

Make a Mural

Vocabulary

Audience	A person or group of people viewing, reading, or participating in an artwork.
Brainstorming	Working together to solve a problem or come up with an idea.
Collaborate	To work together.
Label	An item used to identify something or someone, as a small piece of paper or cloth attached to an article to designate its origin, owner, contents, use, or destination.
Material	What an artwork is made out of, such as paint, wood and canvas.
Message	An idea or set of ideas that an artwork conveys visually.
Mural	A work of art, usually a painting, that is done directly on a wall or ceiling, or another surface that is mounted to a wall. Murals are usually large scale and are commonly found in public areas.
Observation	The act, practice or power of noticing.
Primary Colors	Fundamental basic colors red, blue, yellow.
Public Art	Any form of art that is accessible to the public, and was created with the intent to be seen by the public. Public art could include but is not limited to: poetry in motion, graffiti, murals, billboards, earthworks, architecture and sculpture.
Shade	A color variation on a basic color using black to darken.
Sketch	A hasty or undetailed drawing or painting often made as a preliminary study.
Symbol	Something that stands for, represents, or suggests another thing.
Theme	A subject of artistic representation.
Tint	A color mixed with white to give low saturation and high lightness.
Title	Name of an artwork. If an artwork has no name, the artwork is untitled.

Activity: Collaborative Message

In this activity, students will work together to create a classroom message, deciding on content and color together while designing individual words or letters on their own.

Materials

- 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper
- Crayons or markers
- Yarn or string
- Hole punch
- Examples of murals or public artworks

Procedure

1. Explain to students that a lot of murals, or public art works, have a message or theme. Show examples of murals and have students discuss what they believe is the message(s) of the mural. Explain that students will create their own classroom message for everyone who comes into their classroom to read. Messages may be simply “*Welcome to Classroom 3B,*” or may address a topic being discussed in class, such as “*What do you know about Chicago History?*” Each student will create one letter or word on their piece of paper, combining their individual texts to form their collaborative message.
2. Discuss with students what the classroom message will be. Have students brainstorm messages, keeping in mind that the message will need to be long enough for each student to have one letter or word to design. Punctuation can also be added to ensure that each student has one “text piece” to create. Students will discuss, collaborate and compromise to choose the message and text color.
3. Design and draw one letter or word in a unique way in the voted-on color, making sure that the text will be seen from a distance.
4. Now that your classroom message is complete, discuss where you will display your collaborative message for the public to see. The papers can be simply taped to a wall or window, or hole-punched and strung together with colorful string.

Extension Activity

Try this activity using a light watercolor wash over the letters in a color that contrasts with the text. If using markers, make sure they are permanent.

Make a Mural

Alignment with State Goals

Science State Goal 11

Understand the processes of scientific inquiry and technological design to investigate questions, conduct experiments and solve problems

Activity: Symbols

In this activity, students will study symbols and what several symbols represent in our society. They will then create symbols that represent aspects of their mural theme.

Materials

- Construction or colored paper
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Scratch paper
- Paper to mount on

Procedure

1. Show some examples of symbols, from general symbols such as hearts to more complex symbols such as the Cubs logo, the Chicago flag, ribbon pins etc. Have students discuss what the symbols can represent. What would a symbol such as the American flag mean if it had different colors?
2. Explain that when an art educator from Chicago Children's Museum visits your classroom, he or she will assist you in creating a mural based upon a topic that you've been discussing in class. Brainstorm with students all the different aspects, ideas and feelings that their mural topic evokes.
3. Have each student create a symbol to represent an aspect of the mural topic. If the topic is Chicago History and one aspect is the great Chicago fire, symbols may be a flame, a fire hose, firefighter helmet, etc.
4. Have each student sketch out several versions of their symbol on scrap paper before drawing the final symbol on colored paper. Have students think about how the color of the symbol can alter its meaning. (What would a blue flame symbolize?) Cut out the symbols and mount to a different background color, which can be decided on by the class.

Extension Activity

Have students write explanation labels for their symbols, or hold onto them for the post-visit activity "Art Info."

