

# FIND YOURSELF!

## LESSON 3: IDENTITY BOXES (PRESENT SELF)

**Theme: Identity**

**Grade: Middle School**

**Time: 6-7 classes (50 minutes in length)**

### Introduction

People's identities are made up of internal and external selves. The external self is what others see; the internal self is what we know to be true about ourselves.

Artists use a variety of mediums, techniques and materials to explore their identity. Some create realistic self-portraits, such as Chuck Close and Van Gogh, while others choose a more abstract, non-representational approach, such as Lucas Samaras. Joseph Cornell used everyday objects in his box assemblages to symbolize abstract ideas.

In this lesson, students will explore how others see them, or their external self, and how they see themselves, their internal self. They will learn how to draw a self-portrait with correct proportions, as well as symbolizing their internal self using objects and images. The resulting artwork will be an identity box using assemblage.

### Resources

Lucas Samaras' [identity boxes](#)

Joseph Cornell's [boxes](#)

[Lucas](#) by Chuck Close

[Self-Portrait](#) by Chuck Close

[Self Portrait](#) by Vincent Van Gogh

### Stage 1: Desired Results

#### Desired Understandings

*Students will understand that...*

- There may be a difference between how a person sees himself or herself and how others perceive him or her.
- Artists use a variety of mediums, techniques, and materials to explore their identities.
- Objects can symbolize an individual's identity.

#### Essential Questions

- How can you explore your physical identity and your inner identity through art making?
- How can images and objects represent our identities?
- How do artists represent their identities through their art?

#### Knowledge

*Students will know [how to]...*

- The difference between literal and symbolic representation.
- Use a mind map to explore their present identities.

#### Skills

*Students will be able to...*

- Create an identity box to explore their inner identity (how they see themselves) and their outer identity (how they think others see them).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use certain art vocabulary terms, such as assemblage, juxtaposition, symbols, self-portrait, proportion</li> <li>• That some artists present their identities abstractly using symbolic representation while others represent themselves more realistically.</li> <li>• That there are different levels of craftsmanship in art making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate their artistic representations to a peer.</li> <li>• Draw a self-portrait with realistic proportions.</li> <li>• Demonstrate a high level of craftsmanship and creativity in their art making.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Washington State EALR's</b></p> <p>1.1: Understands and applies arts concepts and vocabulary.</p> <p>1.2: Develops arts skills and techniques.</p> <p>1.3: Understands and applies arts genres and styles of various artists, cultures, and times.</p> <p>2.1: Applies a creative process to the arts.</p> <p>2.2: Applies a performance and/or presentation process to the arts.</p> <p>2.3: Applies a responding process to an arts performance and/or presentation.</p>	<p>3.1: Uses the arts to express feelings and present ideas.</p> <p>3.2: Uses the arts to communicate for a selected purpose.</p> <p>3.3: Develops personal aesthetic criteria to communicate artistic choices.</p> <p>4.4: Understands how the arts influence and reflect cultures/civilization, place and time.</p> <p>4.5: Understands how arts knowledge and skills are used in the world of work, including careers in the arts.</p>

## Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

### Performance Task:

Students will show their understanding by creating an assemblage that explores their personal and perceived identities.

Students will share and verbally explain the artwork with their classmates.

Student self-assessment and teacher assessment using teacher-made rubric (attached).

### Other evidence:

- Mind map: Students will create a mind map involving the way they see themselves and how others perceive them.
- Guided practice: check for understanding – drawing facial features with correct proportions.
- Identity survey (attached)
- Object and images worksheet (attached)

## Stage 3: Learning Activities

*(Steps taken to get students to answer Essential Questions and complete Performance Task.)*

- Present objects to the class from your personal collection and discuss possible meanings. For example, a baby shoe, a graduation tassel, a movie ticket, a concert stub, etc. What significance could these objects represent?
- After the students have discussed possible significances, have them share the meaning and relevance of objects in their lives.
- Begin a discussion with the students about what the objects say about them.
  - What do they say about you?
  - Do they show personal interests about something?
  - What did you think when you first saw these objects?
  - How do these objects tell something about you?
  - What would you want people to know about you?
  - What could you use to represent your inner qualities? Your personalities?

