



Windows to the Soul: A Creative Writing Project

Creative Writing



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Grade Level	6th – 12th Grade	Time Frame	3-5 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	120 minutes
Course	Composition, Creative Writing		

Essential Question

What does a piece of art communicate to us? How can art inform our writing?

Summary

This lesson encourages student writing by combining an art project with a creative writing assignment. Through guided inquiry and responses, students elicit responses that inform their creative writing piece. While this lesson is currently aligned only to ninth grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in any secondary grade and align the standards accordingly.

Snapshot

Engage

Students participate in a Commit and Toss activity to identify three adjectives or characteristics of a person they admire.

Explore

Using their adjectives, students paint/draw/sketch a pair of eyes.

Explain

Students engage in a discussion over the paintings and their adjectives through a Four Corners activity.

Extend

Students use their adjectives to help construct a narrative that tells the stories of a character, fiction or non-fiction, who possesses the eyes they have created.

Evaluate

Students participate in a gallery walk to read the short stories, view the art, and give constructive feedback.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.2.W.1: Students will apply components of a recursive writing process for multiple purposes to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.

9.7.W.1: Students will create a variety of multimodal content to engage specific audiences.

9.8.W: Students will write independently over extended periods of time (e.g., time for research, reflection, and revision) and for shorter timeframes (e.g., a single sitting or a day or two), vary their modes of expression to suit audience and task, and draw appropriate conclusions.

Attachments

- [Four Corners Signs.pdf](#)
- [Gallery Walk Checklist - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Gallery Walk Checklist - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Gallery Walk Checklist.docx](#)
- [Gallery Walk Checklist.pdf](#)
- [Printed Eyes Student Handout - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Printed Eyes Student Handout - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Printed Eyes Student Handout.docx](#)
- [Printed Eyes Student Handout.pdf](#)
- [Story Organizer - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Story Organizer - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Story Organizer.docx](#)
- [Story Organizer.pdf](#)
- [Windows to the Soul Writing Rubric.docx](#)
- [Windows to the Soul lesson slides.pptx](#)

Materials

- Sticky notes
- Art supplies (water colors, paint brushes, water, paper, markers, colored pencils, etc)
- Student Story organizer (attached)
- Sets of printed eyes (attached; optional)
- Four Corner signs
- Student Gallery Walk Checklist (attached)
- Student Writing Rubric (attached)
- Chart tablet paper (optional)
- Lesson Slides (attached)

Engage

Teacher Note: Lesson Preparation

Prior to beginning this lesson, place one of the four corners posters in each corner of the room. Determine and select art supplies that would be appropriate for your students. Print out any handouts needed by students such as the writing checklist. If using the pre-printed eyes, found in the attachments, print the eye sets front and back on one sheet of paper. Students will need scissors to select and cut out the eyes that best match the person who they admire.

Introduce the lesson today as both an art project and creative writing project. Display **slide 3** that addresses the guiding questions for this lesson. Ask for any volunteers to answer either question. If they cannot, you might prompt students by saying, "Have you ever looked at a picture or painting that made a big impression on you? If so, what do you remember about it?" Allow time for any responses. Explain that today we will want to communicate our thoughts and feelings through both our artwork and our writing.

Pose this question to student, "Whom do you admire?" Give them time to think over the question, and then ask "What specifically about them do you admire?" Display **slide 4**. Encourage students to think of someone they know or who may be a public figure, past or present. Remind students that it should NOT be someone who history or the public has identified as a villain. (For example, students should not choose Hitler or a serial killer, etc.)

Ask students to think about adjectives or characteristics about that person. Pass out three sticky notes to each student. On three separate sticky notes, students should write down an adjective or characteristic in order to participate in a [Commit and Toss](#). Allow time for them to write their name on each sticky note and one adjective or characteristic on each. Once completed, have them crumple each note and throw it into a bin or container.

Shake up the container with all the notes. Then, have students grab three items from the bin. Have students stand in a circle or at their desks. Each student will then read aloud one post-it note they have selected. Repeat this activity two more times. While the students are reading these adjectives and characteristics aloud, the teacher will write the adjectives down on poster paper or a white board to create a word wall. Discuss the word wall with your students. Tell students that as a class, these are the words/characteristics that the class applied to the people they admire. They can keep the original words they chose for their person or choose something from the word wall that expresses more accurately the person whom they admire.

