

## Art Making: Create Your Own Self-Portraits

**Target grade range:** 3-5

**DPCS Curricular Unit:** Powerful Beyond Measure

**DPCS Curricular Arc:** Language/Connecting

**DPCS Curricular Theme:** Collage and dramatic writing to recast classical portraits with contemporary identities.

**Final Project:** Reimagine classical art by manually or digitally pasting the image of a contemporary figure into a classical context.

**Vocabulary** (sources: <https://learnersdictionary.com/> and [ABC Lesson 4: Portraits](#))

- **Artist's book:** An art form that uses elements of traditional book structures such as covers, binding, and pages in combination with the elements of art. It is a three-dimensional work meant to be viewed from multiple sides.
- **Background:** The part of a scene or picture that is farthest from the viewer.
- **Collage:** An artwork made by attaching pieces of different materials to a flat surface, or the process of attaching pieces of different materials to a flat surface.
- **Emphasis:** Special attention or importance given to a particular element of an artwork.
- **Foreground:** The part of a scene or picture that is nearest to and in front of the viewer.
- **Identity:** How a person sees or thinks of herself or himself. Identity can also refer to how people represent themselves to each other.
- **Portrait:** A painting, drawing, or photograph of a person that usually only includes the person's head and shoulders; a detailed description of something or someone.
- **Pose:** The position in which someone stands, sits, lies down, etc., especially as a model for a photograph, painting, etc.
- **Self-Portrait:** A painting or drawing of yourself that is done by yourself.
- **Subject:** Someone or something that is shown in a photograph, painting, etc.
- **Symbol:** An object that represents an idea or concept. (Example: The lion is a symbol of courage.)
- **Texture:** The way that something feels when you touch it (actual texture) or the way something looks like it might feel (visual texture).

**Note:** Each of the following steps can be a standalone activity. Combining all steps will result in a completed book with a collaged self-portrait on the cover and a written self-portrait inside.

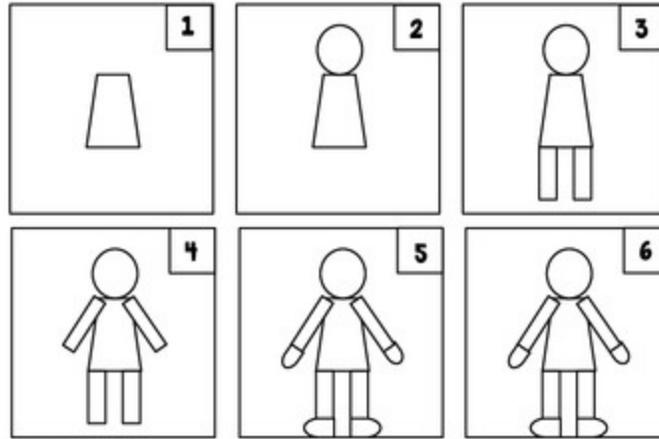
**Step One:** Create a self-portrait book.

- **Materials:**
  - One 8 1/2 x 11 inch sheet of paper
  - Bone folder, plastic spoon, popsicle stick, or fingernail
- **Instructions:**
  - Video: Book Making with the National Museum of Women in the Arts: Self-Portrait Book (5:59)
    - Link to video on PlayPosit:  
[https://api.playposit.com/player\\_v2/?type=share&bulb\\_id=944174](https://api.playposit.com/player_v2/?type=share&bulb_id=944174)
    - Link to video on YouTube (includes closed captioning):  
<https://youtu.be/vLpwSctty5c>
    - If you have trouble accessing this video, email [education@nmwa.org](mailto:education@nmwa.org) for assistance.
  - Written and illustrated: <https://nmwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Self-portrait-Book.pdf> (also included on page 5)

