



Group of Seven

Lawren Harris Inspired Animated Collage

KEY CONCEPTS & ISSUES

Lawren Harris is one of the most well known landscape painters and founding member of the Group of Seven. Students will learn how Harris' artwork progressed from a nationalistic interpretation of Canadian landscape towards a universal vision of how nature has spiritual power. Harris was informed by theosophy and transcendentalism that eventually led to abstraction. Students will explore the works of Harris and will create an animated collage based on it and their own interpretation of nature. Students will be asked to move beyond the surface of Harris' paintings and create a new profound reality using animated collage techniques.

- Creation of Spaces and Landscapes
- Apply the creative process to create original artwork using printed images and technology

SUBJECTS: Visual Arts, History

DURATION: 3 to 5 classes

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- History of Group of Seven
- Analysis of Group of Seven work and significance
- Collage techniques

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- *Mystic Learnings: The Group of Seven* graphic novel
- Group of Seven PowerPoint presentation (teacher led) and supplementary handout
- Printer
- Scissors
- Access to device with camera, Internet access, and basic photo editing software (smartphone or tablet)
- Pixaloo App

EXPECTATIONS/OUTCOMES

The overall expectations listed below serve as an entry point for teachers. Students will:

- Increase their knowledge of the Group of Seven and their importance to Canadian history;
- Analyze the social importance of forging a Canadian art movement that represented Canada's natural landscapes;
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to use technology to create an animated collage;
- Be able to document the process of developing ideas to create their own artwork.

SKILLS ACQUIRED

- Application of Critical Analysis Process to Collage
- How to properly photograph 2D artwork
- Basic photo editing (crop, adjusting brightness, contrast, etc.)
- Using Pixaloo App to animate photograph of collage

BACKGROUND

The Group of Seven believed that the European-oriented view of the painter's profession was doing little to foster cultural awareness of Canadian society. When the Group of Seven first formed, Canada was still attached to its imperial connection to Britain. Canada and its art scene was in need of signs and symbols with which to assert its own distinctive national identity. With the support of the National Gallery of Canada, some private patrons and Lawren Harris, the Group of Seven concentrated on making landscape paintings that focused on nature as a form of Canadian identity.

Lawren Harris is one of the best known landscape painters of the Group of Seven. After attending a gallery exhibition of Scandinavian art in Buffalo, NY, Harris and J.E.H MacDonalld began to focus on landscape oil paintings. This new Canadian

movement was clearly established by 1913 with the stated intention by the group to focus on exploring the landscapes of Canada's North. The group mainly focused on landscapes in Georgian Bay, Algonquin Park, and the Laurentians. All of the members of the Group of Seven except for Lawren Harris, had formal training in the business of commercial art. This background knowledge of design can be seen in the stressing of large, bold forms and movements with an emphasis on colour and contrasting tones.

After the end of the First World War, the group reunited and travelled throughout Ontario, specifically the Muskoka and Algoma regions. They also ventured to other areas of Canada including, British Columbia, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and the Arctic. In the fall of 1918, the group took a box-car trip to Algoma. They wanted to create plein air sketching, which stressed the use of colour and light to capture the essence of a scene. It was Harris that financed the box-car trips to the Algoma region and, later, to the northern shores of Lake Superior. The Lake Superior landscape was one of Harris' favourite places to paint. He felt that it was a "pure" and "spiritual" place. The sketches and paintings created during these trips were showcased in an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario in April 1919.

In 1920, Harris's paintings were more stylized, his work became more abstract and simplified. It was during this time period that Harris stopped signing and dating his artworks. By 1926, members of the Group began to travel further across Canada. They visited the West coast and the Arctic. They were the first documented artists of European descent to paint the Arctic. By the end of 1931, the Group of Seven were well known and decided it was no longer necessary to continue as a group. The Group of Seven subsequently announced they had disbanded and a new association of painters would be formed called the Canadian Group of Painters. The Canadian Group held their first exhibition in 1933 and continued to showcase their work until 1967.



