



# The art of personal storytelling



## Objectives

*Students will...*

- Understand the storytelling themes present in the artwork of Faith Ringgold and Romare Bearden
- Analyze and discuss the narrative elements, symbols, and artistic elements in the selected artworks
- Create their own storytelling artwork
- Extend their learning by writing a poem or story inspired by their artwork or the artwork of another student

## National Art Standards

### VA-Cr2.1.2

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

### VA-Re3.3.1

Respond to and analyze works of art.

### VA-Re3.3.2

Investigate the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

### VA-Re4.3.3

Analyze the characteristics of different art forms and identify how they are used to communicate meaning.

### VA-Re5.3.4

Analyze the ways that art can be used to express personal and cultural identities.

## Introduction (5–10 minutes)

1. Engage students in a discussion about diversity and storytelling through art. Start by introducing Faith Ringgold and Romare Bearden, artists known for their narrative artwork that focuses on diverse subjects and depictions of people's everyday lives.
2. Show specific examples of their artworks that portray narratives, cultural stories, or personal experiences.
3. Lead a discussion using questions such as the following:
  - What stories do you think the artists are telling through their artwork?
  - What colors, lines, patterns, and textures do you see? How do they help tell the story?
  - What cultural elements or symbols do you notice in the artworks? (Trains, roosters, church events, hats, buildings, musical instruments, words)
  - How do these symbols give you clues about the artist's life?
  - What types of media do you see? (Painted paper, collage, paint, ink, fabric, etc.)

## Exploring personal narratives (25–40 minutes)

4. Then, have students think about the stories about their lives that they want to tell with their own artwork. These could include favorite childhood memories or a common scene from their neighborhood. Have them make a list of ideas and then quickly do a thumbnail sketch of each one to see which composition they like best. After students have chosen their scene, encourage them to think about the variety of materials they want to use, as well as cultural or personal symbols they want to incorporate. They can also incorporate words or sentences that are important to them.
5. Provide a variety of pencils, markers, paint, paper, paper dolls, face cutouts, and mixed media, including yarn, beads, fabric, and patterned origami paper to create the background, furniture, people, clothing, and objects in their artwork.
6. Before students begin, demonstrate how to incorporate mixed media techniques by combining different art materials to add depth and texture.
7. When students are finished, have them think about what they would like to name their piece. Then display finished artwork with the name of the piece next to it.







## Writing extension (25–40 minutes)

8. Partner with classroom teachers to introduce the extension component during core class time. Explain that both art and writing can be forms of storytelling and that they are going to use art as inspiration for their writing.
9. Instruct students to choose either their own artwork or the artwork of another student to write a poem or a short story about.
10. Encourage them to explore the emotions and ideas the artwork suggests. They should use descriptive words to activate the senses. What does the artwork make them see, hear, feel, smell, or taste?

## Sharing and community building extension (30 minutes)

11. Ask each student to present their artwork and read their story or poem aloud to the class. Encourage active listening and positive feedback and emphasize the importance of creating a supportive community where everyone's voices are valued and celebrated.
12. After each presentation, facilitate a brief discussion where students can offer compliments, ask questions, or share their thoughts on the themes and messages conveyed. Encourage students to provide constructive feedback, focusing on the strengths and unique qualities of each artwork and written piece.



## Materials list

- Nasco Multicultural Art Supply Enhancement Pack (**NE20303**)
- Fabric (**9732786A** & **9732786B**)
- Patterned origami paper (**9723265**)
- Paintbrushes (**9742098**)
- Water cups (**9719971**)
- Mixing palettes (**9730000**)
- Scissors (**9730432**)
- Glue sticks (**9725921**)
- Yarn (**9713188**)
- Beads (**9727983**)
- Newspaper and magazines

Nasco Multicultural Art Supply Enhancement Pack