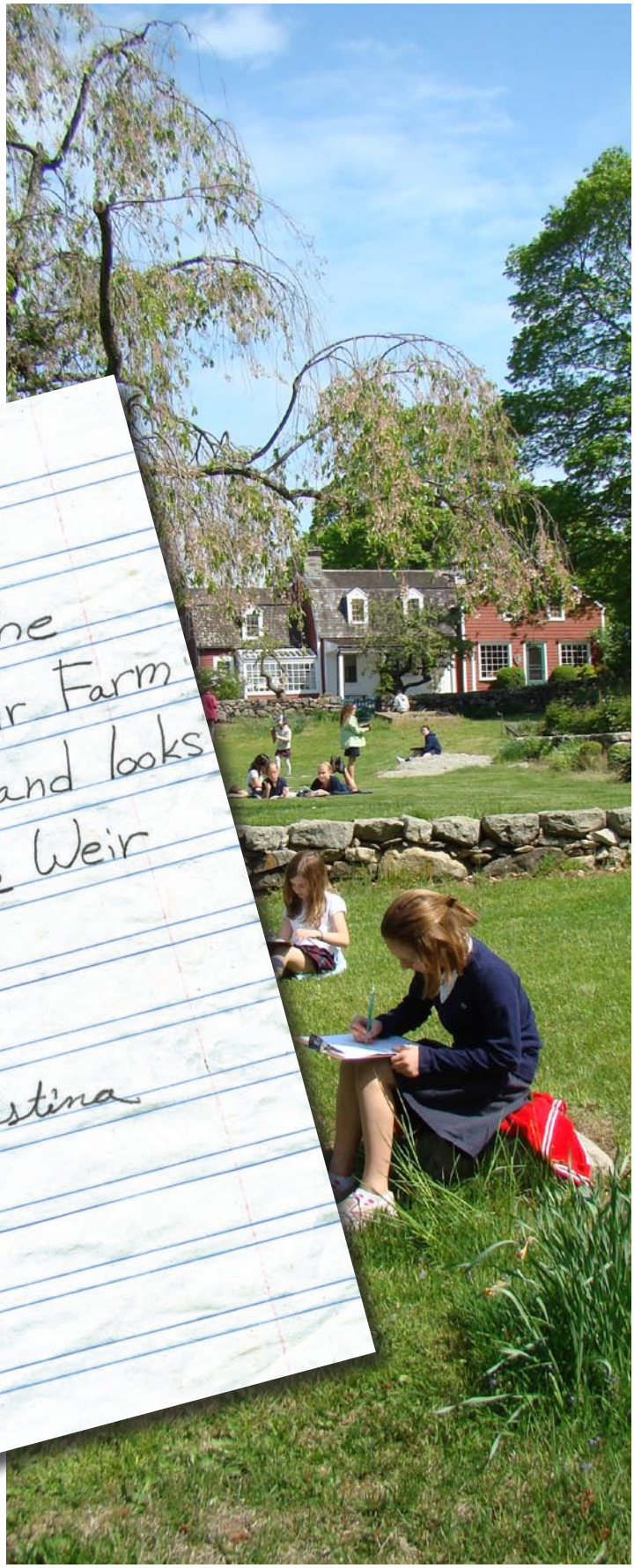


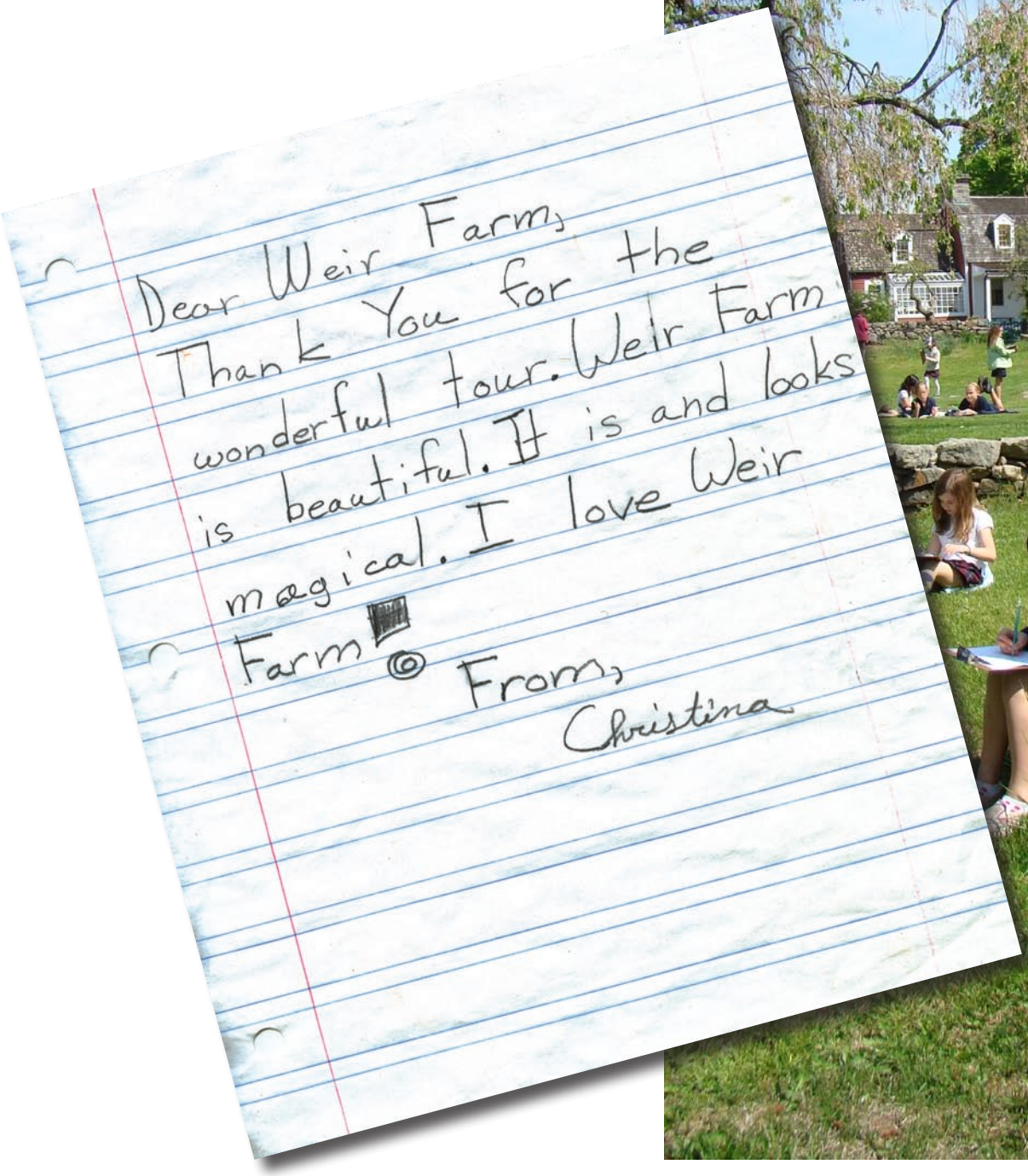
Pre-Visit Activities

- Quick write/journal: What is something or somewhere that you want to save forever? Why?

- Quick write/journal: The Branchville farm was Weir's retreat—his own special place where he could go to relax and do his hobbies. What is your "special place?" Where can you go to relax and do what you like to do?

- Look at art images of Weir's/Young's/Andrews' work and creatively write about the artwork. What might the subjects be saying or thinking? What might be happening? Create a "back-story" for the image.





Dear Weir Farm,
Thank You for the wonderful tour. Weir Farm is beautiful. It is and looks magical. I love Weir Farm!
From,
Christina

Post-Visit Activities

Minds-On

- Write a letter to Weir Farm National Historic Site reflecting on your visit. Please send letters to the following address:

  Weir Farm National Historic Site
  Attn: Park Ranger
  735 Nod Hill Road
  Wilton, CT 06897

- Pretend that you are an artist and your friend, Mr.Weir, invites you to his farm in Branchville for the weekend. Write him a note thanking him for the visit; make sure to tell him about what you did while you were there.

- Mr. Weir not only loved to paint on the farm, but he also loved to hunt and fish. Write a short story describing how you would spend a day on the farm with Mr. Weir.

- Mr. Young made many sculptures and statues of people using clay and plaster. If you were to make a sculpture or statue of someone important to you, who would it be? If you could make your sculpture out of anything, what material would you choose?

Art-In-Your-community

- The American Impressionist movement was centered on the New England countryside and reflected the popular back-to-nature movement. Research and discover local artists who depict images of their region's landscape. These works do not need to be traditional landscapes. Some abstract painters respond to the landscape in unique ways and many Native American, Hispanic, and African American