



# Mary Nohl—An Exploration

Lesson Plan by Mary Kate Witry, Librarian, Morton East High School

Time to Complete: Part 1-(60 minutes)

Big Idea: **Imagination**

Mary Nohl created an artist-built environment in and around her home in Fox Point, Wisconsin. She earned a degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and travelled extensively. When she returned home, she created art using a remarkable variety of materials—found and commercially produced. This lesson provides students with information about the life and work of this joyful artist.



## Essential Questions

What conditions, attitudes, and behaviors support creativity and innovative thinking?

What factors prevent or encourage people to take creative risks?

## Inspiration Artists

- Emery Blagdon
- David Butler
- Bernard Langlais
- Frank Oebser

## Objectives

- Students will “doodle” notes while learning about Mary Nohl’s life and work.
- Students will select their favorite art piece or theme from Mary’s work.
- Students will create “matchbox art” based upon their favorite Mary Nohl artwork.

## National Standard Connection

**Anchor Standard 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

**Enduring Understanding:** Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed.

## Discussion questions

- What evidence did you see that Mary Nohl was creative in her use of materials?
- How did the location of Mary's home influence her work?
- If Mary were living today, what type of "found" materials do you think she would use in her work?

## Overview

Introduce the artist Mary Nohl to the class using *In Mary's Garden* and a slideshow of Mary's art environment.

While viewing the slideshow, students will be asked to "doodle" about Mary's work—identifying their favorite images.

After selecting a favorite image or theme, students will create matchbox artwork.

Continue learning about Mary Nohl with "Tinker Mobile" lesson by Teresa Cantero.

## Materials

- *In Mary's Garden* by Tina Kugler
- Note taking template - Verbal to visual  
<https://www.verbaltovisual.com/doodle-away-with-these-visual-heavy-sketchnoting-templates/>
- Blank matchbox (or any other small box—use your imagination!)

- Assorted craft papers
- White sketching paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Colored pencils
- Colored markers
- Black markers (extra-fine point)

## Literacy Link

*In Mary's Garden* by Tina Kugler

*In Mary's Garden* is a charming biography of Mary Nohl created for young readers. However, there is plenty for older readers to enjoy in this story that highlights Mary's joy in creating, using the materials around her home and the beaches of Lake Michigan.

