



Language Arts and Visual Art

Tell Me What You See

Fourth - Sixth Grade
Lesson by David Habben

This lesson may be adjusted to fit whatever timeline you need. It can be the focus for one day, or worked on for an hour a day over a week or more.

Objectives

- Create a unique character through writing and drawing.
- Learn to contribute to a group activity.
- Edit and refine final project for a more finished result.

Introduction

The project will be a twist on the idea of an exquisite corpse, in which participants each contribute to a story or drawing in sequence. Students will be asked to both draw and write collaboratively to create imaginative characters with their own unique stories.

Learning Activity

This activity should result in unique characters created by the ideas of multiple students. Students will be working on two sheets of paper: A description page and a character page.

Have students begin by writing a two-sentence description of their character's face on the description page. This should be just a simple physical description. Once their description is written, students will pass their paper to the person to their right.

Students should now take a separate sheet of paper and fold it into thirds. Using the description they received from the person on their left, students will draw the face of the described character in the upper third of the paper. This is now their character page. They will not be passing their character page, but keep it at their desk.

Have students return to the description page that was passed to them earlier. Have the students read the description carefully. They will now add two more sentences that describe where this character comes from and how old they are. After adding this new information, students will then pass their description page to the right again.

Using the new description page they've just received, students will draw a torso in the middle third of the character page they made earlier. Make sure students read the descriptions carefully in order to know what details they need to add to their drawings.

For the final portion of the description page, have students write two sentences about a challenge they are trying to overcome. This is a good opportunity to discuss how each of us has challenges, and that we should be kind and respectful when we learn about the challenges our classmates are facing. After writing their two new sentences, students will pass the description page to the right one more time.



David Habben, *The Evening Callers*, 2017-2018, ink on paper



Cassandra Barney, *Self Portrait*, 2017, oil on board

Materials

- 2 pieces of regular copy paper for each student.
- Pencils
- Crayons or colored pencils.

Image from the Museum Permanent Collection

- Cassandra Barney, *Self Portrait*, 2017, oil on board

Image from *Magic and Machine* Exhibition

- David Habben, *The Evening Callers*, 2017-2018, ink on paper

Utah Core Standards

Language Arts:

W.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

Visual Arts:

Strand: CREATE (6.V.CR.)

Students will generate artistic work by conceptualizing, organizing, and completing their artistic ideas. They will refine original work through persistence, reflection, and evaluation (Standards 6.V.CR.1-6).



Learning Activity Continued

Have students read their new description pages carefully, remembering to be respectful when reading about others' challenges. Now, on the bottom third of the character page, students will use the new description they've been handed to draw the lower portion of the character's body. They should try to include something in this section that will help the character to overcome whatever challenge is described.

Conclusion

Students are now ready to unfold their character pages and see the whole character! Have students work in pairs or small groups to talk about the project and compare what they thought their character was going to be with how it actually turned out. Also have them discuss the following questions:

Was there anything challenging about this project? Why or why not?

How did your idea of your character change with each step?

What are some things you can adjust to make your character more complete?

After discussing their characters, give students time to complete their drawings by adding details and making adjustments to combine all three sections into one clear character. Have a couple of students show their finished characters to the class and talk about what adjustments they made.

Now have students turn to their description pages and read through each of the sentences carefully. Ask students to take some time to refine their descriptions. They should take each of the three descriptions and adjust them to make one overall description of their character. Because each sentence was written by a different person, students may need to rewrite sentences to sound more cohesive.

Have students hang their finished character and description pages in the classroom side-by-side. Have students look at each of the characters and discuss their differences and similarities. Remind students that each character was created with the help of several classmates.

Extension Activity

This lesson can be extended by giving students the challenge of creating a story where the character they created is the main character.

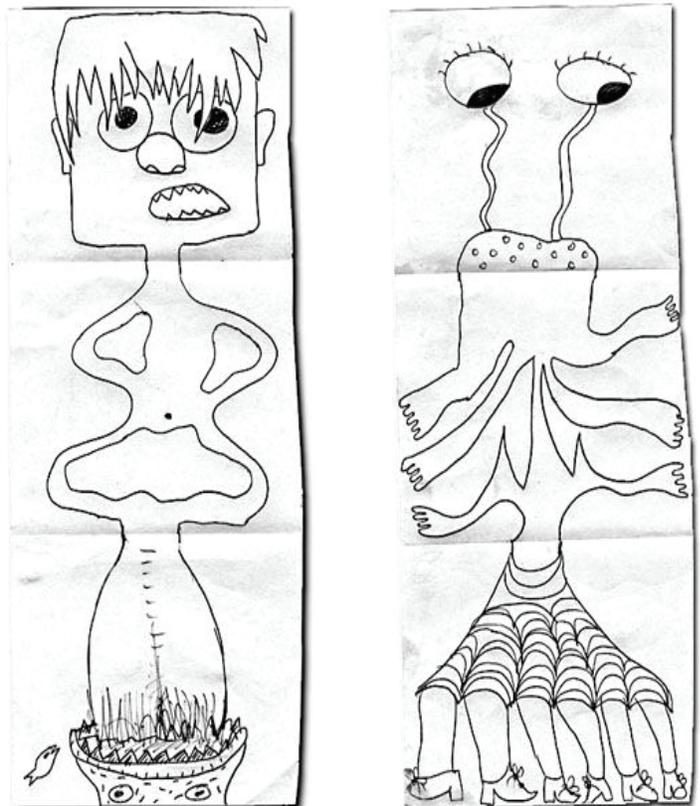
Students should start by creating an outline of their story. Each outline should include:

- A setting
- A conflict (based on the challenge given in the description page of the character)
- A resolution
- At least 2 secondary characters

Students should then begin writing their stories, following the plan layed out in their outline. Once their story is complete, each student should read through their stories carefully and check for spelling and grammar errors. Once they have edited their work, students should re-write their stories and include images to go along with each page in the story.

Invite several students to read their stories to the class. Have them show the class their original character pages along with their stories.

Example of An Exquisite Corpse Image





Cassandra Barney, *Self Portrait*, 2017, oil on board