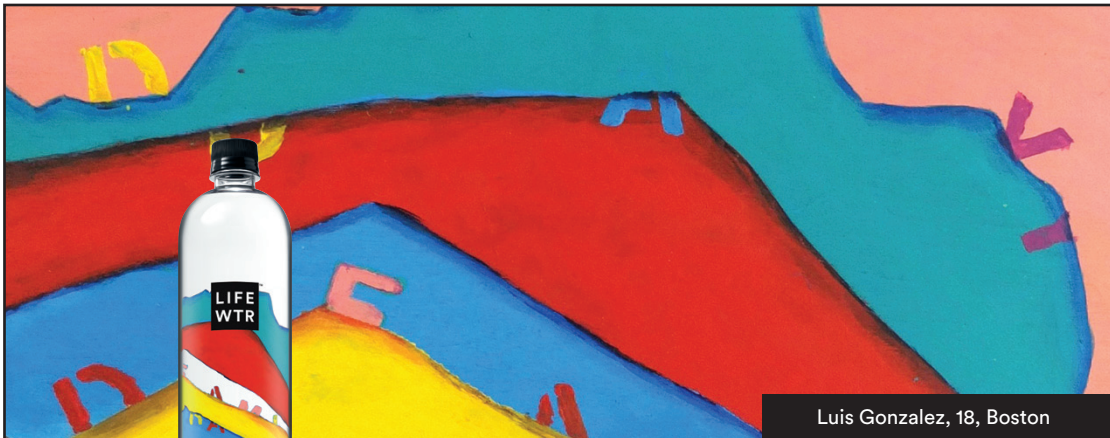


IGNITE INSPIRATION!

Lesson: Illustrating Characters



Luis Gonzalez, 18, Boston

Celebrate arts in education and self-expression by encouraging your students to explore their creativity and discover what they can learn through art.

LIFEWTR is committed to showcasing emerging artists and believes that inspiration is as essential to life as water. This free program from LIFEWTR and Scholastic includes art lessons and activities for grades 7–12 inspired by the work of three young artists. Through hands-on art activities, students will explore techniques for illustrating characters, stenciling with collage, and creating inked black-and-white designs with color blocking.

Tips for Starting the Projects

Before you begin, review the following tips and use them to prepare your students for the project:

- Encourage students to express their creativity while working on each project. It may be tempting to copy something that already exists, but help them understand the power of their unique perspective.
- Ask students to focus on the fun. Explain that the projects are an opportunity for them to learn something about art and about themselves and how they see the world.
- Review the subject matter of each student's work for appropriateness (language, images, illustrations, etc., should not be offensive or disturbing to other students, teachers, or parents).
- During each project, take reasonable and customary precautions to ensure that there is no damage or injury to students.

Skills Supporting National Core Visual Arts Standards

VA1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

VA2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

VA8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Make a Career Connection

As you do these projects, talk with students about careers that involve art. Explain that someone created the patterns and designs of the clothes, books, furniture, products, and other items around us—that someone could be them in the future. Introduce students to three young artists—David Lee (23), Luis Gonzalez (18), and KRIVVY (21)—who each had a career opportunity to create a design being featured on LIFEWTR bottles. Ask students what role art may play in the careers they are interested in pursuing.

In collaboration with





Illustrating Characters

Objective: Students will create one or more graphic characters in a drawing—ideally with animal or humanlike faces (or both). Challenge them to give their drawing personality: embody humor, emotion, and expression.

Time: Three one-hour sessions

Materials:

- Pencils (#2 preferred)
- Ultrathin or fine-point permanent ink markers
- Colored markers
- 9" x 12" sketch paper
- 9" x 12" marker paper (should be translucent)
- Erasers
- Copies of the student handouts: *Meet Three Young Artists*, *Project Tips*, and *Artist's Statement* (available at scholastic.com/InspireArt)
- Samples of illustrated characters (see loc.gov/pictures for examples)

SESSION #1 (1 HOUR)

Step 1: Guide your students to study KRIVVY's artwork, which is featured above and on the *Meet Three Young Artists* handout. Also share popular comics or graphic illustrations by other artists. Comics from the Sunday paper, comic books, animated cartoons, and graphic novels are great for comparing and contrasting styles, techniques, and intentions. Choose illustrations with different intentions: some examples should be funny, some should be serious, some should provide political commentary, etc. Ask students these questions:

- What purpose do cartoons and graphic novels serve?
- What kinds of illustrations do you like and why?
- What do all forms of cartoons or graphic illustrations have in common?

