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### Worcester Public Art for ESL Students

Nora Rueffer

*Clark University*, [nrueffer@clarku.edu](mailto:nrueffer@clarku.edu)

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# Worcester Public Art for ESL Students

Eleanor Rueffer '24 – (Sponsor: Professor Kristina Wilson)



## Summary

Over the summer of 2022, I was given the opportunity to work on a self-designed project through the generous help of the Steinbrecher fellowship. During my fellowship I created a booklet on Worcester public art for ESL (English as a Second Language) learners, as well as teaching materials and lesson plans to go alongside it. I wanted it to be focused on content and clear communication, without “dumbing down” the material. The goal was to create a versatile and relevant resource that could be read individually or used in the classroom.



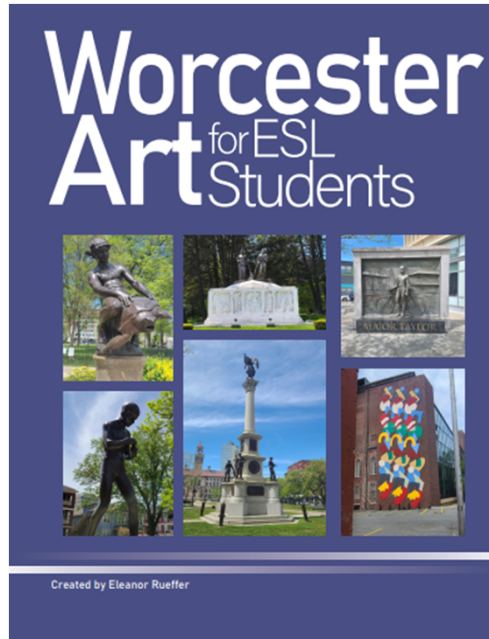
Scan the code to see the project website, including the booklet, worksheets and more

## Why This Project?

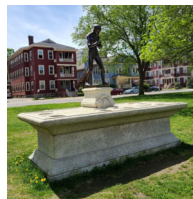
Worcester is home to a highly diverse group of English learners of varying ages. While many ESL youth have the opportunity to practice English within structured environments (like school, where they are often able to learn in designated ESL classes), most ESL adults don't have access to information designed for them. They have to navigate their way through complex language structures in order to receive any information, and often the most informative articles or books are the most complicated. Often, clauses, pronouns, and different tenses all make texts too dense for ESL learners.

Worcester also has a long and complex history of being an industrial melting pot for a variety of people and cultures. There is also a lot of public art in Worcester that reflects this long history. Connecting with one's surroundings helps build stronger communities, and everyone deserves the opportunity to connect with their surroundings.

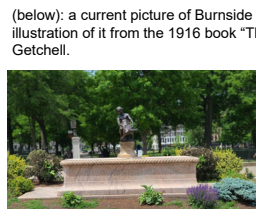
In making this booklet I was able to address this need for locally-relevant adult learning materials.



(above): Cover of Worcester Public Art for ESL Students



(above): a current picture of chamberlain fountain next to an illustration of it from the 1916 book "The Cloud Bird" by Margaret C. Getchell.



(below): a current picture of Burnside fountain, aka. Turtle Boy, next to an illustration of it from the 1916 book "The Cloud Bird" by Margaret C. Getchell.

## Process

I made this booklet in three phases: 1. Research; 2. Formatting; and 3. Distribution.

1. During the “Research Phase,” I finalized what artworks I wanted to be featured in my booklet. I wanted to make sure that they were all in similar locations so that they could be visited easily. I also wanted to make sure that I included iconic Worcester monuments such as “Turtle boy.” Once finalized I started researching all of the monuments, using resources in the Goddard Library, Worcester Public Library, and the Worcester Historical Society Archives. I also used teaching materials that I got through the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester as a reference for the format and tone that I wanted to use.

During this phase I also took all of the photos for the booklet, to make sure that I had detailed examples of what I would be talking about.

2. During the Formatting phase I wrote the text and designed the booklet and the website. It was challenging to write simply and clearly, because I had to learn how to avoid writing elements that were too complicated. I tried to avoid using clauses, anything other than past and present tenses and technical terms. Once I had completed a rough draft of the text I had my faculty advisor, family, and friends read and provide feedback. I then applied the feedback and edited the text until I felt that it was as clear as possible. I then started working on the layout of the booklet.

I wanted the layout and design to be as clear as possible, while not seeming childish. The intended audience was adults and I didn't want anyone to feel spoken down to, so I paired my simple text with “formal” design choices. There are no rounded edges, the colors are dark and there are only a few decorative elements. During this phase I also edited all of the pictures that I took, so make sure that there was as much clarity as possible. I made the website using squarespace, ensuring that it was similar in design to the booklet.

3. Once I had everything finalized, I had to decide how I wanted to distribute it. First, I printed 20 copies that I gave to various people that had helped me throughout the process. I then printed 50 copies that I distributed to a variety of learning institutions. Some copies went to the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester, some to the Christian Charities Language Courses, and others to the ALCI at Clark. The booklet will be used in the LGVW's bookclub. There were also a lot of individual students and educators who wanted copies, which are being used for their respective courses.



Sources: Mass GIS (Bureau of Geographic Information), Commonwealth of Massachusetts EDTSS, City of Worcester  
Map Creation: Adlai Nelson