

FIND YOURSELF!

LESSON 6: ANIMAL AS ALTER EGO (FUTURE SELF)

Theme: Identity

Grade: Middle School

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

Introduction

What does Hannah Montana, Spiderman and Avatars have in common? They are all alter egos, kept as a secret to most people and known to only a few. Alter egos are considered to be a different version of a one's personality than what he or she normally exhibit, almost like a second person. People need to be able to access elements from an alter ego at times. A shy, humble person that does not like conflict needs to be able to speak up for herself when asking for a raise. A funny person that is always making jokes needs to harness a serious personality at a funeral. A rigid, controlling personality needs to be able to go with the flow at times. This lesson teaches students that they can pull attributes from other personalities to help them in situations.

Several contemporary artists use alter egos as the material for their work. Cindy Sherman is an artist that is so well known for creating alter egos, it has come to be called the Cindy Sherman Effect. Dressing up and recreating old-fashioned film stills, Sherman takes on the persona of women in the black and white movies of the 60's.

The character of Jake Sully creates an alter ego in the movie "Avatars". His avatar is an able-bodied, athletic person, whereas his real character is a paralyzed ex-Marine.

In this lesson, students will create a screen print of their alter ego, manifested as an animal. After coming up with a list of adjectives that describes his or her "normal" persona, the student will write a few opposite adjectives. They will then think of an animal that possesses the adjectives opposite their normal persona. For example, a serious student might use a monkey as their alter ego, reminding himself to have fun sometimes. A controlling person might take a jellyfish as her alter ego, reminding herself to go with the flow at times. The animal will be created as a silkscreen, printed on a surface of the students choice.

Resources

Cindy Sherman's [black and white movie stills](#)

Jake Sully becoming [Jake the Avatar](#) (movie trailer)

How to screen print using the stencil technique [video](#)

How to create a stencil without Photoshop [tutorial](#)

Stage 1: Desired Results

Understandings

Students will understand that...

- Alter ego's represent a side of a person that is opposite from their normal personality and identity.
- Some artists' work uses alter ego's as the subject matter.
- Sometimes people need to work at developing personality attributes that do not come natural to them.
- Alter egos can manifest as animals in his or her artwork.

Essential Questions

- Why would someone need to have a double identity?
- How can artists create works of art about alter egos?
- What personality characteristics would be beneficial to you that you do not currently possess?

Knowledge

Students will know [how to]...

- Create an alter ego.
- Turn a drawing into a stencil.
- How to use certain art vocabulary, such as line, contrast, squeegee, silk screen, print.

Skills

Students will be able to...

- Make a silkscreen.
- Make a stencil from a drawing.
- Explain verbally and in writing how an animal can act as an alter ego.

Washington State EALR's

- 1.1: Understands and applies arts concepts and vocabulary.
1.2: Develops arts skills and techniques.
1.3: Understands and applies arts genres and styles of various artists, cultures, and times.
2.1: Applies a creative process to the arts.
2.2: Applies a performance and/or presentation process to the arts.

- 3.1: Uses the arts to express feelings and present ideas.
3.2: Uses the arts to communicate for a selected purpose.
3.3: Develops personal aesthetic criteria to communicate artistic choices.
4.4: Understands how the arts influence and reflect cultures/civilization, place and time.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Performance Task:

The students will create a silkscreen image of their alter ego manifested as an animal.

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

Other evidence:

- Exit tickets – If your alter ego was a super hero, who would it be and why?
- Mind map: Students will create a mind map involving adjectives opposite from their natural identities, and animals that possess those qualities.
- Guided practice – creating a stencil; creating a silk screen from a stencil
- Self-reflection

Stage 3: Learning Activities

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

- Compare and contrast Miley Cyrus as a child to Hannah Montana. What do their personalities have in common and how are they different?
- Discuss Spiderman and Peter Parker. How are the two characters similar and how are they different?
- Write “alter ego” on the board and ask students what it means. Listen to their responses. Have a student look it up and write the definition. Ask students to come up with other examples from popular culture.
- Show the work of Cindy Sherman. Discuss how the images serve as alter egos, given the definition written on the board.
- Ask “Why would someone need to have a double identity?”
How could an alter ego be a positive attribute?
(Use an example from your own life, if applicable. For example, I am a people-pleaser, and rarely say no when asked to do something. Sometimes, I need to harness my selfish alter ego and say no. It’s important not to overextend yourself and commit to too much.)
- Have students come up with a list of five adjectives that describes them. Then write a second list of five adjectives that are opposite from their natural disposition. Think of an animal that exhibits the identity of the characteristics from the second list. (Examples: a monkey is fun loving, a sloth is lazy, a puppy is eager to

please, a jellyfish goes with the flow, etc.) Add this information to the mind map in the “Future Self” section.

- Explain to the students that for this project, they will be creating a silkscreen of their alter ego, personified as an animal.
- Plan a day in the computer lab. Have students find an image of the animal they want to use and save it to their file. Using Powerpoint or MS Paint, load the picture, crop and adjust size. When pleased with the size, change to grayscale and adjust the contrast to 100% to have a black and white image. (See instructions on [tutorial](#))
- When the image is printed in black and white, place a plastic overhead projector sheet over the image. Using a sharpie, color all the areas that will be printed. Using an Exacto knife on a cutting mat, cut away the part that will be printed. Give a demonstration on proper cutting procedures and safety information.
- Show the [video](#) on how to make a silkscreen using a stencil.
- Give a demonstration on how to tape the stencil to the screen and make a practice print on newsprint to prime the screen. Continue on shirts, fabric or paper. Encourage the students to bring shirts to print, as well as other surfaces, like pillowcases, book bags, etc.
- Allow the student’s time to create their stencils and prints.
- Ask for volunteers or call on students to share their alter ego animals with the class.
 - How does the animal represent an alter ego?
 - How would you benefit from having a second identity?
- Have the students complete the assessment rubric and the self-reflection sheet.

Rubric for ANIMAL AS ALTER EGO

Assignment: Students will consider desired attributes of their alter ego, and find an animal that possesses those attributes. They will then create a silkscreen print of that animal.

The print should be of high quality, evenly inked without smudges. The stencil should be cut neatly with clean lines, and the animal should be easily recognizable.

To receive a "satisfactory," the student must:

- Create a print of the students' alter ego, manifested as an animal.
- Create a high quality print, evenly inked without smudges.
- Cut the stencil neatly with clean lines.
- Brainstorm three different animals that could be used as an alter ego on the mind map.
- Describe what they saw in the selected artists' works.
- Explain his/her alter ego on the Self Reflection worksheet.

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

- Make multiple prints on a variety of surfaces.
- Brainstorm four or more different animals that could be used as an alter ego on the mind map.
- Interpret what he/she saw in the selected artists' works.

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

- Make prints that show a level of sophistication, like using a border in the print or printing with multiple colors.
- Create a print that includes a strong focal point to draw the viewer's attention.
- Interpret and show deeper insight into what he/she saw in the selected artists' works.
- Elaborate on how his or her alter ego could benefit them in the future, as evidenced on the Self-Reflection worksheet.

Personal reflection:

What is an alter ego and what purpose(s) might it serve?

What animal did you use for your alter ego? Why did you choose this animal?

What is another animal that you could have used? Why?

What did you learn about yourself and your identity through this project?

How could developing the characteristics of your alter ego benefit your identity in the future?
