

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

STRIKE A POSE

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does the artwork of the past influence and inspire an artist?

GRADES

1–5

TIME

Two class periods

ART CONCEPTS

Figure drawing, proportions, influence

MATERIALS

Pencils, markers, colored pencils, and drawing paper

TALKING ABOUT ART

Look at *Three Women at the Spring*. Write down one word that describes the painting. Your teacher will make a list of these words on the board by calling on you and your peers to share what you wrote. Describe the clothing and poses of the figures. Who are they? Why do you think they are dressed that way? Why are they gathered together? What else do you notice about the painting? What colors do you see? How do they make you feel?

Take a moment to look at *The Lansdowne Artemis* and *The Hope Athena*. These sculptures are very old. Body parts are often missing from ancient sculptures because they are old and have traveled very far. Sculptures like *The Lansdowne Artemis* and *The Hope Athena* used to be very colorful, but their paint was lost with age so now we only see classical sculptures that are white and gray. What are they wearing? How are they posed? Why are they so large? Who might these figures be?

When sculpting figures, the ancient Greek sculptor Polykleitos used one part of the figure, part of the little finger for example, to decide the lengths of the arms, legs, and torso as well as the height of the figure using set ratios. Similarly, today artists often say that a drawing of a person should be 7 and a half heads long, so if you drew a person's head and then measured it, the length of that person's body would equal 7 and a half heads.

Compare the proportions of the *The Lansdowne Artemis* to those of the women in *Three Women at the Spring*. Write down all the similarities between the sculptures and the figures in the Picasso painting. Again share as a class or with partners.

How does the artwork of the past influence and inspire an artist like Picasso? How does the difference in medium (sculpture vs painting) effect the artworks?

MAKING ART

PART I: Choose a partner from among your classmates, and decide on a pose inspired by classical Greek and Roman sculpture like the women in Picasso's *Three Women at the Spring*. Do a gesture drawing (a quick sketch) of your partner's pose, and then some longer drawings of details like your partner's head and hands.

MAKING ART (cont.)

Hold out a ruler vertically in front of you at arm's length. Closing one eye, measure your partner's head with the ruler, and then use that unit of measurement to measure your partner's arms, torso, legs, and overall height (e.g. your model may be 7.5 heads tall) to get an idea of the proportions for your final drawing. Then switch with your partner, and pose for them while they draw you.

PART 2: Use your posed gesture drawing, detail drawings, and measurements to create a modern figure drawing that reflects the influence of antiquity. Begin by deciding how you would like to adapt your figure to modernize it. Will you model your figure's proportions after your partner's measurements, ancient Greek examples, or new proportions of your own making? Will your figure be stocky and squat or elongated and string-like? Will your figure wear a toga or modern attire? Will your figure be placed in a gallery setting or an everyday one, or will they simply hover on the page without a background? Will you use color or stay with the white-gray palette of the classical sculptures you see in museums? Be prepared to explain your choices and the reasoning behind them.

REFLECTION

Display your newly made artwork on the wall. How did it feel to pose like an antique sculpture? Did you feel powerful or self-conscious? How did seeing the artworks inspire what you just made? How have you modernized your drawing? Why did you choose the proportions that you did? How would you describe your drawing in one word?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.1-5

1-5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners. 3-5.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

CCSS.MATH.MEASUREMENTS AND DATA.1-3

1.2 Express the length of an object as a whole number of length units, by laying multiple copies of a shorter object (the length unit) end to end; understand that the length measurement of an object is the number of same-size length units that span it with no gaps or overlaps. 2.4 Measure to determine how much longer one object is than another, expressing the length difference in terms of a standard length unit.

CCSS.MATH.NUMBERS AND OPERATIONS.1-3

3.1 Understand a fraction a/b as the quantity formed by a part of size $1/b$.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

EXPLORING CULTURAL HERITAGE

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does your background and family affect who you are and how you identify?

GRADES

4–8

TIME

One–two class periods

ART CONCEPTS

Collage, 3D, pre-Columbian, Muralism, cultural influence

MATERIALS

8 ½ x 11 inch heavy paper or cardstock (assorted colors), pencils, markers or tempera paints, paint brushes, scissors, glue, bamboo skewers (stands for shapes), and thick cardboard scraps (base)

TALKING ABOUT ART

Visual artists often explore their social and personal identity in their practice. Through making art, they are able to construct a sense of who they are as individuals, as a society, or as a nation. Conventions and stereotypes are also questioned in art-making while exploring gender, nationality, and heritage.

