***Woody Guthrie Prize***

**Rationale**

This lesson can be used to encourage students to think about artists who are working to improve the world around them. It can be modified to serve as an introductory research assignment and presentation or an argumentative writing.

**Guiding Questions**

What contemporary artists are working to improve our world? What are they doing?

**Mastery Objectives**

Students will have an understanding of Woody Guthrie’s role as a voice for the common man and learn how other artists are using their creativity to make a difference in the world around them.



In 2014, the Woody Guthrie Center announced the first ever Woody Guthrie Prize. This award is meant to honor the legacy of Woody Guthrie and the work he did to bring attention to the problems of the common man during his lifetime. The award will be given each year to the artist who best exemplifies the spirit and life work of Woody Guthrie by speaking for the less fortunate through music, film, literature, dance, or other art forms and serving as a positive force for social change in America.

The first recipient chosen was Pete Seeger. Seeger was one of Guthrie’s dearest friends and has been at the forefront of many important causes such as: the labor movement, the struggle for Civil Rights, anti-war movements, and the fight for a cleaner environment.

Research Pete Seeger to learn more about his contributions to folk music as well as his efforts to use his voice for change.

Once you know more about the type of work a recipient of the Woody Guthrie Prize embodies, select an artist that you feel is deserving of the award. Research your choice and develop a two-page paper outlining why you feel your choice should be honored.

Be sure to consider the following questions:

1. What specific reasons or accomplishments can be given to support this artist’s selection (give at least 5 reasons)?
2. What other artists have been influenced by the nominee?
3. If selected for the Prize, what artist would be best to present the award to them, and why?

