



Emotional Literacy Unit One

“Who Am I?”

The theme of the first unit is self-awareness and recognition of one’s unique differences. Students spend the entire unit learning about the elements of collage, using increasingly complex materials and techniques, such as scrunching, tearing, and scaling. The unit project is a full-scale self-portrait, complete with head, body, and “heart object,” created entirely from collage materials. The theme encourages students to begin to feel proud of their work through presentation. Students become accustomed to showing their work to the group and accepting compliments from teachers and peers. No constructive criticism is used; instead, the emphasis is on seeing the positive in every work. By the end of the unit, students are making positive comments about their own work, citing elements of their art that make them feel proud.

We start with this unit because the most foundational skill in social-emotional learning is self-awareness. Many students who suffer from depression, post-traumatic stress disorders, or other emotional disturbances are deeply self-deprecating and have been conditioned throughout their school experience to lack confidence. This unit is all about getting students to take ownership of their own success. For many, success at school is not a typical experience, and it’s important to ground all students in an awareness of their inherent worth.



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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH THE ARTS

Unit 1.1 Who Am I?

Lesson: Thought Journals

Grade Levels 2–4



Yearlong Objectives

- I can recognize my own unique skills.
- I can express myself with words and art.
- I can work as part of an ensemble.

Essential Questions

- What is unique and special about the person I am?
- What do I bring to a group?

Lesson Objectives

- Define “comfortable” and “uncomfortable” and identify which they are feeling.
- Create a collage-based thought journal.

National Arts Standards

Note: For consistency, all arts standards listed are second grade standards. However, National Anchor Standards naturally build on each other. To adjust for your grade level, find the corresponding Anchor Standard for your grade.

- Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity. (VA:Cr1.2.2a)
- Create works of art about events in home, school, or community life. (VA:Cn10.1.2a)
- Categorize images based on expressive properties. (VA:Re.7.2.2a)
- Contribute to group guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama) and informally share with peers. (TH:Pr6.1.2.)



Materials needed

composition books (1 for each student), pre-cut images from magazines, examples, glue sticks, scissors, **talking piece**, **emotions cards**



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *emotions, comfortable, uncomfortable*
 Visual Arts: *unique, composition, collage*
 Theatre: *ensemble*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: “Would you rather” question: Would you rather clip a stranger’s toenails or eat a piece of pizza out of the garbage can?

Team-building game: Build a song, Level 1 (see *Team-Building Games*)



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Class objectives. Since this is the first lesson, be sure to spend a little time making sure students know that you will be covering these objectives every time, and make sure they understand what the key vocabulary in the objectives mean (“**unique**,” “**ensemble**,” and “**emotions**.”)
- “Comfortable” and “uncomfortable.” *Sometimes we feel comfortable, which means that everything is going well and we feel OK. Sometimes we feel uncomfortable, which means we would like things to be different. What are some things that make you feel comfortable? Uncomfortable?* Cite matching objective. Show emotion cards for each.
- Introduce **norms**: Everyone stays safe, respectful, and seen. It is important that students do not disappear under desks or out of the room, so the teacher should be able to see all students at all times.
- Explain that all people are “unique,” or their own person. Point out obvious things that are unique about each person.
- Explain what a **collage** is, and show examples of **Romare Bearden** collages (or other examples). Show how collages are made up of images and of colors.

Keep in Mind

- Go over norms for the art space. (Class may decide to make these norms themselves, or the teacher may create them. A possibility is, “Everyone remains safe, respectful, and seen.”)
- What should we do if two people want the same materials?
- What should the consequence be if we are running all around and being loud and distracting?
- Model exactly how to use materials (glue stick, tape, scissors, scraps).



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Select a blank notebook.
- Select a central image. It should be something you really like, and that speaks to the unique person you are.
- Select supporting images and **complementary colored** papers to cover the entire notebook.
- Trim images and arrange them the way you want them on your notebook.
- Glue everything down with a glue stick. Add details with markers if you so choose.

