



ANIMAL CHARACTER DESIGN LESSON PLAN

Lesson Plan Prepared by Peach Tao, IG: @peacheeblue

GOALS

Thrive Collective provides project-based learning that teaches both art and life skills. To the extent possible, every lesson plan provides the following three clear goals--artistic learning, project participation and applicable life lesson. For this project, the goals include the following:

1. Artistic Learning - This class teaches students how to design a character based off a set of objects and a set of actions.
2. Project Participation - By the end of the class, students will have created a character in mid-action complete with a back-story.
3. Applicable life lesson - Students will be introduced to how the art skill relates to life outside the classroom because they learn the importance of attention to detail, story-telling skills, observation and memory.

MATERIALS

For drawing characters, the students will need the following items:

Crayons, markers, color pencils, blank paper, magazines and newspapers for collage, etc.

EXPECTATIONS (PREPARATION)

Begin by listing which ideas need to be clearly explained in order for the lesson to be successful. Since students have various levels of interest in art, stimulating curiosity in the topic is paramount to achieving full participation. Engaging students in the process begins by showing them the media presentation and then allowing them to have creative discussion.

For picking characters and actions, you will need to prepare two boxes (or something similar) to hold two sets of pre-prepared words/phrases on folded notes. The first box will contain nouns of animals or other food items--Monkey, Rhino, Dinosaur, Banana, Ice cream, Cotton Candy, etc. The second box will contain activities like making coffee, baking cookies, break-dancing, skydiving, eating tacos, etc.

WHAT TO SHOW (MEDIA)

Characters from favorite animated movies, storybooks, or comics, such as Peter Pan, Alice in Wonderland, The Wind in the Willows, etc.



CLASS OUTLINE (30-50 Minutes)

PROJECT: CHARACTER DESIGN

OBJECTIVE

Students will create characters by choosing cards from two boxes. One box will contain nouns such as animals, fruits, or vegetables. The second box will contain activities. Combining these two nouns and actions together, the student will then have the basis for a character in action.

Once students have a character, they will be able to:

- Draw out their character using any medium they are comfortable with
- Create a background story for their character from their imagination
- Understand how to observe and incorporate details into visual storytelling

STEP 1 (5-10 minutes)

DEMO

Have your two boxes of folded notes ready and pull one note from each box. Read your results out loud (e.g.: a banana is skydiving, an alpaca is ice-skating, a spider is drinking hot chocolate).

CLASS WORK

Now randomly pick two sets for each student and have them remember what they got.

Note: If you're teaching from an online platform, you can save yourself time and just create two lists on one sheet of paper. The randomly chosen notes adds to the excitement when the kids are able to see the boxes.

GROUP CHECK-IN / PRESENTATIONS

Let each student talk about their character and activities and let them fill in the details. Give them leading questions to complete a full story.

Example: The banana is skydiving. Is the banana scared or happy? What is he wearing? What kind of plane did he jump out of? Is he going to land in a garden? Are there any flowers or is he landing in the ocean? Will there be a shark or dolphins in the ocean?

Note: Don't let the students change their results, even if they say something like, "I hate spiders!" Encourage them to focus on the "drinking hot-chocolate" part and fill in a backstory to make their character convincing. Or have them focus on why they hate this spider even though it's drinking hot-chocolate.



STEP 2 (20-30 minutes)

DEMO

Draw out your character from the previous step and its corresponding activity. Talk briefly about the story of this character as you draw its surroundings and facial expressions.

CLASS WORK

Have the students draw out their character and its corresponding activity. Encourage the students to research what their character might look like. Also have them research the activity. For example: A banana is skydiving. Is it a ripe yellow banana or a green one? What's their facial expression? What does skydiving involve? What about the landing environment? Will there be other people skydiving as well? What color would the sky be, pink? Is it sunrise, sunset, or at night?

Have them sketch out the scene first and then allow the students to use whatever medium they want to give it color and pizzazz like using cutouts and pasting colored paper.

GROUP CHECK-IN / PRESENTATIONS

Now let the students show their character and emphasize the emotions of the character, their activities, their outfit details, environment details, etc. At the end of their presentations, remind the students that they created an elaborate story and embedded it into a single drawing with only using from two words/phrases.

Note: From here, the conversation can lead into the possibilities of using imagination or how creating stories can help with observation and memory skills, as well as how they apply in other areas of life.