This word wall needs to be preserved for use later in this lesson.

Explore

Ask students "Who did you choose as the person you admire?" Let students answer aloud. As students are answering this question, the teacher will write these responses down on a new piece of poster paper or on the other side of the white board. Allow time for students to read the compiled list. Comment on any patterns you may see. For example: "On our list, many of us admire our grandparents. What were some of the adjectives or characteristics that we used when thinking about our grandparents?"

Display **slide 5**. Give each student art supplies and a piece of paper. Art supplies can vary from paper and markers to paint, brushes, and heavier art paper. Students will then draw/paint/illustrate a pair of eyes that they think reflect the three words that they used in Commit and Toss activity and the person whom they admire.

Teacher's Note: Facilitating Art Work

If you would like students to create more durable, permanent artwork, then consider using 2x5 inch pieces of wood and paint. If your students do not want to create this artwork, consider printing the eyes handout found in the attachments. The pair of eyes they select should be representative of the adjectives that they chose and the person they are thinking of.

Allow time for the drawing of the eyes in your class. Depending on the medium for the art, students may need only part of a class period or an entire class period. For pre-printed eyes, students can choose one from the set of four and cut them out.

Explain

Once art work is completed or the pre-printed set of eyes chosen. Present this statement to students (**slide 6**): "You can judge a person by simply looking into their eyes." Give students a minute or two to think about this statement.

Students will then use their thoughts on this statement to participate in a [Four Corners](#) activity. Around the room, have four separate signs showcasing varying levels of agreement or disagreement. Once students have walked to their sign, have them talk as a group for a few minutes. Next, ask students to elect a group spokesperson to tell the class why they selected the sign that they did. Ask each spokesperson to share out their group's thoughts.

Extend

Ask students to return to their seats, and then pose this question: "Think about the people you admire and the eyes you have drawn to represent them. What experiences do you think the eyes have seen? Call on any volunteers to respond.

Teacher's Note: Facilitating Discussion

During this discussion, draw out any underlying themes such as: perseverance in the face of hardships, humility, generosity, or whatever the characteristics of the admirable people students have identified through the telling of experiences.

Display **slide 7**. Pose this question: Do your eyes have a story to tell? If so, what kind of story would they tell? Give students a minute or two to contemplate the questions, and ask for a few student responses. Explain to students that while they have thought about a person they admire to help us create mood and ideas, the story that they create can be a work of fiction or non-fiction. That is the "creative" part of creative writing. Students might start their story with little exposition, or they may choose to build a character before they start writing other portions of the narrative.

Ask students to write a narrative from the perspective of the eyes they have created. Students should include the adjectives/characteristics from the Commit and Toss activity in their narratives.

Teacher's Note: Writing Organizer

If your students struggle, use the plot and story line organizer to help them flesh out the key parts to their narrative.

Evaluate

Post students' writings with the eyes they drew. Students will participate in a [Gallery Walk](#) to view each other's work and corresponding artwork. Create a [Gallery Walk](#) of these writings on three or four walls of the classroom. Place students in small groups of four or five. Pass out the writing checklist and post-it notes to each group. Choose groups to view one of the (wall) galleries so that groups will only read a portion of the entire student writings. Ask students to leave feedback for students' writings based upon the checklist that has been provided. Model how to leave feedback by explaining **slide 8**. Emphasize to groups to leave feedback ONLY if it is listed on the checklist.

Once the Gallery Walk has been completed, allows students to read through their constructive feedback from the sticky notes and make any edits or changes as needed prior to turning in the final product.

For evaluation purposes, consider developing a rubric as a whole class or use the attached rubric for any teacher assessment needs.

Resources

- K20 Center (n.d.) Strategies. Commit and Toss. Strategies.
<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505b3d0>
- K20 Center (n.d.) Strategies. Four Corners. Strategies.
<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5064550>
- K20 Center (n.d.) Strategies. Gallery Walk/Carousel. Strategies.
<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505a54d>