Extensions: Students can make their names by cutting collage shapes out of construction paper.

Closure: Return to circle and ask whether students are feeling comfortable or uncomfortable. Practice with the talking piece.

Optional Writing Prompt: What is something that makes you feel very comfortable?



Big Picture

We may use thought journals at the end of every class to reflect on activities and write about how we’re feeling. It’s important that these reflect exactly who we are. We are all very special people!



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Shorten the build a song activity/ choose either the activity or the question. Do not attempt both.

I Do/ We Do

Shorten to just include objective about being very special. Do not go over emotions. Introduce the word “collage,” but do not dwell on it. Have students repeat objectives, and simplify them by saying, “This class will help you make art to show how you feel; show what is special about you; and work with a team!”

You Do

Work with pre-cut paper shapes so students just have to arrange and glue.



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Unit 1.2 Who Am I?

Lesson: Facial Self-Portrait Collages

Grade Levels 2–4



Yearlong Objectives

- I can recognize my own unique skills.
- I can express myself with words and art.
- I can work as part of an ensemble.

Essential Questions

- What about me is different from others?
- How can I display my difference and uniqueness in my work?

Lesson Objectives

- Define “comfortable” and “uncomfortable” and identify which they are feeling.
- Create a collage-based self-portrait.

National Arts Standards

Note: For consistency, all arts standards listed are second grade standards. However, National Anchor Standards naturally build on each other. To adjust for your grade level, find the corresponding Anchor Standard for your grade.

- Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity. (VA:Cr1.2.2a)
- Create works of art about events in home, school, or community life. (VA:Cn10.1.2a)
- Categorize images based on expressive properties. (VA:Re.7.2.2a)
- Contribute to group guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama) and informally share with peers. (TH:Pr6.1.2.)



Materials needed

construction paper in many colors, crayons and pastels, large marker (for tracing), thought journals (from last session), **emotions cards**, mirrors



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *comfortable, uncomfortable*
 Visual Arts: *collage, shape, composition, portrait*
 Theatre: *ensemble*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: “Would you rather” question: Would you rather be able to fly or breathe underwater?

Feelings question: Sometimes we feel things like sad, mad, or scared. Those are UNCOMFORTABLE feelings.

Sometimes we feel things like happy, glad, or joyful. Those are COMFORTABLE feelings. How are you feeling right now, comfortable or uncomfortable?

Team-building game: Build a Song, Level 2 (see *Team-Building Games*)



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Revisit class objectives.
- Revisit “comfortable” and “uncomfortable.”
- Revisit the definition of collage, and have students help you brainstorm the qualities of an interesting and unique collage composition.
- Introduce the new objective. We all look different. We all see ourselves in different ways. We are unique and special!
- Describe a **portrait**: a work of art that shows a person’s face. Explain how different shapes make up a portrait.

Keep in Mind

- Go over norms for the art space. (Class may decide to make these norms themselves, or the teacher may create them. A possibility is, “Everyone remains safe, respectful, and seen.”)
- Reminders on how to use the supplies and materials safely.
- What happens if you don’t like how your drawing looks?
- What if you can’t find exactly the color you want?
- What if I am too excited to use the materials safely and kindly?



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Look at your face closely with a mirror.
- Identify a few shapes that you see on your face.
- Cut those shapes from different kinds of paper to begin to incorporate into your portrait. (Be sure to include a large oval for the head.)
- Glue down the shapes on the large sheet of paper in the shape of your face to create a portrait, using the mirror to help guide you.

Extensions: Add details with colored pencils.

Closure: Return to circle. Everyone shares one thing they are proud of about their piece.

Optional Writing Prompt: Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable today? Draw a picture to accompany your answer.



Big Picture

Our portraits will be added to a body design next week.



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Either ask the question or play the simplified version of the game.

I Do/ We Do

Revisit comfortable and uncomfortable, and introduce the new objective, but don’t take too long. Shorten to 10 minutes.”

