

# Lesson 8: Self Portrait – Oil Pastel Details and Background

Grades: 6-12

## Overview

Students will finish their expressive self-portraits by adding details and a background.

## Materials and Tools

- Self-portrait from previous session
- Oil pastels
- Mirror

## Objectives

### Students will understand that:

- Artists add details to make their self-portrait look more exciting and interesting.
- Artists can add a background to make their drawing appear more complete.

### Students will be able to:

- Add details to their self-portrait.
- Add a background to their drawing.

## Activities

### Introduce the following vocabulary:

Details: small elements that convey more information about a subject

Background: what's behind the subject of a portrait

## Close Looking



Malvin Gray Johnson, *Self Portrait*, 1934

### Questions for Discussion:

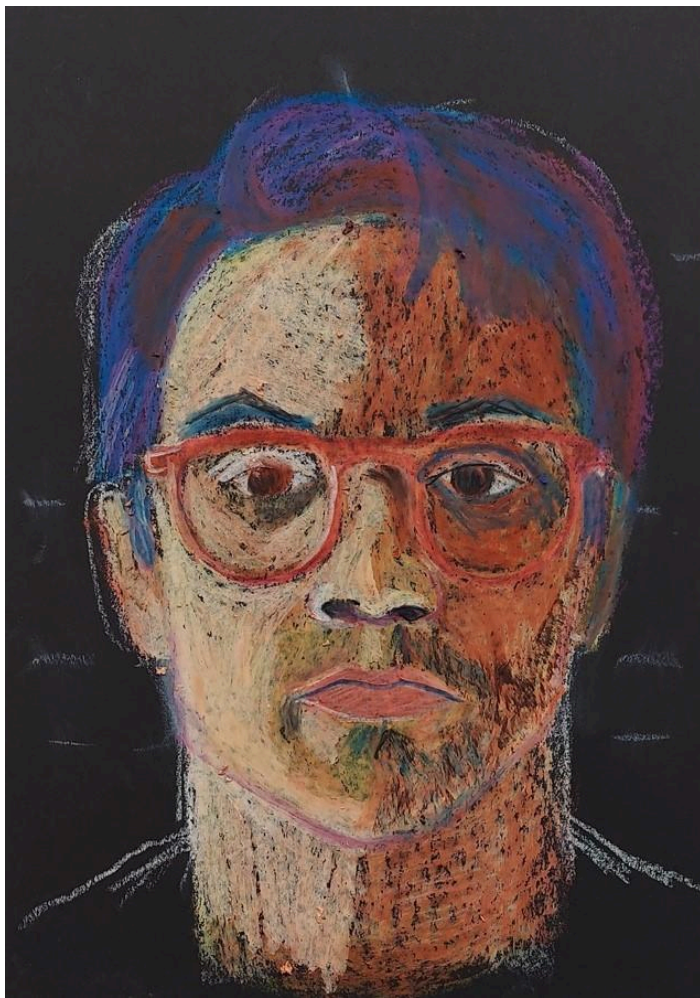
- *What is one detail this artist included in their self-portrait?*
- *What does this detail tell you about the subject?*
- *Where do you think the artist is? Why do you say that?*
- *What do the details in the background tell you about this person?*

### Revisit your self-portrait.

Demonstrate looking over your drawing with fresh eyes.

Is there anything that needs adjustment—placement, color, or value?

Demonstrate making any needed edits to the structure and features of your self-portrait before moving onto the details and background.



### Draw any important details.

*What details make you look like you?*

Demonstrate drawing your facial details now.





Draw your shoulders and clothing.



Demonstrate looking into the mirror to point out the relationship between your head and your shoulders. Use a light-colored oil pastel to draw your shoulders.

*What color will you make your clothing?*

*Will you wear something simple or detailed?*

*Will you include any jewelry?*

Demonstrate developing your clothing and include any highlights or shadows.

Develop your background.



Share that adding a background will complete a self-portrait.

Present different approaches to making a background.

- Keep it simple, focusing on color and value.
- Draw the actual place where you are.
- Include things that might tell us something about you or your interests.

Demonstrate developing the background in your drawing.

## Reflection Questions for Discussion



Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*, 1940

- Looking at how other artists make expressive self-portraits can help you with your own.
- Look at portraits by these artists for ideas:
  - [Frida Kahlo](#)
  - [Jordan Casteel](#)
  - [Amoako Boafo](#)
- *How did these artists express themselves in their artwork?*