

Windows to the Soul: A Creative Writing Project

Creative Writing

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Grade Level	8th – 9th Grade	**Time Frame**	3-5 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	120 minutes
Course	Composition, Creative Writing		

Essential Question

What does a piece of art communicate to us? How can art inform our writing?

Summary

This lesson encourages student writing by combining an art project with a creative writing assignment. Through guided inquiry and responses, students elicit responses that inform their creative writing piece. While this lesson is currently aligned only to ninth grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in any secondary grade and align the standards accordingly.

Snapshot

Engage

Students participate in a Commit and Toss activity to identify three adjectives or characteristics of a person they admire.

Explore

Using their adjectives, students paint/draw/sketch a pair of eyes.

Explain

Students engage in a discussion over the paintings and their adjectives through a Four Corners activity.

Extend

Students use their adjectives to help construct a narrative that tells the stories of a character, fiction or non-fiction, who possesses the eyes they have created.

Evaluate

Students participate in a gallery walk to read the short stories, view the art, and give constructive feedback.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - English (6-12)

KLA 404: Use the word or phrase most appropriate in terms of the content of the sentence when the vocabulary is relatively common
KLA 501: Revise vague, clumsy, and confusing writing

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)

L&C 501: A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Make precise word choices that work in service of the argument -Make stylistic choices, including voice, tone, and diction, that are effective for the given writing purpose and topic

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.2.W.1: Students will apply components of a recursive writing process for multiple purposes to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.
9.7.W.1: Students will create a variety of multimodal content to engage specific audiences.
9.8.W: Students will write independently over extended periods of time (e.g., time for research, reflection, and revision) and for shorter timeframes (e.g., a single sitting or a day or two), vary their modes of expression to suit audience and task, and draw appropriate conclusions.

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.7.W: Create engaging multimodal content (i.e., alphabetic, aural, visual, gestural and/or spatial) that intentionally addresses an audience and accomplishes a purpose.
8.8.W: Write independently using print, cursive, and/or typing for various lengths of time, choosing and combining modes and genres to suit their audience and purpose.

Attachments

- Four Corners Posters—Windows to the Soul.pdf
- Gallery Walk Checklist—Windows to the Soul - Spanish.docx
- Gallery Walk Checklist—Windows to the Soul - Spanish.pdf
- Gallery Walk Checklist—Windows to the Soul.docx
- Gallery Walk Checklist—Windows to the Soul.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Windows To The Soul.pptx
- Printed Eyes—Windows to the Soul.docx
- Printed Eyes—Windows to the Soul.pdf
- Story Organizer—Windows to the Soul - Spanish.docx
- Story Organizer—Windows to the Soul - Spanish.pdf
- Story Organizer—Windows to the Soul.docx
- Story Organizer—Windows to the Soul.pdf
- Writing Rubric—Windows to the Soul.docx

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Printed Eyes handout (one per student; print two-sided; print in color; attached; optional)
- Four Corners Posters (one set; attached)
- Story Organizer handout (attached; optional)
- Gallery Walk Checklist (one per student; attached)
- Writing Rubric handout (attached; optional)
- Sticky notes (five per student)
- Container/Basket (one per activity)
- Blank Paper (one per student)
- Notebook Paper (one per student)
- Art supplies (water colors; paint brushes; water; paper; markers; colored pencils; etc.)

- Chart tablet paper (optional)
- Scissors (optional)

Engage

Teacher Note: Lesson Preparation

Prior to beginning this lesson, place one of the **Four Corners Posters** in each corner of the room. Determine and select art supplies that would be appropriate for your students. Print out any handouts needed by students such as the writing checklist. If using the **Printed Eyes** handout, found in the attachments, print the eye sets front and back on one sheet of paper. Students will need scissors to select and cut out the eyes that best match the person who they admire.

Using the attached **Lesson slides**, introduce the lesson as both an art project and creative writing project. Display **slide 3** to share the essential questions for this lesson. Ask for any volunteers to answer either question. If they cannot, you might prompt students by saying, "Have you ever looked at a picture or painting that made a big impression on you? If so, what do you remember about it?" Allow time for any responses.

Display **slide 4** to share the learning objectives. Explain that today we will want to communicate our thoughts and feelings through both our artwork and our writing.

Pose this question to students, "Whom do you admire?" Give them time to think over the question, and then ask "What specifically about them do you admire?"

Display **slide 5** and encourage students to think of someone they know or who may be a public figure, past or present. Remind students that it should NOT be someone who history or the public has identified as a villain. (For example, students should not choose Hitler or a serial killer, etc.)

Ask students to think about adjectives or characteristics about that person. Pass out three sticky notes to each student. On the sticky notes, students should write down three adjectives or characteristics (one per sticky note) in order to participate in a Commit and Toss. Allow time for them to write their name on each sticky note and one adjective or characteristic on each. Once completed, have them crumple each note and throw it into a basket or container.

Shake up the container with all the notes. Then, have students grab three items from the bin. Display **slide 6** and introduce the Stand Up, Sit Down instructional strategy. Have students stand in a circle or at their desks. Each student will then read aloud one sticky note they have selected, then crumple it back up. While the students are reading these adjectives and characteristics aloud, write the adjectives down on poster paper or a white board to create a word wall. If the student's peers share an adjective that is on one of their sticky notes, they can crumple the repeated adjective up. Once all sticky notes are crumpled up, they can sit down. Continue around the room until all students have shared their adjectives and are sitting down.