You Do

Start with precut heads and precut shapes so students have to do very little cutting. Have them pick their own eye color and lip color, but don’t have them cut those shapes themselves. Have them add drawn-in shapes for noses, eyebrows, and hair. Have some noses, eyebrows, and hair precut, but also some for them to cut.



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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH THE ARTS

Unit 1.3 Who Am I?

Lesson: Full-Body Self-Portrait Collages

Grade Levels 2–4



Yearlong Objectives

- I can recognize my own unique skills.
- I can express myself with words and art.
- I can work as part of an ensemble.

Essential Questions

- How can I work with a partner to better contribute to an ensemble?

Lesson Objectives

- Define and describe “comfortable” and “uncomfortable” emotions.
- Create a collage-based self-portrait.

National Arts Standards

Note: For consistency, all arts standards listed are second grade standards. However, National Anchor Standards naturally build on each other. To adjust for your grade level, find the corresponding Anchor Standard for your grade.

- Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity. (VA:Cr1.2.2a)
- Create works of art about events in home, school, or community life. (VA:Cn10.1.2a)
- Categorize images based on expressive properties. (VA:Re.7.2.2a)
- Contribute to group guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama) and informally share with peers. (TH:Pr6.1.2.)



Materials needed

construction parchment paper, crayons and pastels, large marker (for tracing), thought journals (from last session), **emo-**
tions cards



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *comfortable, uncomfortable*
Visual Arts: *collage, shape, composition, portrait*
Theatre: *ensemble*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: “Would you rather” question: Would you rather be a giant or very small?

Feelings question: Sometimes we feel things like sad, mad, or scared. Those are UNCOMFORTABLE feelings.

Sometimes we feel things like happy, glad, or joyful. Those are COMFORTABLE feelings. How are you feeling right now, comfortable or uncomfortable?

Team-building game: Build a Song, Level 3 (see *Team-Building Games*)



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Revisit class objectives.
- Revisit “comfortable” and “uncomfortable.”
- Revisit the definition of collage, and have students help you remember the qualities of an interesting and unique collage composition.
- Introduce the new objective. We all look different. We all see ourselves in different ways. We are unique and special! Today we will be working with a partner to create a portrait. That will help us get ready to work with more people as part of the larger ensemble.

Keep in Mind

- Go over norms for the art space. (Class may decide to make these norms themselves, or the teacher may create them. A possibility is, “Everyone remains safe, respectful, and seen.”)
- Reminders on how to use the supplies and materials safely.
- How can I keep my partner safe?
- What might I do while I’m lying down to ensure that my body shape is a shape I like?
- What could I do if I didn’t like the way my shape turned out?



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Select a partner (see Note, below), and decide who will go first.
- One person will lie down on the paper and her partner will trace her body as she lies still.
- Partners switch and repeat the process.
- When both children have done this, they may use crayons to decorate their bodies. Remind them that they will be affixing the self-portraits they made last week for heads to the tops of their bodies, so head decorations are not necessary.

Extensions: Add details to body with crayons or colored pencils.

Closure: Return to circle. Give your partner a shout-out or a compliment.

Optional Writing Prompt: Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable today? Draw a picture to accompany your answer.



Big Picture

Eventually, we will combine our face portraits and our body pieces to make a full-scale collage.



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Either ask the question or play the simplified version of the game.

I Do/ We Do

Revisit comfortable and uncomfortable, and introduce the new objective, but don’t take too long. Shorten to 10 minutes.

You Do

Kids color in outline body shapes to show the way their clothes look. They match with a partner to discuss the clothes and to work closely to make sure shapes look right. Meanwhile, an adult pulls students to trace the full bodies. This could also be done during recess or other class times.



Note on Partners

Have students match up based on height, birthday, or number. For example, if there are 30 children in a classroom, write each number, 1–15, twice on slips of paper. Place the papers in a hat or a box and have students select a number, then find their match. It's important for students to become used to working with children they might not otherwise work with. However, anticipate that this will be difficult for some students, and model the right way to meet a new partner. (Greet them, give them a high-five, etc.) Praise children who do this well.



