



students
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FACING
Difference
CHALLENGE



SELF-PORTRAIT
CREATION
GUIDE



Self-Portrait Creation Guide

On the surface, making a self-portrait seems obvious. To create one, many of us are accustomed to looking at a photo of ourselves, or looking repeatedly in a mirror to capture on paper exactly what we look like that day.

While this is one way to get started on a self-portrait for the Facing Difference Challenge, it's not the only way. In fact, there's an important step before students create: looking inward.

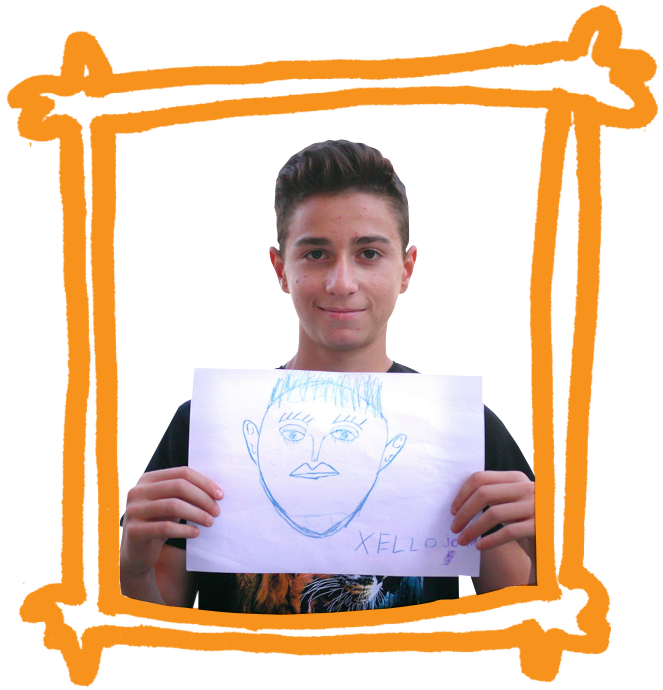
Both an exploration of identity and a tool for self-awareness, the self-portrait can be an exercise in thoughtful self-reflection when introduced with emotional and creative prompts to get students thinking.

Before your students begin they'll need to first reflect on what makes them different and unique. Where do their ideas, values, and beliefs about themselves and others come from? What might others never guess about them, just by looking? How can they answer these questions visually through a self-portrait?

At Students Rebuild, we know that not all young people are comfortable practicing art. A self-portrait can be an intimidating task, but let us reassure you that students can represent themselves artistically in a number of ways! If a collage of objects or student-written poetry, narrative, song, or another form of artistic expression works better, we'll accept it—as long as it's created by the student!

We hope that making art will invite individual reflection and help students consider their own portrait as a personal commitment to tolerance and understanding. Challenging biases and assumptions can be tough, and forming a new mindset around these issues requires seeing yourself clearly.

It starts with you!






Getting Started with Dialogue

After introducing the Facing Difference Challenge, invite students to participate by creating a self-portrait. Check out our [Leader Guide](#) and [videos](#) for additional support!

At its simplest, a self-portrait is a drawing or painting the student will create of themselves.

To help students participate thoughtfully, create a conversation relevant to the goals of the Challenge. Below are some student reflection prompts to help get you started:

-  **What makes you different and unique?** What ideas, values, and experiences make you who you are? Write them down first and think about how to incorporate some of those details into your portrait.
-  **Can you really tell what others are like, just by looking at them?** Think about the way others might see you. Is it the way you want to be seen? Create a portrait that reflects what you want others to understand about you.
-  **Facing difference starts with you.** What does it mean to you, to face those who are different with curiosity and tolerance instead of assumptions and biases? Is that hard work, and why? Think about this as you create your portrait.

Creating Your Self-Portrait

MATERIALS

We welcome all materials! Pens, pencils, paper, canvas, oil paint, watercolor, clay, wire, found materials, crayons, acrylic, ink, ripped papers, fabric, and anything else you come up with. For more ideas, check out our [Pinterest](#) boards and watch our [how to make a self-portrait video](#). While sizes and mediums can vary, we do ask that portraits have a minimum size of 5 inches x 5 inches.



When choosing a material, consider:

- What materials are most accessible to you?
- What materials best connect to the arts experience you want your students to have?
- What materials speak to the person creating, and their artistic vision?

ARTISTIC STYLE



We love all styles, and the depth of the arts experience is up to you! Simple drawings from life or memory, sculpture, painting, collage, word art, illustration, sewing, musical expression, a myriad of historical art styles (cubism, impressionism, expressionism, etc.), and the list goes on!

When choosing an artistic style, consider:

- What processes do your students feel technically capable with?
- What processes do you have experience with and time to complete?
- What style or process best connects to how you are presenting the Facing Difference Challenge?
- What style speaks to the person creating, and their artistic vision?
- Do you or your students want to use photography? Go for it! Just remember: students should continue to be thoughtful about both self-reflection and incorporating the elements of art into their photograph, using the medium to artistically reflect their identity. This is not the “Selfie” Challenge!



