

Activity 1B: Who Am I?



As preparation for making artwork that expresses something about themselves, students explore the question “Who am I?” by discussing the different factors that help to shape them. They also begin to look closely at one factor influencing who they are—their families—as they start collecting information for the “My Roots” component of their unit projects.

Sequence

1B.1: <i>Exploring the Question “Who Am I?”</i>	Students discuss the different factors that influence who they are.
1B.2: <i>Looking at My Roots</i>	Students learn about the “My Roots” mixed-media project, and work on a journal entry about the project.

Materials Needed:

- Students’ copies of **Handout 1: Unit 1 Overview**

1B.1: Exploring the Question “Who Am I?”

1. List factors influencing identity.

To help students begin thinking about who they are and how they might express something about themselves through their work, ask them the following question:

- What are the different factors that help to make you who you are?

List all the factors that students name. If students have difficulty answering this question, you can suggest possible answers, such as personality, family, community, friends, school, culture, hobbies, sports, personal tastes, interests, values, and religious and political beliefs.

2. Have students journal about the factors and share a few answers.

Have students think about the factors that have been listed, and how they might express themselves through artwork, by answering the following questions in their journals:

- Which of these factors are self-chosen, and which come from external sources?
- If someone didn’t know you very well, which parts of you would that person fail to see?



- How do you think you might express the important aspects of who you are through a piece of art?
- What parts of yourself might you want to keep private or hidden?

Ask for a few volunteers to share their answers to the first three questions.

3. Have students complete Journal 2.

Have students complete Journal 2 in class or outside of class before Activity 2A.1.

Journal 2

Brainstorm a list of objects that are important to you—for example, a toy from your childhood, a favorite book, or a sports trophy. Choose one object from the list, and bring it to class with you.

Teacher's Notes: Bringing in Personal Objects

Ideally, your students will all be able to bring in personal objects that are important to them. Because students will use these objects to create their first drawings, you may want to encourage them to choose objects that are not too complex to draw.

It may be challenging for students to bring in their own objects. If this is the case, an alternative option is to select and bring in some items for students to draw. Try to choose a range of things, so students have a better chance of finding an object that has some personal meaning for them.

1B.2: Looking at My Roots

1. Describe the “My Roots” project.

Tell students that for the artwork they’ll create for the “My Roots” component of their unit projects, they will look more specifically at one or two factors influencing who they are—their family and/or their cultural heritage. Although they won’t create the artwork until later in the unit, they need to start collecting the materials they plan to use.

Describe this part of the project, using the description in Handout 1. Ask students to brainstorm the kinds of materials and stories they would like to gather.



Teacher's Notes:

Checking in on “My Roots” Research

This project requires students to collect stories and materials, which may take a couple of weeks. A check-in is scheduled during Activity 2A.4, but you may want to check in with students at least once a week about their progress. If necessary, help them troubleshoot any difficulties they have in finding appropriate materials.

Alternative—Using Digital Video or Photography for “My Roots”

If you are using technology with your students, have them collect digital video footage or photographs and assemble them into a video or photo collage, using a program such as Final Cut Pro, iMovie, or Photoshop.

If you take this approach with students, you will need additional time to teach them techniques related to using digital video or still cameras, editing footage, or manipulating digital photos. You may also need to arrange for students to use equipment off-campus.



2. Have students complete Journal 3.

Have students complete Journal 3 in class or outside of class.

Journal 3

Brainstorm answers to the following questions, coming up with as many ideas as possible. Don't worry too much about grammar or spelling—the goal of brainstorming is to quickly capture your ideas and thoughts.

- How have the different members of your family shaped who you are?
- What is your cultural heritage? How does that heritage shape who you are? Are there any activities, rituals, or traditions from that heritage that are significant in your life?
- What images or memories stand out for you when thinking about your family's history? Do you think of a place where you lived? A particular story? A type of food? A certain landscape? A family ritual? An event?
- Which aspects of your family history or cultural heritage do you think you might want to focus on in your artwork? What materials would you like to collect?