

Passports: Day in the Life of an Illustrator
Grade: 9-12

Description:

Students will learn first hand about the profession of illustrating from a children’s book illustrator/graphic designer. Hearing about the illustrator’s background and passions will inspire students to follow their creative interest! Students will learn all about the techniques and methods utilized by an illustrator to complete colorful creative drawings.

Preparation for the Excursion

To ensure the most meaningful learning experience for your students, it is recommended that students engage in activities prior to the excursion. The excursion is intended to complement a comprehensive unit. The video resources provide students with a context for the virtual excursion. The additional resources and activities offer opportunities for curricular connections and integration within your larger unit of study. During the excursion, classes will be asked to share their response to the challenge question and the expert will provide feedback. Select a class response for the challenge question.

Video Link: Use the following link to introduce students to the illustrator Taffy Corbett – http://www.21-learn.com/authors/taffy_corbett/index.htm

Challenge Question:

As an investigative challenge, use the challenge questions to introduce students to the Passport topic. Present the questions to the students in advance of the excursion to ensure they have enough time to research the answers to the questions. The presenter will activate students’ prior knowledge by eliciting responses from the participants.

1. What is an illustration?
An illustration is an artist’s rendering of scenes from a book.
2. What tools does an illustrator use to make drawings?
Pens, pencils, markers, paints, crayons, and computers.
3. Who is your favorite illustrator? Why?
Have students review books in the classroom to get a feel for different illustration styles
4. How do illustrations enhance a story?
Have students think about the way text and images work together to tell a story.

Vocabulary:

- sketch
- character
- line
- perspective
- organic
- geometric
- pattern

Lesson Outcomes:

The students will:

- understand the techniques and tools used to create an illustration.
- create a sketch.

Lesson at a glance:

Students will explore the different techniques utilized by illustrators to create characters for books. It is important to enable students' creativity by encouraging their illustrations. Children's literature illustration has been in existence since the early 17th century, but its sophistication developed in the 19th century with artists such as Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway, and Randolph Caldecott.

Illustrations were initially drawings and etchings inspired by the author's writing to enhance the reading experience of children. Drawings required patient observation and constant practice. Illustrator Arthur Rackham produced a host of magnificent books beginning in 1900 with *The Fairy Tales of Grimm*. His work is noted for dramatic and detailed composition. Ernest Shepard's drawings for A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and for an edition of Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* (1931) are warm and humorous.

The tools of illustration have evolved with technology. Featured illustrator, Taffy Corbett, uses drawing with pencils, pens, and markers to sketch her characters, but the computer assists with completing her work. Computer programs are the new artistic tools introduced to art students to develop their careers in a technological era.

Activity 1 – Creating a Character from an Observational drawing

Materials: drawing paper, pencils

Procedure:

Discuss that it is important for an artist to observe their surroundings in order to draw picture. Describe how drawing is a skill that can develop over time with practice. Explain how there are different types of drawing.

Next, divide students into two groups. Each group will be given an object that they will observe and draw. Remind the students that they cannot move the object and should draw from their perspective.

After the students have completed their observational drawing, ask them to “transform” the object into a character for a book. This will allow the students to use their creativity to enhance their drawing.

Evaluation: Students will be assessed according to their ability to follow directions. Also, students will be evaluated on their implementation of the drawing technique.

Activity 2 – Define the Line

Vocabulary: Point, perspective, line, geometric shape, organic shape, and pattern

Materials: drawing paper, crayons and/or markers, and scissors

Procedure: Each student should have four sheets of drawing paper. On the first sheet of drawing paper, the students should draw different types of lines. Explain to the students that lines have different sizes and shapes.

After the students have created different lines, ask the student to define the word “shape”. At this point, describe the different shapes found in art and nature. How does an artist recreate the shapes seen in nature? Explain to the students that shapes in nature are called “organic shapes.” Other shapes are “geometric” and this concept should be explained as circles, triangles, cubes, etc. The student should practice drawing geometric and organic shapes.

The next step will allow the students to describe the word “pattern”. Elicit responses from the students and have the student draw patterns on the third sheet of drawing paper.

Finally, the students will utilize their knowledge about lines, shapes and patterns to create a mask. It is important to show different types of masks and ask the students to describe the lines, shapes, and patterns they see.