**Step Two:** Create a visual self-portrait.

- **Materials:**
  - Self-portrait book (or a blank sheet of paper)
  - Pencil
  - Colored pencils or crayons
  - Collage material, e.g. colored paper, decorative paper, fabric (optional)
  - Tape or glue to add collage materials (optional, glue stick recommended)
  - Mirror (optional)
- **Instructions:**
  - Using a pencil, sketch a self-portrait on the cover of your self-portrait book or a blank sheet of paper.
    - Things to consider:
      - Will this self-portrait be a bust portrait of your head, neck, and shoulders or a full-length portrait of your entire body?
      - What shapes would you use to describe your appearance? (e.g. Is your face shaped like a circle, oval, egg, or something else?)
      - What's your favorite hairstyle?
      - What's your favorite outfit?
    - Tip: If you're unsure how to start, take a look at yourself in the mirror or use the following steps.

## How To Draw a Person



<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Illustration-Rubric-Template-260482>

- Once your figure is complete, you can add to the background.
  - Things to consider:
    - What do you think is important for other people to know about you?
    - What objects could you include to tell the viewer more about yourself (e.g. pet, favorite food, an object that represents a hobby)?
    - What symbols represent your personality or beliefs (e.g. a peace sign or a lightbulb to represent your good ideas)?
- Add color and texture using crayons, colored pencils, and/or collage materials.
  - Things to consider:
    - Do you want to use realistic colors?
    - If not, what will the colors you use represent (e.g. emotions, your favorite color)?
    - What areas would you like to collage?

Tip: If collaging, place the materials on your portrait to decide exactly where you want them to be located. Then add glue or tape to those pieces to stick them down permanently.

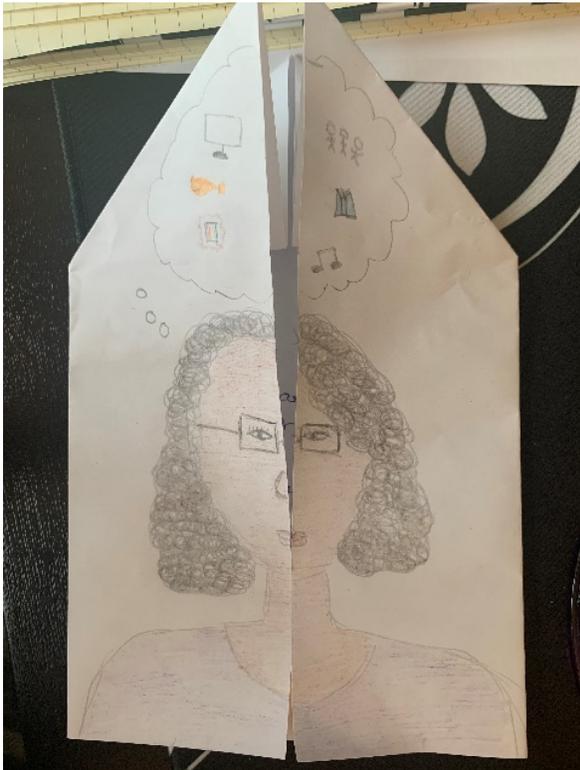
### Step Three: Create a written self-portrait

- **Materials:**
  - Blank paper for drafts
  - Writing implement
  - Self-portrait book (or a blank sheet of paper) for finished product
- **Instructions:**
  - Use the following template to draft an "I am" poem.
  - Once you're happy with the result, copy the final poem inside the self-portrait book or onto a new piece of paper.
- **Template** ([http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson391/I-am-poem.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson391/I-am-poem.pdf)):

- I am (two special characteristics you have).
- I wonder (something of curiosity).
- I hear (an imaginary sound).
- I see (an imaginary sight).
- I want (an actual desire).
- I am (the first line of the poem repeated).

**Samples:** Created by Ashley W. Harris, NMWA Associate Educator

**Self-Portrait Book:**



**“I am” Poem:**

I am shy and determined.

I wonder what the future will bring.

I hear songs, when I can't find the right words.

I see people coming together.

I want to be stronger.

I am shy and determined.