Discuss the word wall with your students. Tell students that as a class, these are the words/characteristics that the class applied to the people they admire. Inform students that for an activity later in the lesson they will need their three adjectives. They can keep the original words they chose for their person or choose something from the word wall that better expresses the person whom they admire.

This word wall needs to be preserved for use later in this lesson.

Explore

Display **slide 7** and ask students, "Who did you choose as the person you admire?" Let students answer aloud. As students are answering this question, the teacher will write these responses down on a new piece of poster paper or on the other side of the white board. Allow time for students to read the compiled list. Comment on any patterns you may see. For example: "On our list, many of us admire our grandparents. What were some of the adjectives or characteristics that we used when thinking about our grandparents?"

Teacher's Note: Printed Eyes

If using the Printed Eyes handout you can skip slide 8. Students can choose one from the set of four and cut them out.

Display **slide 8**. Give each student art supplies and a blank piece of paper. Art supplies can vary from paper and markers to paint, brushes, and heavier art paper. Students will then draw/paint/illustrate a pair of eyes that they think reflect the three words that they used in Commit and Toss activity and the person whom they admire.

Teacher's Note: Facilitating Art Work

If you would like students to create more durable, permanent artwork, then consider using 2x5 inch pieces of wood and paint. If your students do not want to create this artwork, consider printing the eyes handout found in the attachments. The pair of eyes they select should be representative of the adjectives that they chose and the person they are thinking of.

Allow time for the drawing of the eyes in your class. Depending on the medium for the art, students may need only part of a class period or an entire class period.

Explain

Once art work is completed or the pre-printed set of eyes chosen, display **slide 9** and present the students with the following statement:

"You can judge a person by simply looking into their eyes." Give students a minute or two to think about this statement.

Students will then use their thoughts on this statement to participate in a Four Corners activity. Around the room, have four separate signs showcasing varying levels of agreement or disagreement. Explain to students that they will choose their level of agreement or disagreement for the statement. Have students walk to the sign they choose. Once students have walked to their sign, have them talk as a group for a few minutes. Next, ask students to elect a group spokesperson to tell the class why they selected the sign that they did. Ask each spokesperson to share out their group's thoughts.

Extend

Ask students to return to their seats, display **slide 10** and pose this question: "Think about the people you admire and the eyes you have drawn to represent them. What experiences do you think the eyes have seen?" Call on any volunteers to respond.

Teacher's Note: Facilitating Discussion

During this discussion, draw out any underlying themes, such as: perseverance in the face of hardships, humility, generosity, or whatever the characteristics of the admirable people students have identified through the telling of experiences.

Display **slide 11**. Pose this questions: "Do your eyes have a story to tell? If so, what kind of story would they tell?" Give students a minute or two to contemplate the questions and ask for a few student responses. Explain to students that while they have thought about a person they admire to help us create mood and ideas, the story that they create can be a work of fiction or nonfiction. That is the "creative" part of creative writing. Ask students to write a narrative from the perspective of the eyes they have created. Students might start their story with little exposition, or they may choose to build a character before they start writing other portions of the narrative.

Students should include the adjectives/characteristics from the Commit and Toss activity in their narratives. Pass out a sheet of notebook paper to each student and have them begin writing.

Teacher's Note: Writing Organizer

If your students struggle, use the **Story Organizer** handout to help them flesh out the key parts to their narrative.

Evaluate

Teacher's Note: Preparing for Gallery Walk

Create the Gallery Walk by posting students' writings and the eyes they drew on three or four walls of the classroom.

Display **slide 12** and inform students they will participate in a Gallery Walk to view each other's writings and corresponding artwork. Place students in small groups of four or five. Pass out the **Gallery Walk Checklist** handout and two sticky notes to each student. Explain to the students that they will choose two writings on their groups assigned wall to provide feedback for.

Introduce students to the modified version of Two Stars and A Wish instructional strategy. Explain to students that they will choose two writings on the wall to provide feedback for using the Gallery Walk Checklist. First, they will mark off the checklist based on what is written. Then they will leave a sticky note next to the writing with a star and a check. The star will be one thing from the checklist that the writer did well, and the check will be something the writer might want to revise.

Assign groups to view one of the (wall) galleries so that groups will only read a portion of the entire student writings. Ask students to leave feedback for students' writings based upon the checklist that has been provided. Emphasize to groups to leave feedback ONLY if it is listed on the checklist.

Teacher's Note: Feedback for All Students

Encourage students to work with their group to ensure that all writings on their assigned wall have at least one peer providing feedback.

Once the Gallery Walk has been completed, allow students to read through their constructive feedback from the sticky notes and make any edits or changes as needed prior to turning in the final product.

Teacher's Note: Rubric

For evaluation purposes, consider developing a rubric as a whole class or use the attached **Writing Rubric** for any teacher assessment needs.

Resources

- K20 Center (n.d.) Commit and Toss. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/119
- K20 Center (n.d.). Four Corners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/138
- K20 Center (n.d.). Gallery Walk/Carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center (n.d.). Stand Up, Sit Down. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1771
- K20 Center (n.d.). Two Stars and a Wish. Strategies.
- https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/83