Mexican culture and history are major themes and influences in Diego Rivera's art. In a style largely indebted to pre-Columbian culture, he created panoramic portrayals of Mexican history from Mexico's indigenous beginnings up to the Mexican Revolution (c.1910–1920) and post-Revolutionary present. Large, simplified figures and bold colors like those present in Aztec art characterize his native style. Like Maya *stelae* (tall, sculpted stone monuments), his paintings tell stories that seek to teach viewers about the greatness of Mexico's pre-Columbian past.

View and discuss Diego Rivera's *Flower Day* and the statue of the Aztec water deity, *Chalchiuhtlicue* included in the curriculum packet. What similarities do you notice between the two artworks? What types of shapes do you see (organic, geometric, abstract)? What messages or stories are being communicated in each work? Why do you think Rivera chose to include visual elements from pre-Columbian art?

MAKING ART

Begin by thinking of your own cultural heritage. Research your family tree and heritage, as well as any art or symbols associated with your heritage, by interviewing your relatives. Then, write a short reflection paper that describes what you've learned.

Inspired by Rivera's exploration of his Mexican heritage in his art, create a 3D collage self-portrait using simple geometric forms cut out of paper. The collage will integrate selected colors and images that represent your heritage, ethnicity, gender, and/or race.

This lesson will help you to:

- 1) Explore and learn more about your heritage and those of your classmates,
- 2) broaden your views on the diverse population that exists within your school, and
- 3) become more sensitive towards others' differences and uniqueness.

REFLECTION

Reflect on the art-making experience and respond to the following questions in oral form:

How is cultural heritage communicated and interpreted through works of art? In what ways does your collage reveal your cultural identity? What shapes, symbols, or patterns did you use? How would you describe the overall composition? What did you intend to communicate about yourself and your cultural heritage with this artwork? In what other ways can we illustrate and share our cultural heritage with others?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WRITING.4-8

4-8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.4-8

4-8.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners.
4-5.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. 6-8.4 Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details and nonverbal elements to accentuate main ideas; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SAMPLE ARTWORK



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

REINVENTING ANCIENT FORMS

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Those who study ancient artworks will always have unanswered questions, but embracing the unknown can inspire curiosity and present the opportunity to explore one's identity and history.

GRADES

5–8

TIME

One class period

ART CONCEPTS

Historical and cultural context, medium, influence, and visual emphasis and attributes

MATERIALS

Graphite pencils, watercolor pigments, and both heavy stock and scrap papers

TALKING ABOUT ART

Look at ancient artworks from a variety of cultures including LACMA's *Lansdowne Artemis*.

<https://collections.lacma.org/node/229665>

<https://collections.lacma.org/node/229429>

<https://collections.lacma.org/node/207540>

<https://collections.lacma.org/node/172640>

<https://collections.lacma.org/node/179283>

Then conduct a detailed visual analysis of a few works, describing any adornments or attributes. Are there any characteristics that appear to be unique to that artwork or culture? What is emphasized in each piece? Taking a closer look will contribute to a better understanding of ancient sculpture. Discuss the contrast between monumental and durable materials (the marble and clay of ancient artworks) and fugitive and delicate ones (like pigments and paper).

MAKING ART

Draw upon ancient artworks to invent new expressive personalized drawings.

Familiarize yourself with select ancient artworks from a culture of your choice. Write down a list of basic known and unknown information. Then write what is unknown in the form of questions, i.e. Where was this found? Who is it? What was it used for? Ask as many questions as you can.

Think about the parts of the ancient works that are missing and imagine a short narrative explanation of what happened to these works to leave them in their current condition. Think of many alternatives: Were the losses caused by natural causes like erosion or human interventions like war or plunder?

Use a piece of scrap paper to create a brief notation of select details from one of the ancient artworks. Find the lines, shapes, patterns, colors, or forms that make that ancient artwork distinct to its culture.

MAKING ART (cont.)

Next create a composition that incorporates these details in an image that speaks to your life, either a scene from your life or an object that relates to your identity. Refer to what you've learned and wondered about the ancient artworks to help guide your choices and inspire you.

