

## NEWS BREAK

Article: **Working to improve arts accessibility**

Section: **THE MIX, E1**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, May 21, 2023**, of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

***\*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

### Standards:

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1**

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2**

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

### Objectives:

***Students will discuss the importance of equitable access to art galleries, museums and performances, and all the areas that is entailed to make those experiences a positive and accessible one. They will discuss the importance for all businesses to look through a lens of equity and accessibility-are they creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all?***

### Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using these pictures?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

### Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

How can we provide **equitable** programming or tools that help us welcome people of all diversities into performances?

### **Equitable Guess:**

### **Equitable Definition:**

### Comprehension Questions:

1. In the exhibit “Tactile Vision,” curated by Ballard specifically for people who are blind or have low vision, visitors are encouraged to do what?
2. More often than not, museums or galleries offer little to no \_\_\_\_\_ for people who are blind or low vision, or have other disabilities, he said.
3. A growing group of Seattle-area arts organizations is trying to change that. Smaller organizations like Sound Theatre Company and The Vera Project, as well as major institutions like Frye Art Museum, Seattle Opera, Pacific Science Center, SIFF, Burke Museum and other arts groups of different sizes, are working to increase accessibility by doing what types of things?
4. These arts organizations are following in the footsteps of local arts groups founded by and/or for people with disabilities, like Deaf Spotlight, Vibrant

Palette Arts Center and others that have long advocated for \_\_\_\_\_ in the arts.

5. Many of the more recent changes in local arts organizations were sparked by the \_\_\_\_\_, which shone a spotlight on society's inequities, as well as by the 2020 protests and the increased attention to diversity, equity and inclusion.
6. She says the issue is especially relevant right now, as many cultural organizations are struggling to reach what?
7. And according to recent research, accessibility plays a major role, Ralston said. What are some barriers the article listed?
8. And when people don't feel welcomed, they stay away. "This is something that I think is incredibly important to highlight," Ralston said, noting that \_\_\_\_\_ in four people in the U.S. have a disability, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
9. What can people expect in Sunday's Seattle Opera performance of the Verdi classic "La Traviata" at McCaw Hall? How will it look and feel different?

**Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:**

- ***What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?***
- ***At first, I thought \_\_\_\_\_, but now I think \_\_\_\_\_?***
- ***What things did you already know from prior experience?***

*"One of the fascinating pieces was the shape of snow," Choi said. "I didn't even know there were different shapes of snow like that." Choi said it's unusual to encounter exhibits like this.*

- ***Why would touching art make a difference to those that are blind or have limited sight?***

*"How can we provide equitable programming or tools that help us welcome people of all diversities into performances? It's looking at the ADA and moving beyond ramps and interpreters, but including the full spectrum of humanity," said Seattle-based arts accessibility and equity consultant Tiffany Sparks-Keeney of Inclusive Arts OT, who helped create the Opera's program. While sensory-friendly performances have become more common in Seattle for kids, Sparks-Keeney said, performances geared to adults are still few and far between. But as Sparks-Keeney, who is neurodiverse, likes to say: "Neurodiverse children become neurodiverse adults, and they're also looking for arts programming." Sensory audience guides — printed and online programs that give people a heads-up about and describe sensations in a show, like major light flashes, moments of visual, auditory, or emotional intensity, suspense or audience interaction — have become more standard, Sparks-Keeney said.*

- ***Why is it important for all businesses to look through a lens of equity and accessibility?***

“When you think about universal design, you are creating the biggest tent possible that everybody can fit under,” Ralston said. “So, if you’re going to use captioning, you have to remember it benefits everyone, not just people with hearing loss. It benefits people whose second language is English. It benefits people who are learning to read ... It benefits even hearing people ... because they miss stuff.” To create a truly welcoming and inclusive environment, she said, organizations need to rethink their approach to accessibility, hire disabled artists and employees, and rebuild their relationships with the communities that have been shut out for so long, she said.

- ***Have you thought about closed-captioning this way before?***

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.  
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