



TIMKEN
MUSEUM
OF ART

Lesson: Symbolic Portraiture
Grades K-12





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Bartolomeo Veneto (1502-1531)

Only about 30 paintings survive by the great Venetian portraitist Bartolomeo Veneto, a contemporary of Titian, Veronese, and other masters of High Renaissance.

Portrait of a Lady in a Green Dress, 1530, Oil on Panel

This portrait, painted a year before the artist's death, shows the sitter standing in front of a red curtain. She is dressed in the height of fashion with a headpiece of human hair decorated with blue and gold ribbon, suggesting she was a lady of considerable status. The artist signed and dated the work on the cartellino, or tag, attached to the dark red curtain.

Objective

- Encourage students to find new approaches to observe information in a painting, citing visual evidence to support their ideas.
- Learn the general rules for portraiture.
- Develop and use symbols to convey ideas.

Curriculum Connections

English Language Arts and Visual Arts

Common Core Standards Met

- ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1
- ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4
- ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1
- ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3
- ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7
- ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7

Supplies

- Pencils
- Paper
- Colored pencils or pastels
- Glue sticks

Process

- Project the painting on the SMART Board and begin the lesson with the *Look, Talk, Listen, Connect* activity outlined below. Initially, allow students to freely associate any and all ideas they choose to discuss about the artwork.
- Inform students that a painting of a person is called a portrait and that a portrait illuminates and reveals the characteristics of an individual.
- Begin a brainstorming activity on your white board whereby students are asked to examine the painting and figure out who they think the person in the painting was, what do they think she liked to do, and what they think her personality was like. Record their answers on the white board below the corresponding categories (see Supplement 1).
- Select one idea from each of the three categories and erase the rest of the brainstorming activity.
- Ask students to think of a visual symbol that would illustrate each of the three selected ideas (see Supplement 1).
- Pass out a copy of Supplement 2 and a blank sheet of paper to each student. As a class, go over the rules of proportion for a portrait drawing. Ask students to practice drawing a proportional portrait using the guidelines provided in Supplement 2.
- Break students into pairs and inform them that their art project will be to create a portrait of each other.
- Ask the pairs to interview one another using the questions utilized in the *Talk, Look, Listen, Connect* activity that was done on the white board at the beginning of the lesson and, then, create their own lists of information that reflect on who their classmate is and what they like.
Note: Teachers may want to simplify the questions for K-3rd grade students. Alternative questions could include: What is your favorite color? What is your favorite food? What do you want to be when you grow up?
- Once both students have finished their interviews, ask them to select one idea from each of the three lists they have made and draw a symbol or picture that illustrates each selected idea.
Note: 4th-12th grade students should include a collage element that they can add to their portrait. For example, if a student likes fashion, thread or fabric could be pasted or sewn to the portrait. Show Supplement 3 for an example.
- Pass out available art materials (colored pencils, pastels, glue sticks etc.) and instruct students to begin their portrait drawings using the Supplement 2 handout as an example of how to start. Remind students that they need to include the symbols in their portraits and 4th through 12th grade students need to add one found object to collage into their artwork.
- At the end of the lesson, allow each student to present their portrait and what they learned about their classmate while creating it.

Look, Talk, Listen, Connect

Project the focus artwork onto the classroom wall and facilitate a discussion by using these three open-ended questions:

- What's going on in this work of art?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

As students respond, teachers are asked to:

- Paraphrase comments neutrally.
- Point at the area being discussed.
- Link and frame student comments.

Vocabulary

Portrait

A painting, drawing, photography, or sculpture that is meant to display the likeness, personality, and the mood of a person.

Symbol

Something that represents something else.

Facial Proportion

The size and placement of features of the face.

Collage

A combination or collection of various things.

Artistic Expression

Demonstrates an artist's imagination.



Supplement 1

Brainstorming Activity

Who is she?

- a rich lady
- a fashion designer
- a model
- somebody's sister

1. A fashion designer/thread
2. Rain/dripping water
3. Fashionable/make-up

What does she like?

- rain
- nature
- shopping
- art

What is her personality like?

- shy
- educated and smart
- fashionable
- family-oriented

What is your favorite color?

- Blue
- Purple
- Red
- Yellow

1. Purple/picture is colored in with light and dark purples
2. Candy/gummie bears
3. Artist/paint brush and drips of paint

What is your favorite food?

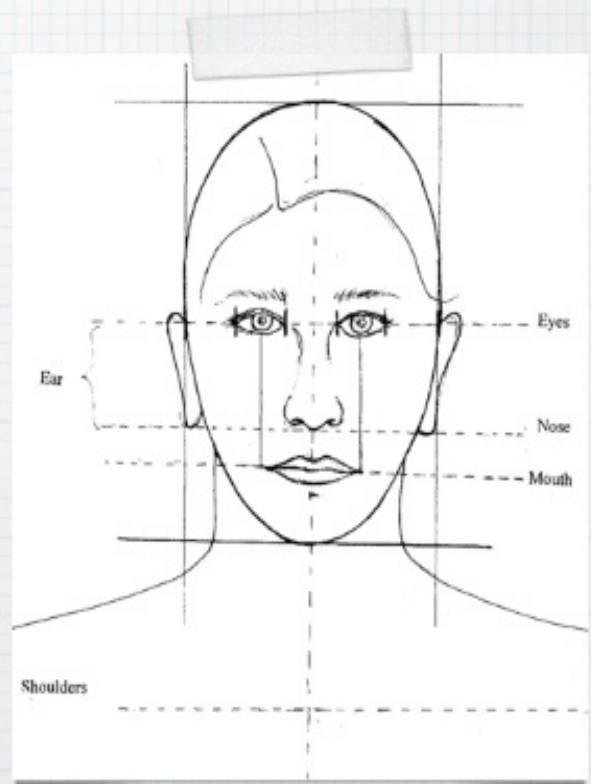
- Pizza
- Candy
- Mac-n-cheese
- Hamburgers

What do you want to be when you grow up?

- Firewoman
- Artist
- A rock star
- An actor

General Rules

- * The eyes are halfway between the top of the head and the chin.
- * The bottom of the nose is halfway between the eyes and the chin.
- * The mouth is halfway between the nose and the chin.
- * The corners of the mouth line up with the centers of the eyes.
- * The top of the ears line up with the center of the eyes.
- * The bottom of the ears line up with the bottom of the nose.



Supplement 3

Examples of Finished Artworks

K-3rd grade example without collage:
The hidden face represents being shy and the bamboo symbolizes nature.



4th-12th grade example with collage:
The scarf symbolizes fashion and the drips represent rain.

Rubric

Self and Peer Assessment

| Rubric Components | Point Scale | | | | Student's Score |
|--|-------------|---|---|---|-----------------|
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| Student followed the directions of the lesson | | | | | |
| Artwork demonstrates an understanding of the objective of the lesson | | | | | |
| Artwork demonstrates effort | | | | | |
| Artwork demonstrates attention to detail and careful craftsmanship | | | | | |
| Artwork possesses added creativity that was not assigned | | | | | |