

Murals and Statues: Explore What Communities Value



CREATE™ Relationships

Introduction

Public art depicts subjects that people hold dear at a particular moment in time. Points of view change with time. Often public artwork that was celebrated in the past is looked at with an updated lens. Reevaluating perspectives can create opportunities for healthy debate. Changes in opinions can be large or small, fast or slow, celebrated or resisted. Necessary shifts in thinking can be stubbornly resisted before change occurs. Some changes are permanent while others are temporary. Children will examine public murals and statues and discuss whether the people, events, and stories that are displayed represent what the community values today. They will then design a public art plan that shows what they believe the community could display to represent the stories that should be told.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Children will:

- identify what public art is saying and the thoughts/feelings it sparks;
- explore how public art represents what a community celebrates or values at a moment in time;
- articulate positive values that they believe represent their community's points of view and suggest visual symbols to represent those values or tell those stories; and
- create and present a plan for a new public artwork.

Vocabulary

change
public art
community

values
celebrate
sentiments

controversy
pride
represent

statue
mural

Essential Questions

- What roles do statues, murals, and other types of public art play?
- How does public art represent the events, people, and stories that a community values?
- What might a community do about public art that was created and installed a long time ago and no longer represents the public sentiments because perspectives have changed?
- How are decisions made about long-standing public art that tells a story that may not represent what a community values today?
- How are decisions made about new public art that is created and installed today?

Guiding Questions

- Where is there public art in our town, city, state, and nation today?
- When researching murals, statues, and other public art, what can be learned about the people who are honored, their stories, and the public perceptions at the time the artwork was created?
- Who is missing from the inventory of public art and why should their stories be told in a mural, statue, or other public artwork?
- What new public art could represent the community's values and leave a positive legacy?

Supplies

- Crayola® Colored Pencils
- Paper for sketching
- Crayola Model Magic®
- Crayola Markers or Paint Brush Pens

Prepare

Plan ahead before sculpting with Model Magic since the modeling material will dry out quickly after packets are open. The final form will dry completely in 24 hours. Children can decide if they will create a mural and a statue and if their artwork will represent the same events or different stories.



CELBRATE STRENGTHS and personal qualities.

RESPECT DIVERSITY by learning what is unique and universal.

ENGAGE FULLY while honoring multiple voices and learning styles.

ACCEPT MISTAKES AS HUMAN LEARNERS since mistakes build growth mindset.

TRUST ONE ANOTHER with positive intent.

EXTEND LEARNING with high expectations.



- Discuss what defines *public art* and how decisions are made about statues and images that belong to a community and are placed on public land. Research examples of public art in the town, city, state, and nation to determine when each piece was created, who is honored, and what story is told by the artwork. How does each piece represent a narrative that was widely accepted at the time the artwork was created?
- Discuss the CREATE™ acronym as a way to help people form positive relationships. Students can use the CREATE framework to decide if a statue or mural represents a community's current values. For example: **Respect diversity** means that we honor individuals who treat others well and intentionally include people of different races, creeds, colors, and ways of life in a piece or a collection of works.
- Students will create a plan for a new piece of public art. Start by having them identify individual(s), trait(s), or event(s) that tell an important story or represent a source of pride for a community. Plan how that could be represented in a statue, mural, or artistic artifact.



Have students present their art to family and friends, who may be physically present or online. As they present, have them explain how this is a model for new public art they believe should be displayed in the community. Ask them to explain the artwork's characteristics that make a story come alive in ways that are historically accurate, unbiased, and welcoming.



Encourage children to use CREATE as they respond to each other's ideas. Be sure their feedback **celebrates strengths**. As listeners are they **engaged fully**? As artists and presenters, do they **accept mistakes as the way humans learn**? Why is it important to respond to ideas by **trusting one another with positive intent**? What are examples of having **high expectations** for our work and our interactions with others?



Public art is designed to connect people to history, a point of view, or each other. People can respectfully disagree about the meaning or value of art and these debates create more connection opportunities. Help students connect their experiences in this project with current events in the news. Change can be dramatic when people are passionate about the ideals and stories art represents. Students will bring a variety of points of view and experiences to this discussion, reflective of what they hear at home and how they see themselves in the statues and murals that are on display. Remind them to **respect diversity** including accepting different points of view during conversations. Encourage them to engage in respectful debate about public art that is being removed. Halfway through the discussion have students switch sides so they can argue a different point of view. As students explore different angles they will realize that to CREATE relationships it is important to hear others, respect diverse perspectives, and trust one another with positive intent.

- Students will sketch ideas, get feedback, revise, and decide which idea to pursue in the plan.
- Students will then create a miniature version of the statue out of Model Magic® or use markers or paint to create a small version of the mural.



