

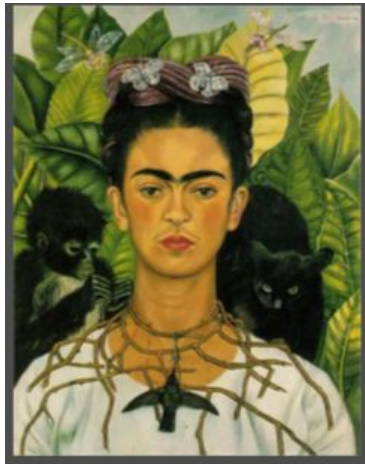
Directions: *This lesson correlates with Week 6 KCS@Home and the video will air on PBS during the week of May 11, 2020 but you won't have to watch the video to do this lesson. This lesson is divided into 5 steps that can be done all in one day or across several days.*

Symbolism in Art

Look around you. Everywhere you look there are symbols that represent an idea or a concept. For example, we see our flag in many places; the flag represents our united country. The Statue of Liberty symbolizes universal freedom. Even colors can represent ideas or concepts. For example yellow is the color of sunshine and represents joy, happiness, intelligence, and energy. Is there something in your home that represents an idea or concept?

Symbolism is when a picture, object, or color is used to represent an idea or a concept. Authors and artists rely on the figurative meaning of symbols to help convey their message to their audience. Different symbols might mean different things in different cultures. What is a sign of good luck in one culture might be a sign of bad luck in another culture?

In this lesson, you will be guided through 4 steps that lead you to your own self-portrait and symbols that represent you. Remember: this is NOT an art lesson. Here we are using art to help us learn about symbolism. We will use an original piece of art that is full of symbols.



Step 1: Analyzing a Self-Portrait

This is a self portrait; meaning this artist drew this picture of herself. At first look, notice that her portrait includes symbols that represent another idea or concept. Her symbols include her use of objects and color. Each of these objects holds meaning. Study this for a moment to make note of everything you can see in this portrait. Make a note of the things you see in this picture.

Did you see:

- A woman who is not smiling.
- She is standing in front of big leaves.
- She has dragonflies flying above her and butterflies are in her hair.
- She has a monkey on one of her shoulders and a black cat on the other.
- She has thorns around her neck with a bird hanging from the center.
- She has an infinity symbol (∞) on top of her head.

Step 2: Artist's Background

To better understand her self-portrait, we must understand the background of the artist.

Frida Kahlo is a famous artist from Mexico. She experienced several hardships in her life, including contracting polio as a child and being in a terrible bus accident. Both of these caused her to live her adult life in much physical pain. She was often confined to her bed. She painted from her bed as a way to fight boredom.

In her self-portrait, she included symbols that represented her life and her Mexican culture. Let's use our list to help you understand the symbols. Remember these are symbols that represent Mexican culture.

- Leaves represent the foliage you'd see in a Mexican jungle
- She is not smiling because of all the hardships in her life
- The monkey represents her husband. He gave her a monkey as a gift.
- The black cat is a panther that represents bad luck.
- The bird hanging from the center is a hummingbird that represents good luck and strength.
- The infinity symbol in her hair represents that her artwork will "live forever."
- The color of the portrait moves from lighter at the top to darker at the bottom. This shows how her life got harder and more painful as she grew older.
- The thorns around her neck represent her pain.

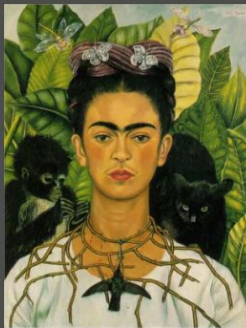
Step 3: Acrostic

An acrostic is an alternative learning task. It promotes conceptual thinking. In this case, an acrostic will help us apply what we've learned about the symbols Frida Kahlo used in her self-portrait.

