

Self-Portraits

Date 1.21.14 - 1.24.14

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Grade Level 4

I. Self-Portraits

A. Students will learn different ways of depicting themselves as subject matter in their work.

B. How do the following four artists differ in their handling of a self-portrait? Is one funnier than another? Is one more serious? Do you have a personal favorite, and why?

II. Objectives / Expected Learner Outcomes

Build upon prior knowledge of the placement and proportions of facial features, but this time focusing on our own faces: creating self-portraits with the aid of mirrors.

III. Focused Standards of Education

- 3.B Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning (NAEA Standards for grades K-4)
- 4.9 The student will use contour drawing and shading techniques to create observational drawing.
- 4.18 The student will analyze works of art based on visual properties and contextual information.

IV. Lesson Cycle

Warm Up Activity: Ask students to examine the images below (that will be placed on the board), and discuss what is similar about each one.



Focus: Ask the students what the differences are in each self-portrait, emphasize that each one is different, no sets of eyes are the same! Each person is unique, and we want to use that knowledge when we create our very own self-portraits! Also show the names of artists and the years the self-portraits were made to emphasize that artists have been using themselves as subject matter for many years. It is sometimes interesting to students to refer to these images as “old-school selfies,” they like that.

Instructional Input: Show students how we will be making our self-portraits with the aid of mirrors. Place a mirror on the white board, and have a piece of paper with a magnet clipped to the board as well. Demonstrate how to continually look between the mirror and the sheet of paper when drawing. Emphasize that we now know the placement and proportion of facial features, but each person’s face is still different, so look really closely and try really hard to depict your eyes, nose, and mouth. Define “self-portrait” as a work done by an artist that includes him or herself as the subject, sometimes with the use of a mirror. Proportion is helpful to go over in this assignment, as students are not as familiar with the size of their eyes, ears, and other facial features, so a packet of helpful information or a diagram on the board works well. The head is five eye-lengths wide, the ears go from the eyebrows to the bottom of the nose, the mouth’s edges are directly below each pupil, and so forth.

Guided Practice: Ask students how many times we should look between the mirror and our drawing (answer should be “A lot,” “A whole bunch of times,” or “Always.”) Ask students if we should draw the eyes from the packets for our eyes or should we look closely at what our own eyes look like. How wide is the human head in terms of eye-lengths? (Ask students to hold up the number of fingers)

Transition Plan: (Mirrors and pencils will already be placed at tables.) I will call students to go to their seats by table numbers, and pass out the paper to begin the independent practice once students are seated at their assigned tables.

Independent Practice: Students will be creating their self-portraits, I will be continuously walking around the room challenging students to look closely at their face while depicting their portrait and praising students who have accepted the challenge.

Transition Plan: Have students put their pencils back into the baskets on the table and leave their mirrors where they are. They can take their portraits with them as they will be starting their final piece the next week (another self portrait, but now that they have had practice they won't be as nervous to accomplish it)

Closure: Ask students what we created today. What is a self-portrait?

V. Materials/Resources/Relevant Vocabulary

Pencils, copy paper, mirrors, images of MC Escher's, Rembrandt's, and Rockwell's self-portraits, the definition of self-portrait.

IX. Suggested Supplemental Activities

Have students share their self-portraits at the end of class. The following class students will paint a light wash of color on their portraits. The next class students will color in their eyes, hair, and other small details with colored pencils. The final class students will have their portraits mounted to a neutral colored paper with a two-inch border and create a frame of collaged papers of different patterns in the style of medallion quilts.

