

Clues for Portraits: What Can You Be? Mixed Media Portraits of the Future

Audience: Grades 2 through 5 with adaptations, **Length:** Three 50-minute Sessions

Context and Overview: As students develop and their view of the world widens ever further beyond their immediate family, this unit asks them to imagine themselves in the future. The motivation for this narrative task/problem is designed to open up the possibilities for them to consider. Presenting techniques and new ways to work with mixed media in sequence is used in order to provide multiple options for personal expression, as well as to reinvigorate their interest and encourage perseverance to consider and work the entire space available in this large format (16" X 22").

Big Idea(s): Identity. Artists are time travelers. They can imagine and show what the future might look like. You can be who you want to be—the future is yours! You can change the world!

Goals: 1. TSW recognize the power of art to tell a story. 2. TSW recognize that their own story is important and that the choices they make affect how their story unfolds. 3. TSW demonstrate an understanding of ways to use a variety of media in a single work of art.

Objectives: 1. TSW examine reproductions of portraits by acclaimed artists and identify ways in which the artist communicates identity, personality, occupation, and other attributes of the subject beyond mere likeness through use of both the positive and negative space in the composition (Show-Me Standards 1.5, FA3, FA5) 2. TSW will use mixed media to create a self-portrait, utilizing both positive and negative space to communicate, showing identity through clothing and other symbols, their imagined future life and/or career (Show-Me Standards 2.5, FA1) 3. TSW present their finished work to the class, explaining how the work shows their future (Show-Me Standards 2.1, 2.4, FA3)

Concepts: 1. Portraits can show more about a person than just what they look like. They can tell stories about the person's life. 2. Artists use many materials to create works of art, each for its own unique expressive qualities. 3. In a work of art, space enclosed within a shape is considered positive space; outside this is negative space.

Vocabulary: *Identity*- Who a person is, all of the things that together make them unique, like no one else. *Self Portrait*- a picture that an artist does showing themselves; a picture of the artist, done by the artist *Medium*- a kind of art material (crayon, watercolor, pencil, marker, etc.). *Media*- more than one medium *Wash*- a large area over-painted with watercolor. *Resist*- crayon "resists" watercolor because wax or oil do not mix with water.

Media & Materials: (1) 16" x 22" or 12" x 18" 80 lb. paper, (2) pencils, (3) sharpie markers, (4) oil crayons, (5) watercolors, (6) large wash brushes, (7) newspaper, (8) water containers

Teaching Resources: Reproductions of portrait paintings showing people at work or dressed for a particular job or role.

Artists: Norman Rockwell, Edgar Degas (dancers, jockeys), Van Gogh (Postman series), Mary Cassatt

Procedures: *First Session: Establish the concept of “the portrait”, demonstrate drawing techniques and begin activity.* 1. Present portraits by artists and ask students to be “art detectives,” discovering who the people are, their identity, and the stories about role or occupation. Help students notice the symbols and clues about the person’s identity role or job that the artist leaves. Ask them to look for these in both the positive & negative space. 2. Ask students to notice that the artist uses all the space in the painting, no large white blank areas.. 3. Brainstorm ideas about careers, discuss the ability of the artist to show what they think the future could hold. As students to close their eyes and imagine where they are and what they are doing in the future. Help them think about the idea that the future belongs to them 4. Using pencil, demonstrate how to use combinations of shapes to create a large figure on the page. 5. Ask them to make suggestions as you add in the detail s that communicate a story about an occupation for the person.

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6. Show how to go over pencil lines with sharpie marker once the drawing is developed with pencil. 7. Have students begin their drawings (use “check with me” before giving out sharpies). 8. Show finished example and explain how they will be adding other art media next class period.

Second Session: Review concepts of portrait, positive & negative space, and introduce use of mixed media 1. Review activities from previous class period (show visuals of portraits, positive and negative space) 2. Demonstrate the qualities of mixed media resist (oil crayon and watercolor)

a. How to utilize oil crayons (mostly in the positive space) b. How watercolor will be use (mostly in the negative space). c. How white oil crayon will show up after watercolor is applied. d. How warm color oil crayon can be contrasted with cool color watercolor (and vice versa); 3. Student helper roles (hand out work from last class, get sharpies and trays of oil crayons, cover tables). 4. Use “check with me” before allowing a student to go to next media step (oil crayon or watercolor).

Third Session: Complete portraits and then hold a critique session in which students look at each other’s work and explain the theme behind their own. Tip: Begin critique when approximately two-thirds of class has completed work. Those still working can listen while they finish & bring their work to the critique area when done—spurs slow workers to focus & finish. Have upper elementary write a statement about their portrait.

Assessment: Did the student . . . 1. Create a self-portrait that presents an idea about their future and illustrates their “identity?” 2. Use symbols, and details to clearly communicate a future career role visually? 3. Utilize both positive and negative space? 4. Participate and contribute to the discussion, describing qualities of the portraits examined? 5. Show controlled, expressive, and responsible use of the variety of media used?

Adaptations, Accommodations, & Extensions: For older students, teach basic figure proportion; present spatial mechanisms, such as showing foreground, middle-ground and background (multiple baselines), and ways to show interior space by representing where walls meet floors. Partner with classroom teachers to do a unit on careers, with students researching possibilities.

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