Each line of an acrostic can be completed as a single word response, a list of several words, a phrase, or a complete sentence. ***Later in this lesson, you'll be asked to complete one at a level that is most challenging for you.*

Look at the acrostic below. In this example you will see an acrostic completed with one or more single-word responses. If you're a 3rd grader, this is a great place for you to start. If you're a 4th or 5th grader, it would be more of an appropriate challenge for you to create an acrostic using phrases or complete sentences.

S	Strength, silence
Y	Yearning
M	Mad
B	Bold, brave
O	Odd
L	Lethargic, lonely
I	Intelligent, ill
S	stamina, sorrow
M	Morose, macabre



This is the process used to create this acrostic: (It will help you create a more detailed self-portrait that will include symbols that are meaningful in your life.)

In thinking of words to use that represent our artist's self-portrait, you may need to use a thesaurus for help if you're having difficulty. Since our lesson's focus is on symbolism, that will be our acrostic (and it should also be yours when it's your turn).

Notice how the word SYMBOLISM contains two S's and two M's. Focus on those double letters first. Knowing what you've learned from her self-portrait and the research you did on this artist, what would be exceptional S words that were represented by her artwork?

- Strength for the hurdles she had to overcome,
- Silence because she is letting the picture speak for her.
- Stamina for continuing to be tough throughout her life, sorrow for what she experienced from her pain.

What words, starting with M, best describe her mindset or feelings, based on the symbols she used in her self-portrait? Be certain you choose the best vocabulary words you can think of, not just the first word that comes to your mind that starts with the correct letter.

- Mad because imagine if you had to live a life full of pain you would be upset by it.
- Morose and Macabre because of the symbols of bad luck in the picture and she doesn't look happy.

The rest of the letters in SYMBOLISM are only used once.

- Yearning for happiness which she never really had,
- Bold and Brave because she had to fight through her pain to become successful.
- Odd because she struggled with feeling different.
- Lethargic because her pain often exhausted her.
- Lonely because she spent so much time by herself recovering from her accident.
- Intelligent as her detail in her art shows.
- Ill because she had numerous surgeries after her accident and she never fully recovered from it.

Step 4: Your Turn

Before you begin, read this and think about what your self-portrait will look like.

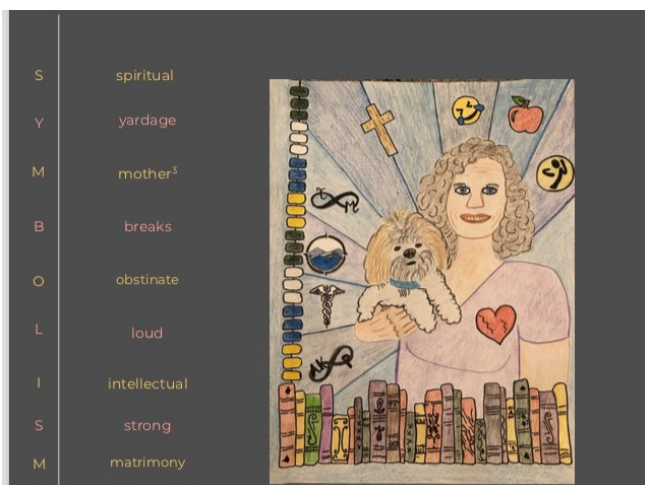
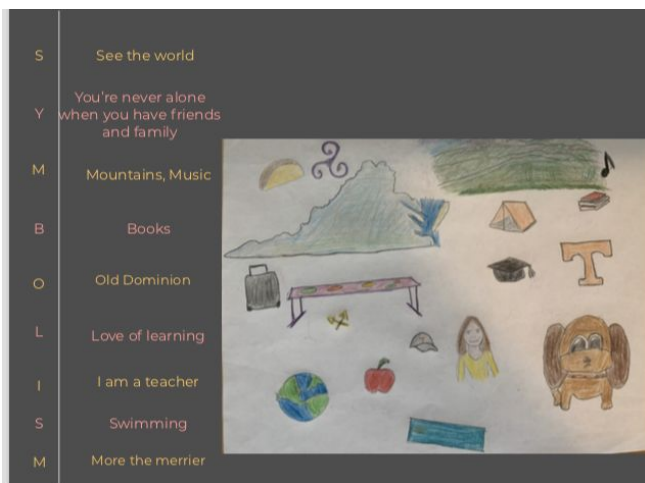


Spend some time thinking about what you're going to include, what your best symbols should be, and plan for this, much like you would plan a rough draft for a piece of writing you would do. Draw out a quick sketch of your plan before you start the real thing.