A note on religious observance and image creation:

We understand that some religions ask that observers refrain from creating human images. If you or your students' faith requires this, please use one of the many alternative forms of expression listed above—a collection of words, student-written poetry or narrative, collage of objects, student-written song, etc.—to participate.

Get Going!

Now that your students have had a conversation, selected materials, and chosen a style, they can create an image of themselves that reflects their unique sense of self, identity, and commitment to stand for peace.

Are You Interested in Going Further with Your Artistic Approach?

In any picture you create, the details that you choose to emphasize help to tell a visual story and direct the viewer's attention to certain parts of the image. Review the elements of art below with your students to help them understand how artistic choices might be used in their portraits to communicate and tell a deeper story.

- **Composition:** How are you positioned within the picture, and what does the position reveal about you? For example, is it zoomed in showing just your face or zoomed out showing your entire body? Are you off to the side or front and center? Where and how you decide to place yourself in the frame can help send a message.
- **Expression:** What kind of emotions does your facial expression or body posture convey? Joy, shyness, or a serious outlook? What do you want to tell the viewer about yourself through your expressions?
- **Background, details, and symbolism:** Where are you, and what environment are you depicting yourself in? Is it real or imaginary? Are you placing symbolic or cultural objects in the picture, and how do they relate to you? What are you wearing? Consider how these details tell a story about your identity and values.
- **Light:** Where is the light coming from, and what does it emphasize? Are there shadows or spotlights, and do they tell a story?
- **Color:** Color can simply reflect reality or be altered to share a mood. What do the colors in your piece make you feel? Are there colors that help reflect your cultural identity? Try communicating various feelings or ideas with color.
- **Line and shape:** Are your lines thick and bold or loose and light? Are your shapes geometric or more organic? What could these elements communicate about you?

Check out these artists for a little creative inspiration!

There's lots of different styles and processes that artists have used in self-portraits as a tool to explore, express, and share their unique sense of self. Consider a few examples from these diverse, experienced artists to see how they blended the self-portrait with their own artistic style.

- **Joseph Cornell** used assemblage and small boxes in his self-portrait.
- **Vincent van Gogh** painted expressionistic, impressionistic self-portraits with thick globs of paint.

- **Frida Kahlo** often incorporated surreal and dreamlike elements like deer antlers into her self-portraits.
- **Yayoi Kusama** uses repeated dots and an illustrative style.
- **Roy Lichtenstein** used pop-art and cubism.
- **Brianna McCarthy** uses bright, mixed patterns in her cut paper collage self-portraits.
- **Yoshitomo Nara's** self-portrait is highly illustrative and looks a lot like a cartoon character.
- **Julie Sarloutte** uses thread to embroider her self-portraits.
- **Cindy Sherman** wears elaborate costumes and make-up in her self-portrait photos.
- **Kehinde Wiley** uses hyper-realism juxtaposed with lush, complex patterned backgrounds and detail.

Reflection

Prepare your students for group discussion and reflection, creating time for individuals to share their self-portraits. You might consider displaying the portraits on a wall together for observation. If you wish, you may use one of the prompts below to jump start the conversation:

1. Describe your portrait to the group. What do you want the person looking at the picture to know about you?
2. When you reflected on yourself as someone who is committed to peace, how did that change the way you wanted to represent yourself in your picture?
3. Why is self-understanding and self-awareness—knowing where our identities, values, beliefs, and even biases come from—an important step in embracing and understanding others?
4. How do you think self-identity influences our experience with diversity, tolerance, and conflict?



Finishing Up

WANT TO KEEP CREATING?

We know that many teams set high goals for the quantity of submissions to our Challenges. Once your students have completed their portraits, consider having them work in pairs to create portraits of each other, particularly with a partner they might not know very well. We also invite students to submit more than one self-portrait, in multiple styles, if they wish.

DISPLAYING YOUR TEAM'S ART

We encourage you and your team to create local displays with your art to help celebrate your work and raise awareness for the issues addressed through the Facing Difference Challenge. If you choose to display your portraits in the classroom, school, or another public place—please take photos and send to us at info@studentsrebuild.org! Our team loves seeing the ways that Students Rebuild teams share their amazing work with their peers and communities.



SUBMITTING ART TO STUDENTS REBUILD

When your team is ready to send us your portraits, submission is simple. You can submit your art to us by mailing us a package with your original art (we love this!) or you can digitally submit your art by sending us a photo(s) of your creations. If sending your package by postal mail is too expensive, a digital submission is a great option. Either way you submit, both processes start with the same first step: go to www.studentsrebuild.org/submit! You can find additional details about the submission process in our [Leader Guide](#).