Transfer these ideas into a final form utilizing the watercolors and heavy stock paper. Add graphite lines and shading before, during and/or after applying color.

REFLECTION

Reflect on your drawing individually using the prompt 'Where am I in this piece?' or 'How am I in this piece?' before coming together as a class. What did you like about the work you did?

Can you tell what culture inspired the artwork just by looking at it? If so, what features do you recognize from the ancient works? Present your work to the class and explain its inspiration.

Reflect on the process as a class. How did it feel to be the one asking the questions? How do you feel now about asking questions?

Consider taking the reflection one more step with an activity: Use movement, performance or poetry to capture an additional aspect of the project.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.5-8

5-8.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners.

5.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.READING.5-8

5.9 Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics. 6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

TRANSFORMING STORYTELLING WITH TECHNOLOGY

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|---------------------------|--|
| ESSENTIAL QUESTION | How can technology inform new approaches to storytelling? |
| GRADES | 6–12 |
| TIME | Two or more class periods |
| ART CONCEPTS | Storytelling, filmmaking, character design, set design, illustration |
| MATERIALS | iPads (open to Stop Motion Studio), bristol paper, a variety of colored and patterned paper, markers, watercolor pencils, scissors, and gluesticks |
| TALKING ABOUT ART | <p>Look at Diego Rivera’s <i>Creation of the Universe</i> illustration depicting the creation story of the Maya, the <i>Popol Vuh</i>. The <i>Popol Vuh</i> is an ancient and sacred text that depicts the creation of humankind according to the K’iche’ people from the area now known as Guatemala. Traditionally, passages from the <i>Popol Vuh</i> were read aloud while a painter created images inspired by the text, and Diego Rivera used the same method for his illustrations. Read the passage from the <i>Popol Vuh</i> that inspired <i>Creation of the Universe</i> (parts 1–3 of the attached summary). Can you identify narrative elements in the illustration? What aesthetic choices did Rivera make when translating the narrated text into visual images and why do you think he made these choices?</p> <p>Discuss ways in which artists over time have interpreted ancient stories and myths. How have inventions and advancements in art technology brought forth new approaches to storytelling? If you could create an animation inspired by Rivera’s <i>Creation of the Universe</i>, how would you represent the various elements of the story? What tools would you use to portray your vision?</p> <p>Learn about several user-friendly apps for filmmaking in the classroom including Stop Motion Studio and iMovie. Stop Motion Studio is a free, easy to use app that allows you to give your character creations the illusion of movement through frame by frame images. iMovie is a video editing platform which allows you to add sound, music, effects, and narration.</p> |
| MAKING ART | <p>PART I: Discuss the <i>Popol Vuh</i> and look at a short summary of the story to look at for reference material. Create a stylized illustration of a character from the <i>Popol Vuh</i>. When finished, cut out the character and choose a colored or patterned paper background for your stop-motion video.</p> <p>PART II: Collaborate as a group and take turns experimenting with the iPad and Stop Motion Studio app to create mini stop-motion animations of the characters. Lay out your character on your background and take turns filming from above using the iPad (making sure only the characters and background are in the frame). While other students in your group move the characters slightly, capture each frame with the iPad to create an animated sequence. Once the stop motion videos are complete, upload them to iMovie to add effects, narration, music, and/or sound.</p> |

MAKING ART (cont.)

OPTIONAL: The *Popol Vuh* may be broken up into chapters with one group of students assigned to each chapter. You can then create an animated/ stop-motion video interpreting your assigned chapter. Once each group is finished with their chapter of the story, all the stop-motions may be gathered together in iMovie as a single film that tells the story in order from the first chapter to the last. Materials other than paper, such as clay, paper-mache, etc. may also be used to build the characters.

REFLECTION

Share observations, challenges, and ideas relating to using technology as a medium for storytelling. How has viewing different interpretations of the *Popol Vuh* affected how you think of the story? Does seeing these different interpretations make you think of how other classic stories may have changed through multiple interpretations over time?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.6-12

6-12.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners. 6-8.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study. 9-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats. 9-12.5 Make strategic use of digital media in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.READING.6-12

6-8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details. 6-8.7 Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium. 9-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. 9-10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States. 9-12.7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment. 9-10.9 Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work.