These are things you should consider as you design your self-portrait.

- What view of your face will you show? (front, profile)
- Will you show your whole face or cover part of it? What might you cover it with?
- Will your eyes look at the viewer or away?
- Will your eyes be open or closed?
- What will you be wearing?
- What environment will you be in? (real, imagined, inside, outside)
- Will you show some other part of your body instead of your face? (hands, feet)
- Will anyone or anything else be in the artwork with you?
- What kind of mood do you want to create?
- What role will color play in your self-portrait?

Examples:



Now you try it!

- Remember that you are thinking about symbols that represent you. If I look at your portrait, would it explain you?
- After completing your portrait, create an acrostic using the word, “SYMBOLISM”.

Step 5: Publish

You have an opportunity to share your work with others. We have a Flipgrid set up for you to display and explain your self-portrait and acrostic. This will work on your computer or on a smart phone that has the Flipgrid app (that's free). The link is listed below.

Once you're there, you'll need to log in with a Google account. If you're from Knox County, this should be your school email and password. Contact your GT coach if you don't remember yours. If you're not a Knox County student, you will need to get your parent's permission to use Google gmail to create an account.

Your video will have to be approved by a GT Coach before your video uploads, so there may be a delay between the time you post and the time you see your video on the site. If you're sharing something that is NOT related to your self-portrait and your acrostic, it will not be included. You must stay on topic. Share your results. Use this link on Flipgrid to publish your final self-portrait and acrostic.

flipgrid.com/gtselfportrait

If you have any questions email gt@knoxschools.org

Using the Acrostic Strategy

Adapted from Bertie Kingore in *Teaching Without Nonsense*

Parents/Guardians,

You can use acrostics at home to push your child’s thinking. Use an acrostic with a character’s name, a book title, a science concept, math vocabulary, etc. If your child is not familiar with acrostics, complete one together to build their confidence. These can easily be done on paper, typed in a Word document with an image behind them, or even outside with sidewalk chalk. Feel free to get creative.

Acrostics are an alternative learning task for students that are simple to prepare and encourage application, analysis, and synthesis. Acrostics promote conceptual thinking and can be used as an assessment tool to check for “accuracy, depth and complexity of information.” This strategy can be easily adapted for all levels of learners and utilized in all content areas. For younger students, start with just one word per letter, but for older students, use the ideas below to really make it a challenge. You may need to help brainstorm a list of words that begin with the letters of the alphabet, especially with the less frequently used letters. Challenge your child to use more complex words/wording.

How to use an Acrostic:

Each line of an acrostic is completed as a single word response, a list of several words or a phrase. To add complexity, each line can be written as a sentence, with a specific number of syllables or with certain lines rhyming. You might choose to specify a number of adjectives. To increase degree of difficulty, it can be completed as continuous text, which is then read like a paragraph. This requires students to think more extensively to plan the structure of information.

Types of Acrostics:

Acrostic	Telestich	Double Acrostic
<p>Simple, easy to implement Concept word as beginning letter</p>	<p>Concept word as last letter of each response</p>	<p>Repeats concept word; each response must begin and end with the letters in a concept word.</p>

Examples of Acrostics:

<p>Adaptable Creative Rigorous Open-ended Strategic Tricky Insightful Challenging</p>	<p>Can create a picture that is vibrant It is flexible Word choice makes the student insightful Can use word, phrase, or sentence Works with all subjects Create in partners or independent Finding the words is a safari A finished acrostic is an accomplishment Word placement is strategic Add complexity by making it into a paragraph</p>
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