

An Example of a Written Lesson Plan for a Five-Minute Object Lesson 2024 Garden Docent Training Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

(Note: the four sections above the line are not spoken to visitors; they are only expressed in writing by the docent.)

Audience: intelligent, curious adults with little to no knowledge of the subject of the lesson

The object and location: Diana sculpture [19th century, based on a marble portrait statue made in 1710 by Antoine Coysevox of Marie Adelaide de Savoy as goddess Diana] in the French parterre

Objective: As a result of participating in this lesson, participants will be better able to discuss the significance of the Diana sculpture in the French parterre at Hillwood.

(Note: the sections below are spoken to the visitors.)

Introduction: Hook Question: **Raise of hands – who here agrees with the quote “A garden without its statue is like a sentence without its verb.”** Just as verbs communicate action, the sculpture before us is drawing our attention to her this evening.

Introduction: Advance Organizer: **Who has been to Hillwood before?**

Let’s spend a little time exploring this piece and thinking about why this sculpture is here, what it can tell us about Marjorie Post, and how it fits within the garden’s design.

The Body of the Conversation:

(Design) **What are some words that describe her? What do you see?** (she’s in mid-stride, dog jumping up, she touches her hair and reaching for dog, toga-like outfit, in her hair is a crescent moon, her quiver on her back, terracotta, above us) The sculpture is of Diana, a figure in Roman mythology. She was the goddess of the hunt and the moon.

(Function) **Is there any significance to where it is placed in the garden? What if there was no sculpture in this location?** (leads your eye on axis to and from house, looks like she is coming out of foliage). The sculptures in the French parterre direct your attention to the layout of the garden. The terra-cotta sculpture of Diana is set off by the ivy walls around her, she seems to be emerging from the woodlands after a hunt.

You might ask why there is a Roman goddess in this French garden. The French, beginning in the 1400s, created many magnificent pleasure gardens and, copying Italian gardens, placed Roman mythological figures in them.

(Marjorie Post) **What does this sculpture reveal of Marjorie Post interests?** (enjoyed decorative arts, used in both inside and outside at Hillwood, used sculpture in classical themes as an emphasis in the gardens) Marjorie Post was a big fan and collector of the 18th century French decorative arts throughout her lifetime and refined this garden to enhance the view from her bedroom and to extend the French drawing room beyond those doors. An even stronger French connection exists. This is a 19th century copy of an 18th century French marble original that is now in the Louvre.

(Museum Today) Each winter, Hillwood’s staff protects more vulnerable outdoor sculptures with specially made covers. In addition to the sculptures the garden itself requires lots of care to keep it looking spectacular. In the late 1990s, Hillwood completely renovated this garden...a huge commitment of funds, time, and expertise. And in recent years, the boxwoods were all replaced, and the hardscape of the porch was redone.

Why do you think the museum undertook such a big project? (important for the museum to preserve this garden as part of its historic landscape)

Conclusion: We’ve discussed this sculpture in terms of several important ideas: how it looks, the role it plays in the design of this garden, how it relates to Marjorie Post’s collecting interests. We also thought about why the care of this sculpture and garden is important to the mission of the museum.

Question assessing visitors’ take aways: **What is one important idea you will take away from this discussion?**

Resources consulted: lecture notes, French Parterre sections in: audio tour, printed tour, Comprehensive Garden Notes, *A Garden for All Seasons*