



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART

ATLANTA

Picture the Dream

The Story of the Civil Rights Movement
through Children's Books

Grades 3-5 Visual Arts TEACHER RESOURCE

Written by Equiana Eubanks-Frazier,
Fulton County Schools

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Pacing: Four, 45-minute class sessions

GRADE: 3-5

LESSON ACTIVITY TITLE: *I, Too, Am America* mixed-media self-portraits

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What are symbols? How do artists use symbols to communicate multiple ideas in their works of art?
- How can we use a variety of materials to express our ideas and give our works personal meaning?
- How can social and historical events inspire our works of art?
- How can our works influence or change behaviors and beliefs?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.

PICTURE THE DREAM REFERENCE BOOKS: *I, Too, Am America* by Langston Hughes, illustrated by Bryan Collier; *Martin's Big Words* by Doreen Rappaport, illustrated by Bryan Collier; *We March*, written and illustrated by Shane W. Evans

VISUAL ART GSE TO ADDRESS IN ACTIVITY:

CR.1: Engage in the creative process to generate and visualize ideas by using subject matter and symbols to communicate meaning.

a. Utilize multiple approaches to plan works of art, incorporating imaginative ideas, universal themes, and symbolic images.

CR.2: Create works of art based on selected themes.

a. Create original works of art that communicate values, opinions, and feelings.

c. Create representational works of art from direct observation (e.g. landscape, still life, portrait).

d. Create works of art inspired by historical, contemporary, and/or social events.

CR.3: Understand and apply media, techniques, processes, and concepts of two dimensional art.

c. Utilize a variety of materials in creative ways to make works of art (e.g. mixed-media, collage, or use of available technology).

CR.5: Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and appropriate use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.

CN.1: Investigate and discover the personal relationships of artists to community, culture, and the world through making and studying art.

c. Discuss how social, political, and/or cultural events inspire art.



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MAJOR CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY:

- illustrations
- symbols
- self-portrait
- mixed media
- collage
- details

DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING (OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCAFFOLDING AND EXTENSION):

Class One:

Scaffolds:

- Students may use a word bank.
- Students may use a shape template.
- Students may paint the background one color.

Extensions:

- Students may write about an experience that demonstrates their thoughts on what it means to be an American.
- Students may blend colors or gradually add more water to their brushes to create value.

Class Two/Three:

Scaffolds:

- Students may use an oval template for the shape of the head.
- Students may use a precut semicircle to create the hairline.
- Students may use the Facial Features handout to assist them in creating facial features.

Extensions:

- Students may use old magazines and bend and fold paper to add additional details to their work.
- Students may add a personal message to the inside of the shirt (see sample).

Class Four:

Scaffolds:

- Students may use a word bank to create their protest signs.
- Students may use precut black strips to create the stick for the signs, instead of creating an outline with black construction paper.
- Students may create fewer protest signs.

Extensions:

- Students may add images and color to their signs.
- Students may create additional signs.



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MATERIALS:

STUDENT SUPPLIES:

- 9" x 12" drawing paper
- Colored pencils
- Pencils
- Watercolors
- Paint brushes
- Water buckets
- Paper towels
- 6" x 9" skin tone construction paper
- 6" x 9" colored construction paper
- Old magazines
- Scissors
- Glue

TEACHER SUPPLIES:

- *I, Too, Am America* by Langston Hughes, illustrated by Bryan Collier
- *Martin's Big Words* by Doreen Rappaport, illustrated by Bryan Collier
- *We March*, written and illustrated by Shane W. Evans
- *Picture the Dream* PPT resource (available at High.org), if needed
- Teacher sample
- United States of America flag visuals
- Facial Features handout
- Mirrors
- Large, flat containers to hold colored construction paper

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OPENING

HOOK/INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

- Introduce the lesson and the first book, *Martin's Big Words*: "Words spark ideas, ideas open minds, minds create actions, actions inspire movements, and movements change the world! Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used words to express his experiences as an African American during the civil rights movement. He used his words to challenge our country when it was not living up to the American ideals of freedom, justice, and equality for all."
- Read *Martin's Big Words* with the students. Link to reading, if needed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc39Ka8ut6k>
- Introduce the second book, *I, Too, Am America*: "Langston Hughes also used words to express his experience and challenge our country to truly treat all people equally."
- Read *I, Too, Am America* with the students. Link to reading, if needed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZDbBGKpUw8>
- Prompts students to think about what it means to be American. They should think of not only their own experiences (family, culture, religion), but the experiences of people who are different from them (race, gender, nationality, etc.). How has the United States lived up to our ideals, and how has it not? What words come to mind?
- Explore with the students the illustrations from *Martin's Big Words* and *I, Too, Am America*. Refer to the PPT resource if needed.
 - Do you notice similarities and differences in these images?
 - What messages are these images sending? What do you see that makes you say that?
 - How did Bryan Collier use the American flag as a symbol to communicate his ideas about African American experiences?
 - Can you find other symbols in these images? What are they, and what might they stand for?