North Shore, Lake Superior (1926)



Mountain Forms (1926)



Baffin Island (1935)

In 1955, Robert and Signe McMichael began to collect and exhibit works from the Group of Seven at their home in Kleinburg, ON. In 1965, the McMichael family formally reached an agreement to donate their collection and their Kleinburg property to the Government of Ontario for the purpose of establishing an art museum. In addition to housing a collection of works by the Group of Seven, the museum property also contains the burial ground for six members of the group,

including Jackson, Lismer, Varley, Harris, Johnston, and Casson; along with four of the artists' wives. The Group of Seven introduced Canadian art to the international stage and for many, their work continues to represent the Canadian national identity.

STEP ONE

TEACHER DIRECTED DISCUSSION

- Students begin by reading Group of Seven graphic novel and discussing their work and its significance;
- Teacher guides students through analysis of Group of Seven artwork, focusing on colour theory, elements and principles found in the work of Lawren Harris (paintings included in PowerPoint);
 - Analysis ends with touching on the importance of celebrating natural landscapes in art, the concept of nostalgia, and the importance that places and landscapes can play in treasured memories
- Teacher leads class discussion on concept of natural landscapes, nostalgia, and memory
 - This could be done as group activity; the teacher has student groups present their ideas to the class to facilitate further discussion and gauge student understanding

STEP TWO

STUDENT LED EXPLORATION

- Individually, students are then asked to reflect on their own personal memories of important natural landscapes and spaces, drawing parallels from class discussion to their individual treasured memories; students are asked to think of specific places that come to mind
- Once students have developed an idea of what their created ideal personal landscape or place would include, students then choose three to five paintings of Lawren Harris' to print, cut, and arrange into a collage

STEP THREE

PHOTOGRAPHING THE COLLAGE

- Once students have arranged their collage pieces into their created interpretation of a natural landscape, they will digitally photograph their collage
- Students may choose to glue or affix their collage pieces to a larger piece of blank paper or bristol board before photographing so that they can move their collage around their space without unarranging it
- To photograph their collage, students should choose a space near an open window or door to utilize natural light
- Standing over their collage, and without blocking the natural light, students will photograph their collage from above, using their device's camera grid lines to keep the edges of their collage parallel with the viewfinder

- After the image has been photographed, ensuring even lighting and framing of their collage, students are encouraged to crop their image and complete any necessary editing (adjusting of contrast, brightness, etc.) of the photograph of their collage

STEP FOUR CULMINATING ACTIVITY

1. Animating with Pixalooop

Please refer to **LM #2**

- After creating their collages, photographing them, and editing them, the next step is for students to use the Pixalooop app to animate their collage
- Pixalooop features 6 tools: *Animate*, *Sky*, *Effects*, *Element*, *Overlay*, and *Camera FX*
- Encourage students to experiment with the features of the app by using photographs from their camera roll; remind them that one of the best ways to become comfortable using an app like Pixalooop is to experiment with it
 - Remind students that as they try new things, to save what they create so that they will have a variety of options to choose from at the end.
 - Some students may want to record their steps in their sketchbook so they can recreate specific combinations of tools

Pixalooop Tools

- **Animate:**
 - **Arrows:** use arrows to add movement to an area of your collage; you can choose the direction and speed of the movement
 - **Anchors:** you can also control what moves by placing anchors in parts that you want to remain static
 - **Freeze:** similar to anchors, using freeze allows you to freeze sections of photos with a brush
 - **Loop:** this tool lets you choose how to transition between loops of your animation
- **Sky:** With the Sky feature, you can add background imagery to replace (or layer on top of) the sky in your collage with animated sunsets and clouds
- **Effects:** These filters are different dispersion overlays that you can use to add a radial disintegration effect to specific areas of the collage; you have less control over what parts of your collage this tool affects as the app uses artificial intelligence to determine what part of the image to “break apart”
- **Element:** This tool allows you to incorporate pre-made animations into your collage almost like “stickers”; Pixalooop’s free version only offers a few of these
- **Overlay:** These animated overlays simulate different weather conditions, and like the other tools, you can control their opacity and what areas of your collage it overlays
- **Camera FX:** These tools recreate motion graphics effects resembling cinemagraphs and camera techniques, like zooming in, panning, etc.

