

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.

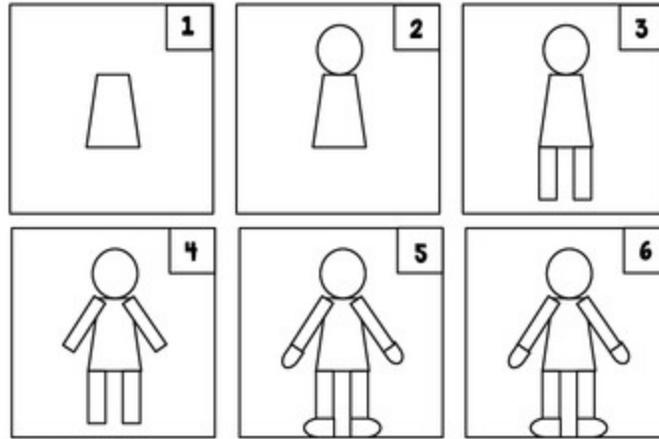
Step One: Create a self-portrait book.

- **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
 - Link to video on YouTube (includes closed captioning):
<https://youtu.be/vLpwSctty5c>
 - If you have trouble accessing this video, email 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.

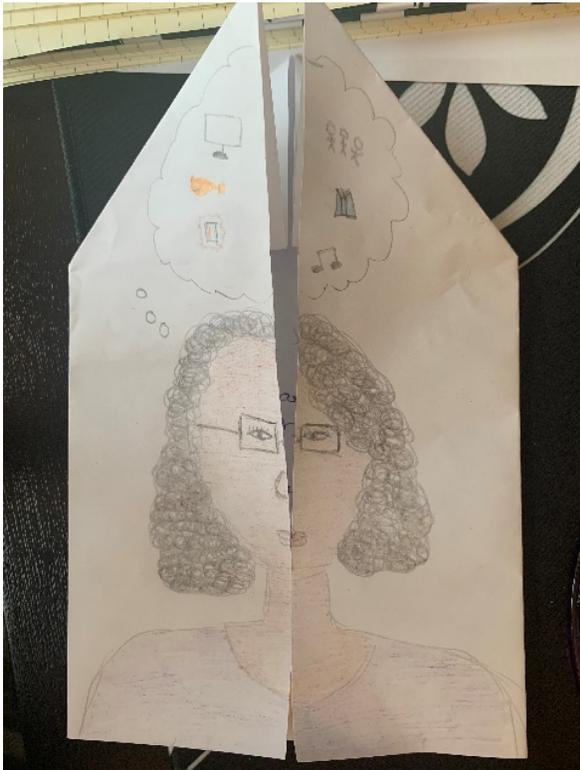
Step Three: Create a written self-portrait

- **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):

- 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.