Make a Mural

Alignment with State Goals

Science State Goal 12C

Understand the processes of scientific inquiry and technological design to investigate questions, conduct experiments and solve problems

Fine Arts State Goal 26A

Identify media and tools and how to use them in a safe way

Fine Arts State Goal 26B

Create visual artworks using manipulation, eye-hand coordination, building and imagination

Physical Development State Goal 19A

Demonstrate control when performing manipulative skills

Activity: Mural Theme & Sketch

In this activity students will work together deciding on a mural theme and create group drawings that will be used in preparation for workshop day.

Materials

- 8 1/2 X 11 white sheets of paper
- Sharpened #2 pencils
- Pencil sharpeners
- Erasers

Procedure

- 1. Pick A Theme**—Discuss with the students what theme they would like to showcase in their mural. Also, explain to the students if they pick a general theme, groups can decide on something more specific to focus on. For Example: The mural theme can be “Culture in Chicago”, and specific group themes can be “Chinese New Year in Chinatown”, “Dia de la Independencia in Pilsen”, and “Boriquen Festival in Humbolt Park”. If the class seems to have a hard time agreeing on a theme, pick three popular ideas and have them vote on their favorite.
- 2. Collaborate**—Divide class into groups of 2-3 students, and have them brainstorm ideas for their section of the mural. Have them discuss amongst themselves what they would like to illustrate in their portion of the mural.
- 3. Sketch**—Have students prepare individual sketches of their ideas, and have them present them to the rest of their group. After sharing their sketches, groups need to collaborate all of their ideas to create a final drawing that reflects the intent of every student.
- 4. Collect**—In preparation to collect final drawings, allow groups to present their collaborative work to the rest of the class. Make sure that group-member names are clearly labeled on their sketches before collecting them.

Make a Mural

Alignment with State Goals

Language Arts State Goal 1

Read with understanding and fluency

Language Arts State Goal 5

Acquire, assess and communicate information

Activity: Art Info

In this activity, students will work collaboratively to create a label for their mural.

Materials

- Stiff paper/poster board (optional)
- Pencils and/or markers
- Class murals

Procedure

1. Gather students around the class murals. Have students describe how the murals visually convey aspects of the mural topic. Have students brainstorm information that is not readily apparent when looking at the mural that they would like people to know, such as who created the mural, why it was created, etc.
2. Explain to students that they will create a label to hang next to the mural which will include information they would like people to know. A label for a work of art usually includes the title of the artwork, name of artist(s), the materials used to create the art, dimensions and when the art was created. Some art labels also explain a little about how the artwork was created and what ideas and messages the artist is trying to convey in the artwork.
3. Divide students into groups to write short paragraphs describing one aspect of their mural. These aspects may be topics that came up in the discussion, or each group can answer an assigned question such as: *“How was the mural made?”* *“Why was the mural made?”* *“When was it made?”* *“Where was it made?”* *“What is the mural made of?”* *“Who made it?”* etc. Students should keep in mind what they would like the audience to know about the mural. Have students share their paragraphs with the rest of the class.
4. As a classroom, have students decide on a title for the mural.
5. Now that you have all your label information, discuss how this information will be displayed with the mural. Each group may write its finished paragraph on a sheet of stiff paper, and the paragraphs can be mounted together on large poster board, or possibly typed-up and printed.

Extension Activity

Have students create individual labels for the symbols they created in the pre-visit activity.

Make a Mural

Alignment with State Goals

Language Arts

State Goal 3

Write to communicate for a variety of purposes

Language Arts

State Goal 4

Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations

Activity: Public Art Hunt

In this activity, students will identify various kinds of public art in their school/community.