With the final sheet of drawing paper, have the student fold the paper in half – without creating a crease. Beginning with fold in the right hand, the students will cut along the fold. The cut will begin the left corner and continue around to create different facial features for the mask. When students finish cutting, instruct them to begin drawing the mask using different lines, shapes, and patterns. Remind students that masks have symmetry, just like face.

Evaluation: Critique other students work. Describe how the different features in the masks.

Activity 3—Technology and Illustration

Materials: access to one of the following graphic design programs: MS Paint, Adobe Illustrator, MS Publisher

Procedure: Before beginning this lesson, it is important to prepare a computer lab with enough computers for the students. Another option is to set-up one terminal with a data/LCD projector. In both set-ups, students will be able to utilize the graphic design programs.

Students will explore the tools used by graphic designers to create drawing on the computer. Use the questions below to guide the discussion:

Questions:

- 1. What are your experiences in drawing? Do you feel natural drawing?*
- 2. Have you ever used a computer to make a drawing?*
- 3. What are the differences between using a drawing pencil and a graphic design program?*
- 4. Which method do you think it easier? Why?*
- 5. Which method do you think is more efficient? Why?*
- 6. Do you think illustrators have to think about the audience when creating illustrations?*

Students use the drawing tools to create an illustration for the short story included in this lesson. Inform the students that they will illustrate a children's story and it should be age appropriate.

Evaluation: Refer to the questions used in the introduction of the lesson; and, compare and contrast the different drawing experiences. Through this comparison, students will be able to evaluate the methods and assess their placement in real world experiences and occupations.

Extension: Have your students share their children's books to younger students!

Illustrating a Children's Book

Directions: You are going to take on the role of an illustrator who uses the computer to complete his/her assignments. Using the computer program, explore the different drawing tools. After you have familiarized yourself with the tools, read the children's story below. Create the illustration for this section of the book using the computer program. You will have to remember that your audience ranges from 6 -9 years old. Good luck!

Táina and San Pedrito

Once upon a time, in a tropical rain forest in the mountains of Puerto Rico, where lush green palms trees and vines grew to reach the sky, lived a young girl named Táina. Táina loved to walk around the rain forest and discover new plants, insects, and animals that lived in the rain forest, too! Her best friend in the entire rain forest was San Pedrito, a tiny tropical bird with a gorgeous head of emerald green feathers covering his back, a full cloud belly, and a brick red neck. With his long thin lemon beak, he would call Táina, "Priii, priii, priii!" When Táina heard San Pedrito, she knew to find him close to home at the dirt banks of the forest.

Today, Táina was swimming in the pool beneath the waterfall. As jumped from underneath the water, she could hear in the distance, "Prii, prii, prii!" She knew San Pedrito wanted to see her. Táina decided to dry herself and begin walking to his home at the dirt banks of the forest. At the dirt banks of the forest she saw San Pedrito flying around excitedly. Táina stepped closer to his home and many more, "Prii, prii, prii!" sang from the nest. San Pedrito was showing Táina his new family of 4 new San Pedritos.

Bibliography

Books

Mike Artell. *Cartooning for Kids*. (2002). ISBN 140270111X

Josephy Bruchac (author/illustrator). *A Boy Called Slow*. (1998). ISBN 069811616X
Crazy Horse's Vision. (2000). ISBN 1880000946

Tomie de Paola (author/illustrator). *Strega Nona*. (1979). ISBN 067166606
The Lady of Guadalupe (1980). ISBN 0823403734
The Night of Las Posadas (1999). ISBN 0399234004

Patti Bongiorno. *My Dad's Footsteps: Illustrations Developed in Close Collaboration with Kid Art Experts, Rebecca, Samantha and Lucy*. (2002). ISBN 0971581983

Kathleen Krull and Yuyi Morales (illustrator). *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*. (2003). ISBN 0152014373

Yuyi Morales (illustrator). *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book (Pura Belpre Medal Book Illustrator Awards)*. ISBN 0811837580

Faith Ringgold (author/illustrator). *Tar Beach* (1995). ISBN 0517885441
Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky. (1995) ISBN 0517885433

Websites

National Museum of American Illustration – <http://www.americanillustration.org/index2.html>
This web site offers the biography and samples of illustrations from 15 illustrators from the United States.

Tomie de Paola – <http://www.tomie.com>
With biographical information, this web site will allow students to research a renowned children's book artist and author.

Mark Fiore – <http://www.markfiore.com/>
Using illustration to convey political sentiments, this web site features the work of a political cartoonist.