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WORK PERIOD

STUDENT AND TEACHER PROCEDURES:

Class One:

- Introduce hook and visualization strategies.
- Students will use red, white, and blue colored pencils to write their ideas about what it means to be an American. Students may write their thoughts in paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words, and/or symbols. They should fill the page. They may use one color or all three colors.
- Demonstrate for the students how to use watercolors to recreate the American flag over their words.
- Students will use watercolors to paint their own version of the American flag. They may change the shape, placement, or perspective, or they may simply use the colors to paint over their words. The American flag visuals may help to inspire their work.

Class Two:

- Review with the students the concepts and vocabulary from the previous class session.
- Read and explore with the students the illustrations from *We March* by Shane W. Evans.
 - Link to reading, if needed: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHszJOck_YE
- Revisit illustrations from *I, Too, Am America* and *Martin's Big Words*.
- Discuss illustrations using any or all of the following prompts:
 - What do these images have in common, and how do they differ?
 - How do you think they were created?
 - What symbols did the artist use to express their ideas?
 - How do these images/symbols/techniques help to tell a story, and what story are they trying to tell?
 - If you could journey inside this image, how would you feel? What questions would you ask? What would you take with you, and why?
- Facilitate an art criticism discussion using the illustrations listed above.
- Demonstrate for the students how to create a head, neck, and facial features in the foreground of their painting using colored construction paper.
 - A variation of this is to do a mini lesson on color mixing and have students paint pieces of paper with a variety of colors (including skin tones) that can be used in addition to or instead of the colored construction paper.
- Students will select a 6" x 9" sheet of construction paper that best matches their skin tone and draw a large oval that fills the page to create the head.
- They will use the remaining paper to cut a curved rectangle for the neck.
- Next, they will glue the neck about two inches from the bottom of the page and then glue the head on top.
- Then they will use colored construction paper to begin cutting and gluing on their facial features.
 - Students may use mirrors or the Facial Features handout.
 - Have students save any scraps or facial feature cutouts that have not been glued down in a bag at the end of class, as this process may take more than one class session for some students.

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WORK PERIOD

Class Three:

- Review with the students the concepts and vocabulary from the previous class session.
- Demonstrate for the students how to add a shirt, hair, and details using colored construction paper to complete their self-portrait collage.
- Students will select a 6" x 9" sheet of colored construction paper and place it over the bottom of the neck at the bottom of the page. They should use the neck as a guide to draw the neckline for the shirt and then cut on the line and glue the shirt to the bottom of the page.
- Students will select a sheet of colored construction paper that best matches their hair color and place it vertically over the top of the head. They should use the top of the head as a guide to draw a curve for their hairline. Then, they should cut and glue the hair over the head and cut and glue on the remaining paper to add additional hair details.
- Students may use the colored construction paper to add any additional details to their self-portraits.

Class Four:

- Review with the students the concepts and vocabulary from the previous class session.
- Introduce the following theme: "During the civil rights movement, everyday people of all races stood up against injustice, inequality, and racism. They sacrificed their lives and their safety to march, sit-in, and boycott in hopes of making the United States a better place for all people. Freedom of speech is a guaranteed right for all Americans. This right gives us the freedom to speak out about issues that concern us."
- Discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups:
 - What social/cultural/environmental injustices or challenges do you see in the United States today?
 - Look at the illustration from *We March* by Shane W. Evans. If you could protest to bring awareness about these issues, what would your protest sign look like?
 - As an additional resource, see what a nonprofit organization in Boston did to empower young students to engage in advocacy:
<https://www.weethepeopleboston.org/wee-chalk-the-walk>.
- Demonstrate for the students how to create protest signs using 1" x 1½" white construction paper, black construction paper, colored pencils, and glue.
- Students will write their protest message on the 1" x 1½" white drawing paper with pencil. When they are happy with the style of the writing, they may trace and color with colored pencils.
- Students will glue the white paper on top of the black construction paper and cut around the edges to create a black outline. Then, they should cut thin strips of black construction paper to create the handle for the sign and glue it to the back of the sign. They should create two to five signs.
- Students should glue the signs on either side of their self-portrait's shoulder. It may be necessary to cut the handles so the signs fit within the self-portrait border.



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CLOSING

- Ask students the following questions:
 - How have the illustrations by Bryan Collier and Shane W. Evans helped you better understand the civil rights movement? Share specific details from the illustrations to support your answer.
 - How did you apply what you learned to your own work? Share specific examples to support your answer.
 - If someone in the future were to look at your artwork, what do you hope they would understand about the America that you live in today?



Equiana Eubanks-Frazier graduated with a BFA in Art Education from Georgia State University with a concentration in ceramics in 2002. She has been an elementary art educator in the Metro Atlanta area for seventeen years and currently holds a teaching position with Fulton County Schools. She has served on the Fulton County Art Department leadership team for ten years. She held a position on the Fulton County GPS writing and revisions team as well as lead teaching positions on the Georgia Department of Education GSE writing team and the Georgia Department of Education and Fulton County curriculum writing and resource team. She was named the 2006 Young Audiences/Woodruff Arts Center Teacher of the Year, the 2006 City of East Point Teacher of the Year, and the 2007 Conley Hills Teacher of the Year. She believes it is an honor to share her lifelong love of art and learning with her students.