2. Final Critique

Please refer to **LM #1**

Final Critique

- In what ways do you feel your work is successful?
- How have you demonstrated and documented the creative process?
- In what ways would you change the work to improve it?

3. Reflection

Please refer to **LM #1, LM #3**

Ongoing Reflection

- In what ways do you feel your work is successful?
- In what ways would you change the work to improve it?
- How would you alter this project to further reflect your own conceptual ideas?

OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Use a critical social justice lens while viewing the artwork of the Group of Seven to: 1) focus information from multiple, non-dominant perspectives, and seeing those as independently valid and not as an add-on to the dominant, hegemonic one; 2) de-centering students' analytical frame and opening their minds to a broader range of experiences; 3) analyzing the effects of power and oppression; and 4) inquiring into what alternatives exist with respect to the current, dominant view of reality of the artwork of the Group of Seven. For this lesson, students will need to understand how non-dominant perspectives are not seen in the artworks of the Group of Seven. Students will be encouraged to analyze the effects of power and oppression on the First Nations populations and inquire into how this affects Canadian cultural identity.
- Students can use the abstract paintings of Lawren Harris as inspirations for their own animated collage.
- Students can incorporate their own sketches, drawings, and paintings into their own animated collage.
- Students can add photos of significant objects or people into their animated collage.



Group of Seven

Lawren Harris Inspired Animated Collage

Teacher/Student Resource

THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS PROCESS

STAGE OF THE PROCESS	SAMPLE GUIDING QUESTIONS
INITIAL REACTION	<p>Prompt: Teacher will ask students to take notes while reading the graphic novel and to consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your first impression of the Group of Seven? • What connections can you make between the graphic novel and the history of the Group of Seven? • What questions do you have?
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	<p>In what ways is the Group of Seven identity explained through the graphic novel?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the following quote relate to the work being created by the Group of Seven: <i>“the function of artists in life he must accept in deep singleness of purpose the manifestations of life in man and in great nature and transform these into controlled ordered and vital expressions of meaning”</i>?
CONSIDERATION OF CULTURAL CONTEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What cultural movements, historical events, and/or traditions may have influenced the Group of Seven? • What message or meaning do you think is emphasized in the work of the Group of Seven? How does this view match or contrast with your own view of Canada?
EXPRESSION OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively do the paintings by the Group of Seven convey the Canadian landscape? • What emotions do the paintings evoke?
ONGOING CRITICAL REFLECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do you feel your work is successful? • In what ways would you change the work to improve it? • How have you demonstrated and documented the creative process? • How would you alter this project to further reflect your own conceptual ideas?

BASED ON:

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010). *The Ontario curriculum grades 9 – 10, the arts*. pp. 18 -19.

Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/arts910curr2010.pdf>

Group of Seven

Lawren Harris Inspired Animated Collage

Teacher/Student Resource

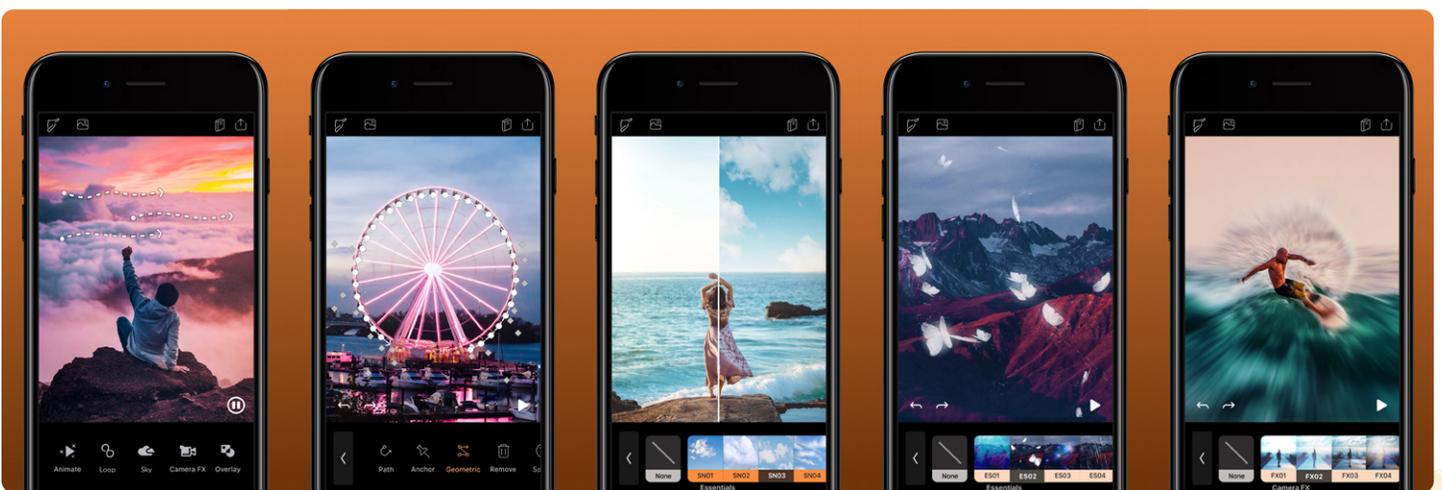
COLLAGE ANIMATION WITH PIXALOOP

Enlight **Pixaloop** is a mobile app available for both iPhones and Android devices. The app, which has both a free version and a paid version, allows the user to “breathe life” into their still images, effectively allowing the user to animate their own photographs and artwork to create short, looped videos.

After creating your own interpretation of a natural landscape using found images and collaging together parts of Lawren Harris’ paintings, you photographed and edited your collage.



The next part of this assignment is to animate your created personal landscape using Pixaloop’s features: *Animate*, *Sky*, *Effects*, *Element*, *Overlay*, and *Camera FX*.



Images from Pixaloop’s online press kit: <https://www.pixaloopapp.com/>

One of the best ways to get to know an app like Pixaloop is to experiment with it! As you try new things, save what you create. You will have a variety of options to choose from at the end.

Pixaloop Tools

1. Animate:

- a. **Arrows:** use arrows to add movement to an area of your collage; you can choose the direction and speed of the movement
- b. **Anchors:** you can also control what moves by placing anchors in parts that you want to remain static
- c. **Freeze:** similar to anchors, using freeze allows you to freeze sections of photos with a brush
- d. **Loop:** this tool lets you choose how to transition between loops of your animation