- Have the students complete the Identity Survey and discuss some of the responses as a class. Students can add some of these results onto their Mind Map in the section of “Present Self.”
- How do symbols differ from logos? Have students come up with examples and discuss if it is a symbol or logo. (Examples include a heart, a peace sign, a hashtag, a Nike swoosh, etc.)
- Compare the identity boxes of various artists, including Joseph Cornell and Lucas Samaras. What objects did the artists use to portray themselves? What could be some possible interpretations?
- Have the students brainstorm some objects that they could use to symbolize their own personalities and desires. Come up with at least five objects and/or images and their possible meanings. Complete the worksheet (attached).
- Compare one of Lucas Samaras’ identity boxes as a self-portrait to the portrait “*Lucas*” by Chuck Close. Explain the differences between the portrait and the self-portrait. What can people know about us by the way that we look? What can they not know by our external appearance?
- Discuss the level of craftsmanship and creativity of the Samaras’ and Cornell’s identity boxes and various artist’s self-portraits. What makes them successful as works of art?
- Explain that they will be producing both types of self-portraits: an abstract, symbolic representation on the inside of the box to represent the inner self, and a realistic self-portrait on the outside to portray the external self that others see. Other options for the outside of the box would be to print a selfie, or collage together parts of your face from several different selfies.
- Review the directions for creating their identity box (attached).
- Demonstrate how to draw a face with correct proportions. Have students draw their face while looking in a mirror. They can color or leave in grayscale.
- Provide time for the students to collect objects from home and complete their identity box assemblage. Students can also choose items provided by the teacher, and print out images from the internet.
- Students will open each other’s boxes and discuss possible meanings of their symbols and images. Have students respond to questions about other students’ work using the Peer Critique handout (attached).
- Have the students complete the self-evaluation form and turn it in to be graded.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Identity Survey

**Complete the following questions.**

What is something that you are known for?

What is something that you are proud of doing?

List five words to describe yourself.

List five words that you think others would use to describe you.

What is something that:

makes you happy?

makes you sad?

makes you nervous?

makes you mad?

makes you laugh?

makes you embarrassed?

you enjoy doing?

you work hard at?

Where is your favorite place to go?

If your personality was a landscape, what type of landscape would it be? (dense forest, arid desert, flower garden, etc.)

Imagine a stranger looking through your memorabilia. What objects best represent your identity?

## Identity Box Directions

**This project will portray your outer self on the outside of a box, and your inner self on the inside of the box.**

1. Draw a realistic self-portrait using a mirror, paying attention to proportion and relation of features. (This is a guided class activity). The self-portrait can be colored, if desired.
2. Attach the self-portrait to the outside of the box, along with other objects/images that describe your literal, external identity (how others may see you).
3. On the inside of your box, attach objects and images that describe your internal identity (how you see yourself).
4. Make sure to completely cover all surfaces of your box. You may use paint, paper, pictures, sequins, beads, ribbon, twigs, leaves...anything that represents your identity.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Object and Images

Object	Possible meanings

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Critique

Name of artist:

What is something new that you learned about this person today?

Describe this person's identity box in detail.

Exterior:

Interior:

Did this person succeed in creating a symbolic representation of themselves? How? What are the symbols?

What comments do you have about the external self-portrait? Are you able to tell that it is a self-portrait?

What is your favorite part of this assemblage? Why?

Does the assemblage work as a successful work of art? Why?

## Rubric for IDENTITY BOXES

**Assignment:** Students will create an identity box, with images of the external self on the outside of the box and images and objects representing the student's inner self on the inside of the box.

The artwork should include a realistic drawing of the students' face and objects to symbolically represent the students' identity.

To receive a "satisfactory," the artwork must:

- Completely cover the box, inside and out
- Create a realistic self-portrait with correct proportions
- Create an identity box that uses symbolic representation for the inner self, as explained on the *Objects and Images* worksheet
- Respond to three of the questions on the mind map
- Be accompanied by a verbal explanation of the students' narrative, including people and places.
- Students were able to describe what they saw in the selected artists' works, including mediums, techniques and materials

To receive a "proficient," the student's artwork must meet all of the criteria for a "satisfactory" and:

- Respond to all of the questions on the mind map
- Demonstrate effective use of assemblage to add dimension and visual interest.
- Students were able to interpret what they saw in the selected artists' works, including mediums, techniques and materials

To receive an "exceptional," the student's artwork must meet all of the criteria for a "proficient" and:

- The self-portrait is expressive and shows an interesting point of view
- The assemblage includes a strong focal point to draw the viewer's attention
- The verbal explanation of the students' narrative uses outstanding supports and details
- Students were able to interpret and show deeper insight into what they saw in the selected artists' works, including mediums, techniques and materials



# STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

List three things that you learned in this lesson:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Here is something that I would like to do better: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I can do this by: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This is what I would do differently next time: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_