



MAINE MUSEUM OF
INNOVATION
LEARNING +
LABOR

Inside Out Portrait Lesson Plan

Teacher's Guide and Worksheets

Inside Out Portrait

Grades 3-8

Time: 1-2, 50-60 min. class period(s)

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Reflect on personal identity by identifying and expressing aspects of themselves that are visible to others (external identity) and aspects that are internal or less visible (internal identity).
2. Recognize the complexity of identity, including how factors like interests, values, race, culture, gender, family, and experiences shape who we are and how we're perceived.
3. Express identity through visual art by creating a symbolic self-portrait that represents both external characteristics and internal thoughts, feelings, and values.
4. Develop self-awareness by examining how they see themselves versus how others might see them, and exploring the feelings that come with that difference.
5. Practice respectful listening and sharing through group or partner discussions that encourage empathy, understanding, and appreciation for diverse identities.
6. Use visual and symbolic elements to communicate ideas and emotions creatively and effectively in a two-part portrait.

Maine Learning Results Standards Visual and Performing Arts: Visual Arts: A1-3; D1-3

Materials Needed

- Copies of the drawing template or plain drawing paper
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils (include a variety of skin tones – Crayola™ "Colors of the World" is recommended).

Introduction

The goal of this lesson is to encourage students to reflect on how they present themselves to the world (their outer self) versus who they are internally (their inner self), and to explore the complexity of identity through visual expression and discussion.

Begin with a class discussion. Prompt students to think about how we each have an outside that others can see, and an inside that holds our thoughts, feelings, hopes, and experiences. Use guiding questions such as:

(Introduction Cont.)

- How would you describe your physical appearance? (e.g., brown hair, green eyes, glasses, skin tone, clothing, etc.)
- What are your interests or hobbies?
- What are your dreams or goals?
- Who are the important people in your life?
- How do aspects like race, gender, culture, or background shape how you see the world or how others see you?

This lesson is ideal for the beginning of the school year but can be used anytime to strengthen community.

Instruction, Teacher Modeling, Guided Practice

1. Following your class discussion distribute materials.
 - Hand out the portrait template or have students draw a basic head-and-shoulders outline on blank paper.
 - Instruct students to draw a vertical line down the center of the face to divide it into two halves.
2. Review directions for the project together as a class.
 - Left side – Outside self: Students draw themselves as they appear to others. Encourage them to include features like hair, skin tone, accessories, clothing styles, and anything that represents their outward identity.
 - Right side – Inside self: Students use drawings, symbols, colors, or words to represent their inner thoughts, values, personality traits, goals, feelings, and experiences.

Tip: Encourage creativity and emphasize that there's no "right" way to represent the inside self.

Independent Work

1. Allow enough time for students to complete their self portraits. This may take an additional class period.

Closing/Conclusion

After students complete their portraits, hold a class discussion or provide individual reflection time using questions such as:

- Was it easier to represent your outside or your inside self? Why?
- What kinds of things are easier to show on the outside?
- Were there things about your inside self that you don't usually share?
- How did it feel to explore both sides of yourself?
- Could someone fully understand who you are just by looking at the outside?

Optional: Invite students to share their portraits and reflections in small groups or with the whole class, emphasizing a safe and respectful environment.

Additional Activity: pair with our "I Am" poetry lesson

Name: _____

Date: _____

Inside Out Portrait

Take a moment to think about yourself. Ask yourself:

- What do I look like? (hair, eyes, skin, glasses, clothes, etc.)
- What are my interests and hobbies? (sports, music, movies, reading...)
- What do I dream about or hope for?
- Who are the people that matter to me?
- What makes me me on the inside?

You can also think about big parts of your identity like your race, culture, gender, family background, or anything else that helps shape how you see the world — and how the world might see you.

Create Your Portrait!

On the back of this page is a template you may use to create your portrait.

Left Side = Outside You

Use crayons or colored pencils (especially ones that match your skin tone!) to draw how you look on the outside. Think about your clothes, hairstyle, accessories, anything that shows how you present yourself to the world.

Right Side = Inside You

Now show who you are on the inside.

You can draw pictures, use colors, write words or symbols — anything that shows your feelings, thoughts, dreams, and what's most important to you.