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Unit 1.4 Who Am I?

Lesson: Heart Objects

Grade Levels 2–4



Yearlong Objectives

- I can recognize my own unique skills.
- I can express myself with words and art.
- I can work as part of an ensemble.

Essential Questions

- How is my own work unique?
- How does my work relate to my personal story?

Lesson Objectives

- Define “comfortable” and “uncomfortable” and identify which they are feeling.
- Create a collage-based self-portrait.

National Arts Standards

Note: For consistency, all arts standards listed are second grade standards. However, National Anchor Standards naturally build on each other. To adjust for your grade level, find the corresponding Anchor Standard for your grade.

- Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity. (VA:Cr1.2.2a)
- Create works of art about events in home, school, or community life. (VA:Cn10.1.2a)
- Categorize images based on expressive properties. (VA:Re.7.2.2a)
- Contribute to group guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama) and informally share with peers. (TH:Pr6.1.2.)



Materials needed

all self-portrait pieces (from previous sessions), markers, crayons, decorating materials, tissue paper, construction paper, magazine scraps, fabrics, assorted textiles, scissors, glue, **talking piece**, **emotions cards**



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *omfortable*, *uncomfortable*
 Visual Arts: *collage*, *shape*, *composition*, *portrait*
 Theatre: *ensemble*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: “Would you rather” question: Would you rather kiss a jellyfish or step on a crab?

Feelings question: Sometimes we feel things like sad, mad, or scared. Those are UNCOMFORTABLE feelings. Sometimes

we feel things like happy, glad, or joyful. Those are COMFORTABLE feelings. How are you feeling right now: Comfortable or Uncomfortable?

Team-building game: Build a song, Level 4 (see *Team-Building Games*)



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Revisit class objectives.
- Revisit “comfortable” and “uncomfortable.”
- Revisit the definition of **collage**, and have students help you remember the qualities of an interesting and unique collage composition.
- Introduce the new objective. *Something is unique and special about all of us. Think about the thing that you love the most in the entire world. That’s probably different than what your neighbor loves most.* Solicit examples.

Keep in Mind

- Go over **norms** for the art space. (Class may decide to make these norms themselves, or the teacher may create them. A possibility is, “Everyone remains safe, respectful, and seen.”)
- Reminders on how to use the supplies and materials safely.
- How can I best share materials?
- What do I do if I don’t like the way my piece turned out?



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Think of one thing you really love. It could be ice cream, video games, cats, a favorite pair of shoes, a basketball star.
- Looking at the materials available, how might you create a representation of that object with just paper? (Example: cut two circles and a triangle to make an ice cream cone).
- Use multiple textiles to create the object you love.
- Put that object near your full-body self-portrait’s heart.
- Add the head self-portrait from the second session to the body of the self-portrait.

Extensions: Make another heart object with textiles.

Closure: Students present heart objects to the class and compliment each others’ work.

Optional Writing Prompt: How does this heart object make you feel? Why? How do you know? How does it feel in your body?



Big Picture

Next week we’ll polish these portraits and create a poem to go along with our work.



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Either ask the question or play the simplified version of the game.

I Do/ We Do

Revisit “comfortable” and “uncomfortable,” and introduce the new objective, but don’t take too long. Shorten to 10 minutes.

You Do

Have a person, animal, and food template pre-drawn and copied for each student, so they pick whether their heart object is a person, animal, or food. They then decorate their heart object with textiles, and describe why their object is special. For example, Kate might choose “person” and be given a person template. She might use brown textiles to create eyes and hair for her person. She would explain to the class that her heart object is her mom, who has brown eyes and hair.



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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH THE ARTS

Unit 1.5 Who Am I?