Cierra S.



Alexandra V.



Emma B.



Adriana O.



For Younger Children

Help young children practice the CREATE behaviors in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Classrooms and families are small-scale working communities where different points of view should be honored. Find examples of relationships in books and discuss whether the artists and authors celebrated strengths and respected diversity. Introduce a dilemma that would require the story character to make decisions that involve listening to others' points of view. How might that character demonstrate personal strengths, such as kindness and empathy, or celebrate someone else's idea while learning from a mistake? Ask children to illustrate a new scene for the story that shows themselves or the main characters demonstrating the behaviors in CREATE.



For Older Children

Many communities have arts councils that guide decisions about public art. Some have designated space and funding for large murals or sculptures. Often the leaders of these organizations have been involved in community debates about new art that others view as too *avant-garde* and old art that others view as outdated or inappropriate. Invite representatives from the arts councils or artists they have commissioned to address students and explain how decisions are made to fund or display artwork.

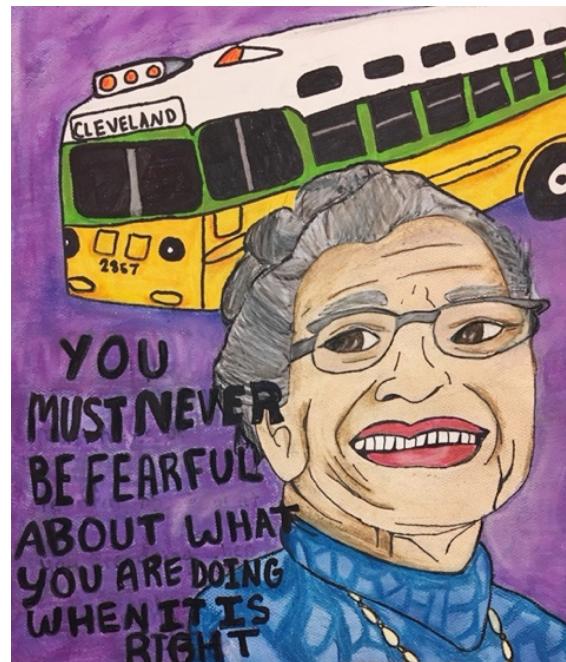
Students could send images of their art and an artist's statement to the local arts council or similar group in your community. They can offer their plan as inspiration for new public artwork and explain how they feel this connects with community values and relevant topics. Or they might ask a professional mural painter or sculptor for feedback on the plans and learn about the process of having public art created and displayed.

Child Reflections

- What are some important stories and values that should be portrayed in public art today?
- What artists are creating public art today in our town, city, state, or nation? What patterns can be observed in the new art? How is it different from public art created in past decades or centuries?
- How did observing and thinking about public art spark new ideas?
- How did debating points of view about public art help us understand others' perspectives?

Adult Reflections

- How did the discussions enable children to share ideas that might have been different from yours?
- Why is it important to connect art-making experiences with current events?
- How did this project spark conversations about biased accounts of history?
- Did using CREATE help children and others explore new ways to personally respond to public art?
- How did creating public art plans provide opportunities to view contemporary issues in new ways?



Silas D.



Rachael R.

STANDARDS AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Educational standards outline what children should know and be able to do. These recommendations guide how children move through a progression of skills and understanding.

This project aligns the following educational standards:

LANGUAGE ARTS

- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well the purpose and audience have been addressed.

VISUAL ARTS

- Generate a collection of ideas reflecting current interests and concerns that could be investigated in art making.
- Formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art.
- Revise artwork in progress on the basis of insights gained through family and peer discussion.
- Explain why some objects, artifacts, and artwork are valued over others.
- Ask and answer questions regarding where, when, why, and how artwork should be prepared for presentation or preservation.
- Analyze how art exhibited inside and outside of schools (such as in museums, galleries, virtual spaces, and other venues) contributes to communities.
- Assess, explain, and provide evidence of how museums or other venues reflect the history and values of a community.
- Identify and interpret works of art or design that reveal how people live around the world and what they value.
- Explain how a person's aesthetic choices are influenced by culture and environment and how they impact the visual image conveyed to others.
- Decipher messages communicated by an image.
- Analyze ways that visual components and cultural associations suggested by images influence ideas, emotions, and actions.
- Analyze multiple ways that images can influence specific audiences.
- Interpret art by referring to contextual information and analyzing relevant subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media.
- Recognize differences in criteria used to evaluate works of art depending on styles, genres, and media as well as historical and cultural contexts.
- Identify how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society.
- Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses.
- Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity.