Step 2: Have each student develop one character or more to be used for the creation of his or her work. Ask students to describe the backstory for each character. For example, ask: What does your character personify (good, silly, sad, etc.)? Is your character original? What are the key attributes of the character?

Step 3: Next, students should sketch their character ideas in pencil on sketch paper. Remind students to make the sketch large enough so there is room for facial features and other details. Encourage students to make their sketches expressive. Ask students: What attributes—from shape to clothing—best show your character's personality?

Step 4: Now have students add dialogue and/or text to complete their illustrations. Ask students: What words would add to the impact of your sketch? As an option, students might create a short series of scenes (maximum of three) like a comic strip. Provide guidelines on size, scale, and details. Tell students that in a future session they will turn their characters into colorful illustrations.

SESSION #2 (1 HOUR)

Step 1: Begin by having students transfer their sketched character or graphic illustrations (from Session #1) onto marker paper using a pencil. Students can trace their work onto the marker paper or do this work freehand.

Step 2: Students will then use the black permanent markers to outline the entire figure—face, hair, clothing, etc. After completing this outline ("inking the art"), they should erase all the pencil marks carefully, add the words, and then ink those in, too.

SESSION #3 (1 HOUR)

Step 1: Bring on the color! Students will use colored markers (the more color selections that are available, the more vibrant the artwork will be) to fill in the lines of the drawing. Encourage them to think of color combinations that determine attitude, as well as interesting patterns that add dimension to the character.

Step 2: Have students complete the *Artist's Statement* handout and talk about their finished projects. Then discuss the lesson using the following assessment questions:

- Did this project challenge you?
- Did you develop any new skills?
- Why are comics/cartoons/animation/graphic illustrations important to art?
- What, if anything, changed as you worked on the project?

Project Tips



Inked Black-and-White Designs With Color Blocking

Tips from David Lee:

- When blocking out each color or shape with tape, overlap it. If you don't, there is going to be white showing.
- When peeling off the tape, pull away from the paint, not toward the paint.
- If too much paint is applied, it will take longer to dry. You still need to make sure it is dry before peeling off the tape.



Illustrating Characters

Tips from KRIVVY:

- Don't be afraid to make mistakes: It's fun to incorporate those "errors" into the overall character design.
- Try and relax yourself as much as possible when inking—it makes for a smoother and more-confident line, if that's the look you're going for!
- To make areas look solid, outline the area in which you're coloring and then use small to large circular motions to fill in the rest of the color.



Stenciling With Collage

Tips from Luis Gonzalez:

- Make sure you put the tape and stencil down carefully so the paint doesn't leak under it.
- Don't be afraid to take risks.
- Follow your inspiration; your heart knows best.
- Pay attention to how the colors interact with one another.

Tips on Creating

1. When creating stencils, think about negative space. You are creating an image by taking away material, so what is left provides the outline of what you want to show.
2. If your stencil has a few parts or letters, make sure that they are not too close together.
3. If you are trying to make something that has open space like the letter O, draw connectors or small links so when you cut the stencil, the outline remains and you don't end up with a circle. Do not cut the connectors when cutting the stencil.
4. Always be careful when cutting stencils and follow all safety guidelines.

Name: _____

Artist's Statement

After completing your project, reflect on the process and what inspired your artistic style. What does your art represent, and what do you want others to know about it? Respond to each item below.

My inspiration: _____

My approach: _____

What my art represents and means to me: _____

How I hope my art inspires others: _____

Challenges I experienced during the artistic process: _____