Lesson: Acrostic Poem

Grade Levels 2–4



Yearlong Objectives

- I can recognize my own unique skills.
- I can express myself with words and art.
- I can work as part of an ensemble.

Essential Questions

- How can I create a work of art that is all my own and that demonstrates my unique qualities?

Lesson Objectives

- Define “comfortable” and “uncomfortable” and identify which they are feeling.
- Create and present a collage-based self-portrait with an accompanying acrostic poem.

National Arts Standards

Note: For consistency, all arts standards listed are second grade standards. However, National Anchor Standards naturally build on each other. To adjust for your grade level, find the corresponding Anchor Standard for your grade.

- Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity. (VA:Cr1.2.2a)
- Create works of art about events in home, school, or community life. (VA:Cn10.1.2a)
- Categorize images based on expressive properties. (VA:Re.7.2.2a)
- Contribute to group guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama) and informally share with peers. (TH:Pr6.1.2.)



Materials needed

full-body portraits, scrap draft paper, heavy white paper, pastels or crayons, paper scraps, scissors and glue, **talking piece**, **emotions cards**



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *omfortable*, *uncomfortable*
 Visual Arts: *collage*, *shape*, *composition*, *portrait*
 Theatre: *ensemble*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: “Would you rather” question: Would you rather meet an alien visitor on Earth or go to outer space?

Feelings question: Sometimes we feel things like sad, mad, or scared. Those are UNCOMFORTABLE feelings. Sometimes

we feel things like happy, glad, or joyful. Those are COMFORTABLE feelings. How are you feeling right now: Comfortable or Uncomfortable?

Team-building game: Build a song, Level 5 (see *Team-Building Games*)



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Revisit class objectives.
- Revisit “comfortable” and “uncomfortable.”
- Revisit the definition of **collage** is, and have students help you remember the qualities of an interesting and unique collage composition.
- Introduce the new objective. *Today we will be creating a word-based collage. Often, visual art and language go together.* Use picture books as **examples**.
- Explain what an acrostic poem is, and give examples (see two at the bottom of this lesson). Explain what a **draft** is and why it is important. *Artists usually start with a draft, which is a sketch, or a version of something before you create your final version with your final art materials.*

Keep in Mind

- Go over **norms** for the art space. (Class may decide to make these norms themselves, or the teacher may create them. A possibility is, “Everyone remains safe, respectful, and seen.”)
- Reminders on how to use the supplies and materials safely.
- How can I best share materials?
- What do I do if I don’t like the way my piece turned out?
- What if I misspell something? What tools are at my disposal? What tools can I use to check my work?



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Start by creating a draft.
- Write your name in large letters vertically down the paper.
- Come up with words that begin with each letter that are also special and unique about you. (Example: P for “Plays Piano.”) Each letter can correspond with a single word, a series of words, or an entire sentence.
- Compose an entire acrostic poem on draft paper before moving to final paper
- Decide on a collage technique to use: either write the poem on the paper first and collage second, or use collage elements first and write second.
- Students might challenge themselves to cut each letter of their name out of paper.
- Create a final draft that incorporates elements of collage in unique ways (crumpled textures, layers, shapes, color).

Extensions: Create an acrostic poem for your last name, too.

Closure: There should be a presentation of all the work students have completed over the course of the session.

Optional Writing Prompt: What parts of your project are you proudest of? Why?



Big Picture

We are all done! Your portrait is unique and special, just like you are.



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Either ask the question or play **the simplified version** of the game.

I Do/ We Do

Revisit “comfortable” and “uncomfortable,” and introduce the new objective, but don’t take too long. Shorten to 10 minutes.

You Do

Have students cut out the letters of their name the best they can, and then decorate them with colors and shapes that are unique and special to the people they are.



Sample Acrostics

Tumbling through the air
Ready to become
Airborne at any
Moment, feeling the springs
Push you up
Over and around again and again
Light as a feather
Instantly rebounding,
Naturally full of
Energy

Jump
Up high
Swimmer
Trying my best
I like to dive
Noisy