SAMPLE ARTWORK



EXCERPTS FROM THE POPO VUHL

PART I

The ancient world had its beginnings here in this place named Quiché. The sea was calm. The sky was empty and silent. There was not, then, anything in fact. Only the sea. There were no people, no animals, no fish, no birds, no mountains, no forests. The face of the earth has not yet appeared. Alone lies the expanse of the sea, along with the womb of all the sky. Only the god of the sea, Plumed Serpent, and the god of the sky, Heart of Sky. Luminous they were in the water, wrapped in Quetzal feathers and Cotinga feathers. In their essence, they were great sages, great possessors of knowledge.

PART II

Heart of Sky and Plumed Serpent were both great knowers and great thinkers. They talked, they thought, they worried. They joined their hearts and their thoughts.

Plumed Serpent: "We will create life!"

Heart of Sky: "But how? How will we make the earth?"

Plumed Serpent: "If we remove much of the water, the earth will rise from the sea."

Heart of Sky: "Earth."

With one word, the trees spread across the mountains, and great woods and forests were formed. Just like a cloud, like a mist, was the creation and formation of the Earth.

PART III

Then they pondered further beyond the creation of Earth and thought of wild animals, guardians of the forest.

Heart of Sky: "Deer. Bird. Puma. Jaguar. Serpent. Rattlesnake. Fish. Monkey. Coyote. Parrot. Crow."

And with his words, the animals filled the Earth and the Sea.

Plumed Serpent: "Look at the wonderful animals we have made! Now these creatures must thank us."

Heart of Sky: "They must tell our great story to the other gods so we will be honored."

Plumed Serpent: "Speak! Don't moan or cry out!"

Heart of Sky: "Name our names! Praise us! Speak now!"

But they did not succeed in talking like men. They just rattled and croaked and howled.

PART IV

Heart of Sky: "We must try again."

Plumed Serpent: "We will try to make a human being who will give us praise and respect. A provider. A nurturer."

And they talked and they thought and they decided to make men out of the mud that remained when earth and sea were divided. But it came undone and crumbled. It became sodden and mushy. It fell apart and dissolved. Its head was not set apart properly. Its face could only look in one direction. Its face was hidden. Neither could it look about. At first it spoke, but without knowledge. Straightaway it would merely dissolve in water, for it was not strong.

**EXCERPTS FROM
THE POPO VUHL (cont.)**

PART V

Heart of Sky: "We must try again."

Plumed Serpent: "Let us consult the great and wise god and goddess, Grandfather and Grandmother of Light. They will be able to guide us."

So they journeyed beyond the heavens to visit Grandfather and Grandmother of Light.

Plumed Serpent: "Great god and goddess, we have tried to make creatures who will speak our names, honor us and give us praise. We have failed so far! The animals growl and hiss, the mudmen babble. Who will tell our story? Who will remember how the earth began?"

Grandmother of Light: "Wood! You must carve the faces and bodies in wood! Let them sing your praises and give you the respect you deserve!"

Their legs were not filled out, Nor their arms. They lacked blood and sweat. They did not possess their hearts nor their minds. They walked without purpose.

Plumed Serpent: "Speak!"

Heart of Sky: "Name our names! Praise us! Speak now!"

Plumed Serpent: "What a horrible noise! There is nothing in their minds! There is nothing in their hearts!"

And so, Plumed Serpent and Heart of Sky harnessed the waters and a great flood covered the earth to destroy the wood people.

PART VI

Heart of Sky: "What are we to do? The animals cannot sing our praise, the mudmen dissolved, and the woodmen had no hearts or minds."

Plumed Serpent: "Look at the mountain in the distance. What do you see coming towards us?"

Heart of Sky: "I can see clearly now! Fox, coyote, parrot, crow!"

Fox: "We bring you great news! We have found ears of yellow corn and white corn."

Coyote: "This is the ingredient you have been looking for to create human flesh!"

Parrot: "The mountain we have just come from is thick with corn."

Crow: "Hundreds of plants grow there, strong and straight and tall."

And they rejoiced then over the discovery of the marvelous mountain, filled with yellow and white corn.

Plumed Serpent: "Let us grind the corn nine times! And let us add water to make the flesh!"

Heart of Sky: "Man."

And with that, the first true humans that could think and speak and praise were created from corn.

Heart of Sky: "Our praises will finally be sung!"