

Expressive Portraits

Essential Question	How do artists create detailed portraits expressing the personality of the person that is drawn?
Grade	5th
Time	50 minutes
Art Concepts	Portraiture, proportions, focus
Materials	Plain white paper, pencils, ruler, mirror, crayons, colored pencils, markers
Artwork in Focus	Cheyenne Matron, 1910 by Edward Sheriff Curtis
Talking about Art	<p>Edward Sheriff Curtis was a United States photographer and ethnologist whose portraiture work focused on people in the western United States and Native American peoples of North America. In the early 1900s, Curtis worked in the belief that he was in a desperate race against time to document, with film, scholarship, and sound, the North American Indian before their lives were destroyed by white expansion and the actions of the Federal government. At great expense to his family life and his health, Curtis lived among dozens of Native tribes for thirty years, devoting his life to his calling until he produced a definitive and unparalleled work, the book, <i>The North American Indian</i>.</p> <p>Curtis used photography to create portraits of Native American peoples. We will create our own portraits using drawing instead of photography. Together we can explore</p>

the advantages of drawing a selfie instead of taking a photograph, and vice versa.

Look closely at the portrait *Cheyenne Matron*. What can you tell about the subject from this portrait? What kind of personality do you think she has? What do you see in the portrait that makes you say that?

What might be powerful about drawing your own self-portrait versus taking a photograph of yourself?

Making Art

1. Begin by drawing a large oval about the size of a large plate so you have room for lots of detail.
2. Using very light pencil marks, divide the oval into quadrants (four equal areas) with a vertical line from the center top to the center bottom, and a horizontal line from the center left to the center right.
3. Eyes go on the horizontal line. This may seem too low, but eyes are actually in the center of the face. It will look right when you add hair.
4. Sketch eyes, nose, and mouth using simple shapes like ovals and triangles.
5. Think about how you want to portray yourself. Smiling? Frowning? What are your eyes communicating in the drawing?
6. By looking in the mirror and using observation skills, begin erasing the unnecessary lines you drew to outline your facial features.
7. Don't forget to add hair!

8. Make adjustments to the shapes and features in your drawing so they look like your own face as best as possible.
9. You can apply shading techniques to give your self-portrait more volume and to make it look more three-dimensional.

After you have completed your self-portrait, you can then draw the portrait of a family member or friend. You can teach them your simple system of **proportions** for drawing a portrait and then you can draw each other.

Reflection

How do portraits capture the personality of the person being depicted? How might your self-portrait communicate to others ideas about your personality?

What are some things about you that a viewer might not know by looking at you? What are some details that you might draw or add to your self-portrait so that viewers can learn more about you?

Does a portrait drawing have to be realistic to express the personality of the person or subject in the drawing? What are some other ways to show personality in a portrait?

Curriculum Connections California Arts Standards for Public Schools—Visual Arts

5.VA:Re8: Interpret art by analyzing characteristics of form and structure, contextual information, subject matter, visual elements, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed. 5.VA:Re9: Recognize differences in criteria used

to evaluate works of art depending on styles, genres, and media as well as historical and cultural contexts.

Prepared by Ismael de Anda III with the Los Angeles County (LACMA) Education
Department