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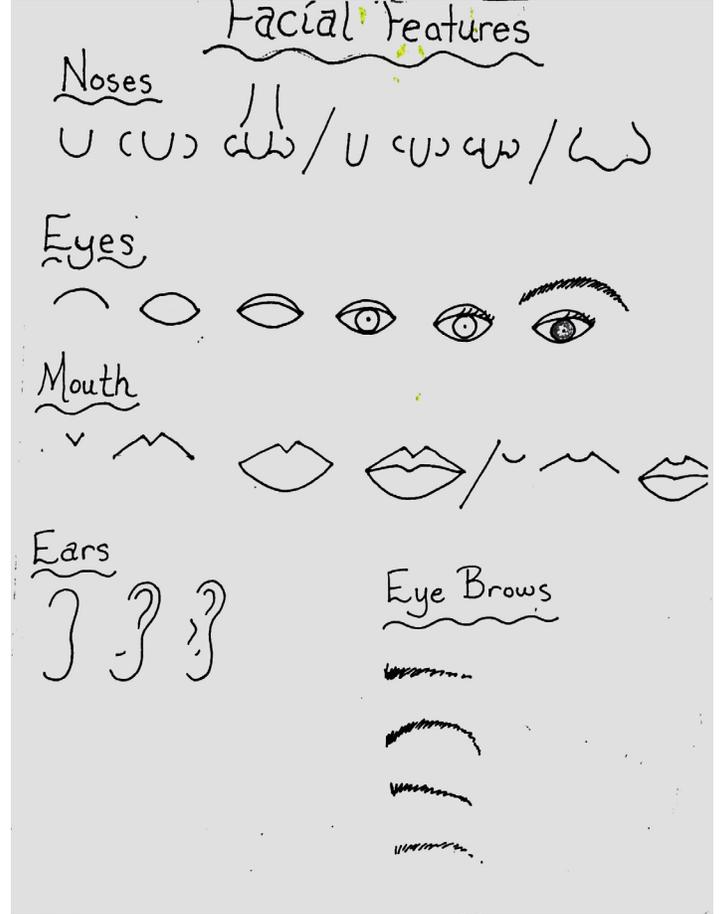
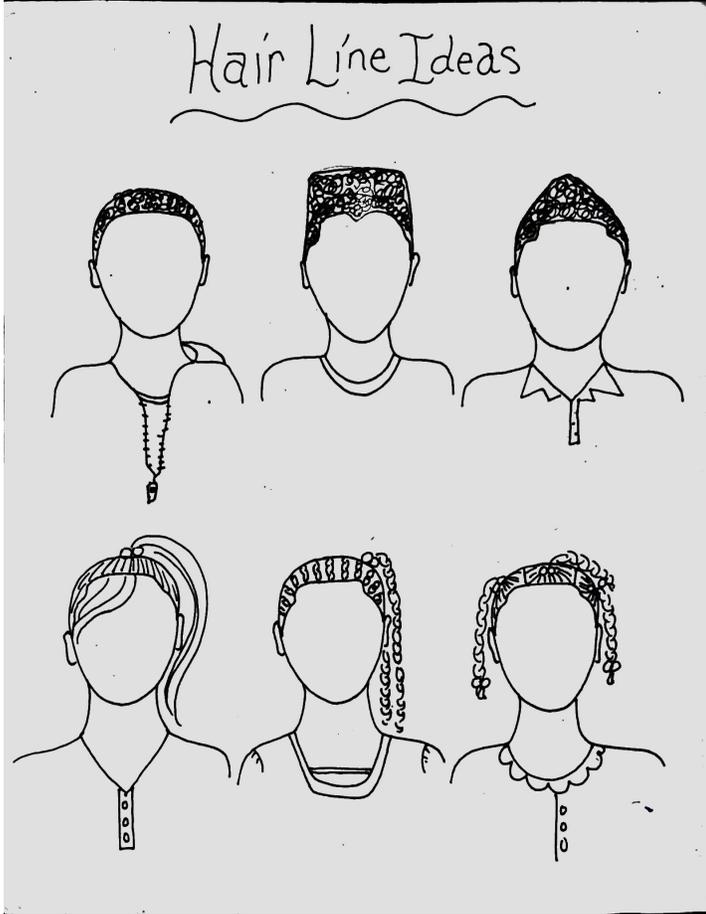
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Shane W. Evans (American, dates unknown), "We work together," *We March*, 2012, written by Shane W. Evans, digital print, collection of the artist, XL.2019.34.3.

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Bryan Collier (American, born 1967), "Remember, if I am stopped, this movement will not be stopped, because God is with this movement." *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 2001, written by Doreen Rappaport, watercolor and cut-paper collage, collection of the artist, XL.2019.31.10.

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Bryan Collier (American, born 1967), "Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., cared about all Americans. He cared about people all over the world." *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 2001, written by Doreen Rappaport, watercolor and cut-paper collage, collection of the artist, XL.2019.69.1.

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Bryan Collier (American, born 1967), "... the darker brother." *I, Too, Am America*, 2012, written by Langston Hughes, collage on paper, collection of the artist, XL.2019.31.1.