Materials (one complete set per cooperative group)

- Pencils
- Clipboards (optional)
- Observation handout

Procedure

1. Discuss the variety of public art. Remind students that public art is any form of art that is accessible to the public, and was created with the intent to be seen by the public. This could include but is not limited to murals, billboards, graffiti and sculpture. Have students identify different kinds of public art in their classroom: from drawings made by fellow students to the ABC board created by a graphic designer.
2. Explain to students that they will be going on a public art hunt to find other examples of public art in their school/neighborhood. Hand out observation sheets, pencils, and clipboards. Go over the observation sheet with students, describing one artwork in the room using the sheet.
3. Have students walk around their school looking for public art. They may find murals in the gym, paintings of the namesake of the school, or a large chalk drawing on the playground. Encourage an open definition of art. The “public art hunt” can also extend to include the neighborhood around the school or be done as a homework assignment.
4. Share examples in class by having students verbally describe their public art findings to the class.

Extension Activity

Try this activity by having groups of students lead the class on an art walk through your school or neighborhood. If you have access to a digital camera, encourage students to photograph the public art that they find and review the photos together in the classroom.

Make a Mural

Alignment with State Goals

Language Arts State Goal 3

Write to communicate for a variety of purposes

Language Arts State Goal 4:

Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations

Public Art Hunt

Walk around your school or neighborhood and search for public art. You may find a public artwork right away or you may have to look hard! You may pass by a public artwork every day and not know it! Public art is any kind of art that was made for the public to see, such as murals, billboards, graffiti and sculpture, to name just a few examples. Fill out the sheet below as best you can.

1. Title (Name of artwork)

2. Artist(s) (Who made it?)

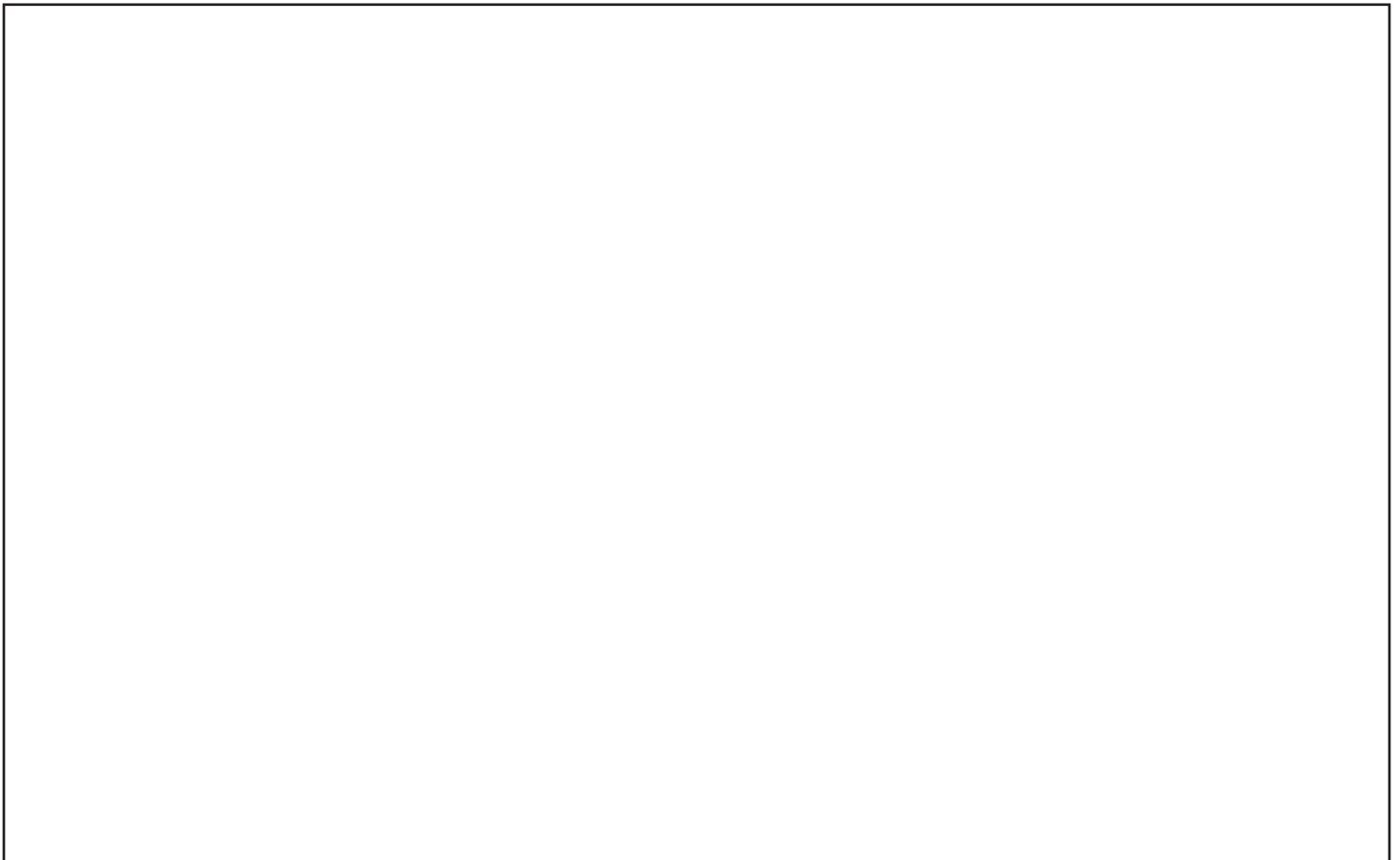
3. Location (Where is it?)

