

Symbolic self portrait

Great lesson
for your 4th-8th
grade students!

Handout included
for Assessment,
Reflection, or
Criticism.



Symbolic Self Portraits

Vocabulary

Symbol- an item or object that represents something else
 Self Portrait- an artistic representation of the artist, a portrait of themselves
 Grid- A space divided into even spaces

Materials & Resources

Notebook Paper
 12 x 12 Drawing paper
 Ruler
 Pencil
 Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencil
 (Media of your choice)
 Artist Statement

Essential Questions

How is a symbol different than an illustration?
 How can symbols represent a person?
 How can you create a self-portrait without drawing yourself?
 What will the chosen symbols tell viewers about the artist?

Instructional Targets

Create an informative, personal, meaningful self portrait
 Use symbols to tell stories, convey meaning
 Create a grid using a ruler
 Demonstrate ability to create strong compositions- cropping, balance, planning, etc...
 Communicate ideas of meaning and content through written Artist Statement

Day 1

- Brainstorming Symbols- Prompt students to create a self portrait using 9 symbols
- On Notebook paper, brainstorm objects that would symbolizes something about you

Day 2

- Making the grid- Divide your 12 x 12 drawing paper into 4 inch boxes. There will be 9 in all. Use rulers to measure, mark, and draw lines
- Talk about composition inside each of the boxes
- Draw images in boxes

Day 3

- Continue drawing any images that need to be completed
- Begin coloring with chosen medium

Day 4

- Continue coloring
- When the Symbolic Self Portrait is complete, students may begin working on their Artist Statement

Steps

- Keep reminding students not to draw illustrations. I told my students I wanted viewers to look at my art and try to put together a puzzle and figure out what my images meant. "Why a cardinal? What's a tomato doing on your self portrait?"
- Brainstorm until there are 9 strong objects, then move to the drawing paper
- Composition- I explained to my students that I wanted each box to look like its own piece of art. I encouraged students to use the whole box and even crop their images to make more interesting compositions

Let's hear from the artist!

My Symbolic Self Portrait

Artist's Name: _____

What 9 symbols did you use?

1.

4.

7.

2.

5.

8.

3.

6.

9.

Choose one of your symbols and describe what it represents. Why is this important to you?

Do the symbols tell viewers more about you than a traditional self-portrait? What are you excited for viewers to learn about you?
