

Hero Figures

Pay tribute to the everyday heroes in the community

(art + social studies)

One of the oldest themes in the history of painting and sculpture is tribute portraiture. Across almost every culture, heroic figures and their deeds have been portrayed in art, captured for the historic record and to inspire future generations. Often larger than life, these venerated figures are placed in spaces where they can be admired by the public.

Heroes can be characterized by many admirable traits. Bravery, charity, self-sacrifice, and exceptional abilities are just a few of the qualities of a heroic spirit. Everyday heroes possess the same traits, but are not often paid tribute or placed on a pedestal.

In this lesson, students select a person that they know who has demonstrated these heroic qualities. They then create a small representational figure sculpture that pays tribute to them and what makes them a hero.

Soft, flexible wires can be twisted into a human form and positioned on a pedestal of air-dry clay. Details such as hair, clothing, and tools can be added assemblage-style with a variety of materials, such as paper, yarn, fabric, and craft foam.

Defining what it means to be an everyday hero is highly individual—each student will come up with their own ideas based on what is important to them. This lesson not only gives students an opportunity to honor community heroes and recognize their own ideals, but also provides a chance to understand the perspectives of others.

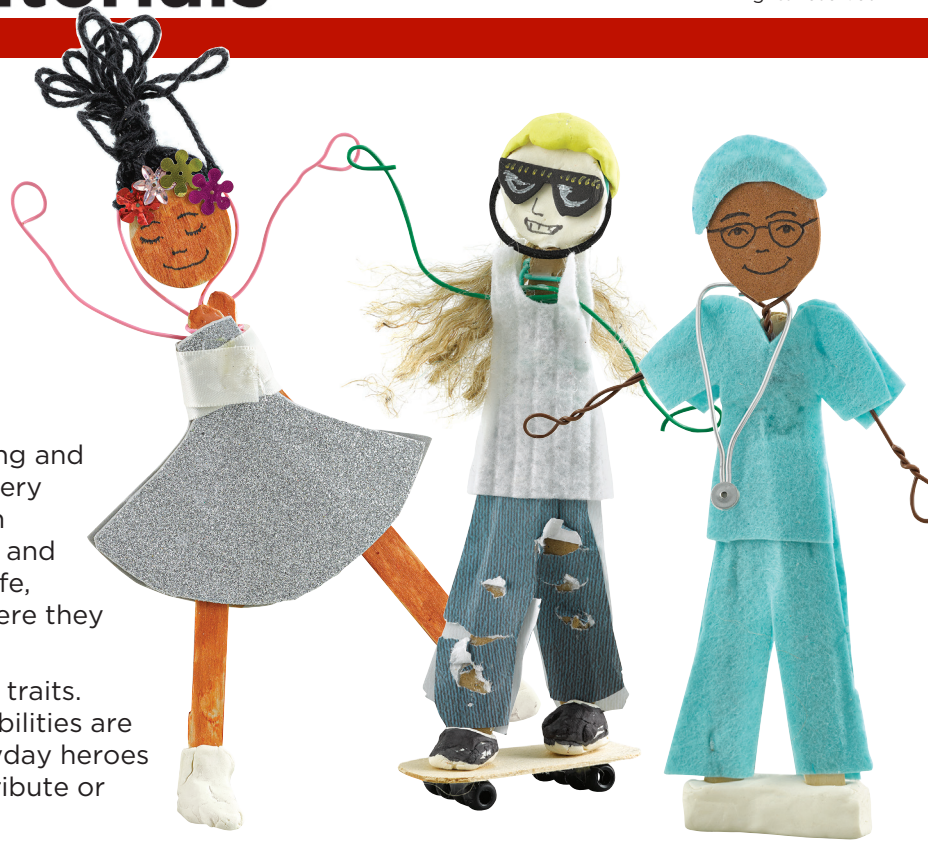
GRADES 1-8 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Divide dough into portions approximately the size of a ping pong ball and place into zip-close plastic storage bags to keep moist until needed.
2. Cut and distribute wire. Each student will need one full-size and one half wire. These can be placed in the bag with the dough ahead of time.

Process for early elementary students

1. Start by generating a list of personality traits that could be attributed to a hero. Each student can create a list or it can be a group effort. For example, a hero might be brave, strong, kind, hard-working, caring, giving, etc.



Materials (required)

Twisteez Wires, Bulk pack, box of 200 (33407-1009); share one across class

Crayola Air-Dry Clay, 5 lb Bucket, white (33272-1005); share one across class

Creativity Street Craft Sticks, Bag of 150, natural (60401-1500); need two per student

Crayola Colors of the World Markers, Set of 24 (21218-1024); share four sets across class

Blick White Glue, 4 oz, (23882-1004); share one bottle between two students

Fiskars Kids Scissors, Blunt, pkg of 24 (57085-1009); share one across class

Recommended Materials for Embellishment:

Roylco All Kinds of Fabrics Paper, 200 sheet pkg, 8.5" x 5.5" (12651-1058); share one across class

Pacon Tru-Ray Color Wheel Assortment Construction Paper, 9" x 12", assorted colors, 144 sheets (11406-1004); share one across class

Creativity Street WonderFoam Peel & Stick - Multicolored Shapes, Pkg of 720 (61731-1010); share one across class

Creativity Street Felt Sheet Assortment, 9" x 12", 12 colors (61753-1023); share one across class

Optional Materials

Blick Sculpture Wire, 14-gauge, 350 ft spool (33400-1435)

Ready to order materials?