artists imprint their own interpretations of place on their works. Invite educators from local art museums, historical societies, galleries or libraries to the classroom to discuss and show slides of the different styles of art popular in the region. If possible, arrange a field trip to a gallery or museum. When your research is completed, make a short presentation about the artist or artists studied. The class can discuss what is artistically unique about your region and how the artists were inspired by that uniqueness.

Hands-On

- Even though your visit to Weir Farm National Historic Site is over, you can still have the farm in your classroom. As a class, create a bulletin board using words and images that describe and reflect on your visit to Weir Farm National Historic Site.

- The symbol of the National Park Service is the Arrowhead, which represents all of the natural and cultural resources that the National Park Service protects and preserves. Design a symbol specifically for Weir Farm National Historic Site, making sure to include examples of what is protected and preserved at the site.

- J. Alden Weir liked to paint in the Impressionist style, which included using thick, loose brushstrokes and bright colors, and focused on the landscape and scenes of everyday life for subject matter. In the spirit of Mr. Weir, paint your own Impressionist style painting using these techniques. If possible, paint outside, or *en plein air*, as the Impressionists did.

- Mr. Weir liked painting outside, but sometimes, it wasn't possible. As a solution, Weir invented a small portable studio he called the "Palace Car." This studio was dragged around the landscape by oxen and even had a woodstove inside! This way, Weir could continue painting the landscape, but without getting cold or wet. In this tradition, design your own "Palace Car."

- Compare Mr. Young's studio to Mr. Weir's studio which you saw on your visit to Weir Farm National Historic Site. If you built a studio, what would it look like? What kinds of things would be inside?