4. Material (What is it made of?)

5. Message (What did the artist(s) want to tell you by making the mural?)

6. Audience (Who did the artist create the art for? Adults, kids, you?)

7. Sketch the public artwork here. (Do a quick drawing of the artwork.)



Extension Activities: Murals

Make a Mural

There are endless ways to make murals fun in the classroom!
Here are just a few ideas...

Mural Dedication

Invite parents or other classes to a dedication of your class mural. Create invitations and supply cookies and punch for the audience. Have students make short speeches explaining the messages, techniques, and collaborative efforts involved in making the mural. Unveil the mural in its display place.

Mural Scrapbook

Document the whole mural process from brainstorming the mural topic, doing the pre-visit activities, and participating in the workshop to following through with the post-visit challenges. Take pictures, and have students save all their sketches, scraps of paper and other art materials they use throughout the mural process. Write down what students say throughout all the discussions. Use the pictures, sketches, notes and art materials to create scrapbook pages documenting the mural process. Make black and white or color photocopies of the photographs for students to use. Students can combine visual and written messages to describe an aspect of the mural process, from discussing the mural topic to hanging the finished pieces. Collect all the pages and bind into a classroom book. Pages can also be photocopied to allow each student to have their own documentation scrapbook to keep.

Paper Murals

Murals do not have to consist of canvas and paint. Create a mural on paper with your class. Ask students where they think an additional mural in the classroom would make a positive difference. A mural may fill the blank wall just above the blackboard or provide a temporary covering for a bulletin board on a new topic you are studying in class. Measure the area and cut a large piece of butcher paper to the measurements (a group of students can also be in charge of this). Paint, draw, stamp or make prints on the paper for your new mural.

Additional Mural Ideas

- Create window murals with paper cutouts or with translucent paper such as tissue paper.
- Use an opaque, slide or overhead projector to project simple images onto a large sheet of paper for students to trace, or have students stand in front of the light source for other students to trace their overlapping shadows.

Books about Murals

For Children

- *Diego*, by Jeanette Winter, text by Jonah Winter, In English and Spanish
- *The Journey of Diego Rivera*, by Ernest Goldstein

For Educators

- *Art for the People: The Rediscovery and Preservation of Progressive—and WPA-Era Murals in the Chicago Public Schools, 1904-1943*, by Heather Becker
- *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros*, by Desmond Rochfort
- *Murals: The Great Walls of Joliet*, by Jeff Huebner
- *Walls of Heritage, Walls of Pride: African American Murals*, by James Prigoff and Robin J. Dunitz
- *A Guide to Chicago's Murals*, by Mary Lackritz Gray
- *Mural Manual* by Mark Rogovin, Marie Burton and Holly Highfill
- *Street Murals*, by Volker Barthelmeh

Helpful Websites

A Mural-Making Guide for K-12 Teachers

<http://www.kuidaosumi.com/murals/>

Mural Activities Created by Chicago Teachers

http://www.artic.edu/aic/students/mural_project/