Go to www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/hero-figures to access a product bundle for your convenience.

Process, continued

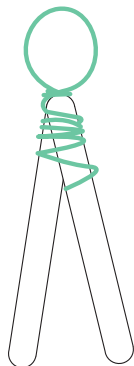
Let this list serve as a prompt for students to select someone that they know — an everyday hero — who shows one or more of these characteristics.

2. Form a figure using the following simple process:

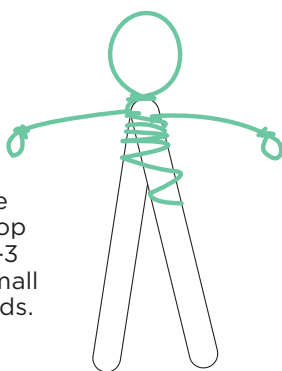
A) Start with a full size wire. Bring the ends together so that they are evenly spaced. Form a loop about the size of a quarter and twist to form the head.



B) Place craft sticks just beneath the loop and move apart slightly to form legs. Twist wire around top of sticks, then between the sticks, then around each one. Legs will be secure, yet flexible.



C) Use a half wire to finish figure. Insert one end of wire between wrapped wire at the top of the sticks to secure, then wrap around 2-3 times until arms are proportionate. Make small loops at the end of the wire to indicate hands.



3. Craftsticks can be colored with markers to represent skin tones.
4. Form a base for the figure using air dry clay and insert the craftsticks so that the figure stands upright. Adjust position of arms and legs to desired pose. The base could be shaped as a square or rectangle as many statue pedestals would be. Or, the clay could be used to form shoes that hold the figure so it is standing. For best results, allow time for the clay to dry before moving on to the next step. Depending on thickness, it may require several hours or overnight.
5. Design elements of hair, clothing, and accessories to make it look like the person who is being honored. Cut paper, fabrics, yarn, string, felt, foam shapes, etc. Attach to the wire figure by gluing, wrapping or tying. Test frequently to make sure the figure doesn't become unbalanced and is still able to stand.

Option for Grades 4-8

— Higher grade levels can use 14 gauge aluminum sculpture wire, a more rigid, supportive medium that is still very easy to bend. Eliminate the craft sticks in the figure process (B) and simply twist the wire back on itself to create legs

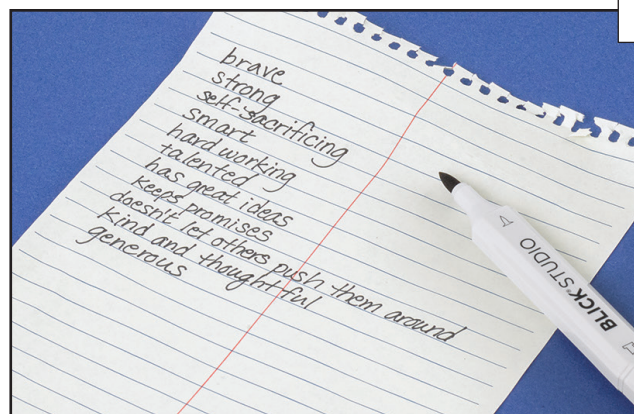
National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

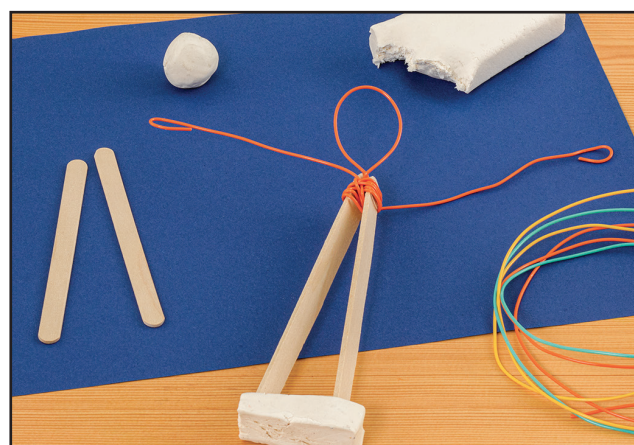
Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.



Step 1: Generate a list of words that describes the traits of a hero. Select an everyday hero who fits one or more of the traits and plan the wire sculpture to honor them.



Step 2: Create a simple wire figure and design a base that will hold it in a standing position.



Step 3: Embellish the figure with a variety of materials to make it look like the hero who is being honored with a sculpture.

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