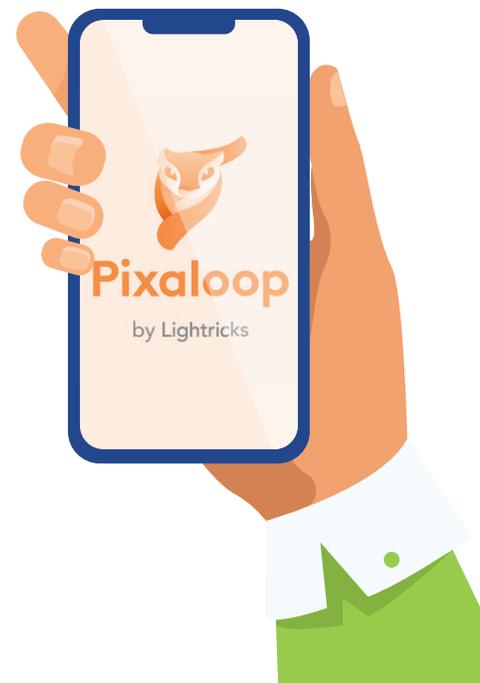
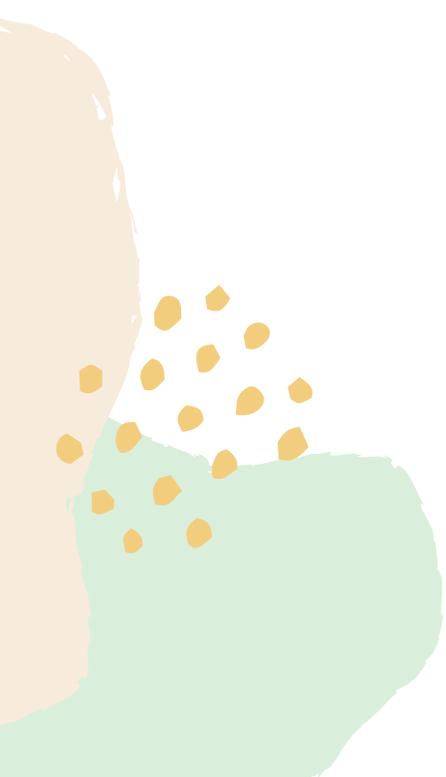
2. **Sky:** With the Sky feature, you can add background imagery to replace (or layer on top of) the sky in your collage with animated sunsets and clouds

3. **Effects:** These filters are different dispersion overlays that you can use to add a radial disintegration effect to specific areas of the collage; you have less control over what parts of your collage this tool affects as the app uses artificial intelligence to determine what part of the image to “break apart”

4. **Element:** This tool allows you to incorporate pre-made animations into your collage almost like “stickers”; Pixaloop’s free version only offers a few of these

5. **Overlay:** These animated overlays simulate different weather conditions, and like the other tools, you can control their opacity and what areas of your collage it overlays

6. **Camera FX:** These tools recreate motion graphics effects resembling cinemagraphs and camera techniques, like zooming in, panning, etc.



Group of Seven

Lawren Harris Inspired Animated Collage

ASSESSMENT	LEVEL 1 (50-59%)	LEVEL 2 (60-69%)	LEVEL 3 (70-79%)	LEVEL 4 (80-89%)	LEVEL 4+ (90-100%)
KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING	Student does not demonstrate much knowledge and comprehension of the creative process	Student demonstrates some knowledge and comprehension of the creative process	Student demonstrates knowledge and comprehension of the creative process	Student demonstrates excellent knowledge and comprehension of the creative process	Student demonstrates outstanding knowledge and comprehension of the creative process
THINKING & INQUIRY	Student's planning and processing skills are not very evident; students has demonstrated critical and creative thinking processes to a small degree	Student's planning and processing skills are somewhat evident; students has demonstrated critical and creative thinking processes to a satisfactory degree	Student's planning and processing skills are clearly evident; students has demonstrated critical and creative thinking processes to a good degree	Student's planning and processing skills are very evident; students has demonstrated critical and creative thinking processes to an excellent degree	Student's planning and processing skills are extremely evident; students has demonstrated critical and creative thinking processes to an outstanding degree
COMMUNICATION	Student has communicated their concept of creating spaces and landscapes with little degree of proficiency	Student has communicated their concept of creating spaces and landscapes with some degree of proficiency	Student has communicated their concept of creating spaces and landscapes with a good degree of proficiency	Student has communicated their concept of creating spaces and landscapes with a great degree of proficiency	Student has communicated their concept of creating spaces and landscapes with an outstanding degree of proficiency
APPLICATION	Student used knowledge and skills of creating an original artwork using technology	Student used knowledge and skills of creating original artwork using technology with some proficiency	Student used knowledge and skills of creating original artwork using technology	Student used knowledge and skills of creating original artwork using technology with a great degree of proficiency	Student used knowledge and skills of creating original artwork using technology with an outstanding degree of proficiency