



Yearlong Objectives

- Express oneself in words and art.
- Work as an ensemble.
- Understand the power and importance of uniqueness.

Essential Questions

- What is special and unique about me?
- Why should I plan out my work before I do it?
- How can I effectively plan a work of art?

Lesson Objectives

- Understand the historical and cultural origin of sugar skulls.

National Arts Standards

- Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design. *(VA:Cr2.1.6a)*
- Analyze ways that visual components and cultural associations suggested by images influence ideas, emotions, and actions. *(VA:Re7.2.6a)*
- Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work. *(TH:Cr2-6.b)*



Materials needed

Four 1-inch balls of air-dry clay per student, one plastic spoon per student, four pieces of string per student, Emotions Four-Square templates, pencils with erasers, flour



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *comfortable, uncomfortable, frustrated, excited, hurt, annoyed, neutral, unique*

Visual Arts: *sugar skull*

Theatre: *ensemble, body*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: **Hypothetical question:** *If you could trade places with anyone currently alive, who would you trade with?*

Optional follow-up question: *Are you feeling comfortable or uncomfortable?*

Team-building game: *What are you doing?*, Level 4 (see [Team-Building Games](#))



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Review examples of “comfortable”, “uncomfortable” and “frustrated”.
- Say, *We’re focusing on learning different emotion words so that we can articulate what we’re feeling to other people.* Have students talk with a partner about why that might be important during the school day and outside of school.
- Introduce four new emotion words: _____, _____, _____ and _____.
- Have students decide whether these emotions are comfortable or uncomfortable. Write “comfortable” or “uncomfortable” under each emotion word on the board.
- Distribute the Emotions Four-Square Template (*attached*). Describe each of the emotions to the students. As you are describing the emotions, have students sketch faces that demonstrate those emotions. (Example: *Let’s start with “excited.” Pick up your pencil and look at the square that says “excited.” Think about a time you felt excited. Being excited means you’re looking forward to something and you have a lot of energy because of it. If you were excited for a big party coming up, how would you show that on your face? Begin to sketch a face that looks excited. Maybe the eyes would be bigger than normal, or maybe the face would be smiling in a specific way. Think about how you uniquely look when you are excited. What features on your face would show your excitement?*)
- Introduce art vocabulary: _____ . *Sugar skulls are a folk art tradition from central and southern Mexico, made as part of the Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration. Traditionally, a sugar mixture was pressed into a clay mold to make a skull shape that was dried and then inscribed with the name of the deceased on its forehead. The decorations were used to adorn churches, altars, and cemeteries as a way to honor the deceased and enjoy memories of them.*
- Say, *We will be using the sugar skull format to express the four emotions (excited, hurt, annoyed, and neutral) we are focusing on today.*

Keep in Mind

- Go over norms for an art space. *Art space needs to be safe, respectful and calm. What needs to happen to ensure everyone feels that way?*
- Describe the new art supplies and explain how they might be difficult to use. *How can we make sure that we are gentle with clay? Why is that important?*
- Clay is changeable. *How can you make sure you take the steps necessary to finish your project?*



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Begin with a spoon, a bowl of flour (table groups can share), and four small balls of clay per student.
- Dip the spoon into the flour and tap the side of the bowl to remove the excess. This will keep the clay from sticking in the spoon, but will not affect the performance of the clay.
- Press a small ball of clay onto the outside of the spoon. Attach a looped piece of string to the top of the clay.
- Remove the clay from the spoon. Carefully use an eraser to create two dents for eyes.
- Place the skull on the Emotions Four-Square in one of the boxes. This skull will be decorated like that emotion.
- Repeat with three more balls of clay.

Extensions: Add color to the Emotions Four-Square with colored pencil to show what colors you will use when you go to decorate your work next class.

Closure: Students turn and share with a partner their plans for how they will color their skulls next class.

Optional Writing Prompt: Choose one of the four emotions we have focused on today. When have you felt that way? What happened?

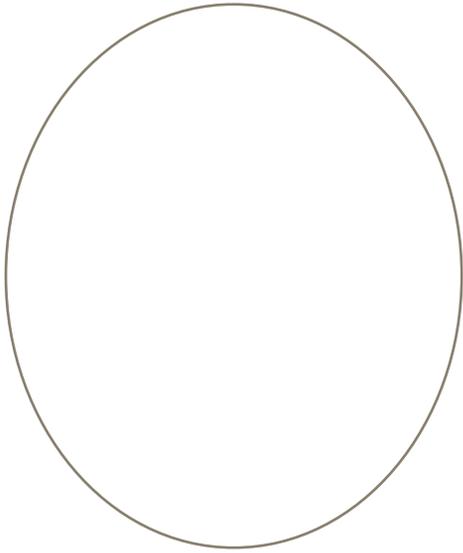


Big Picture

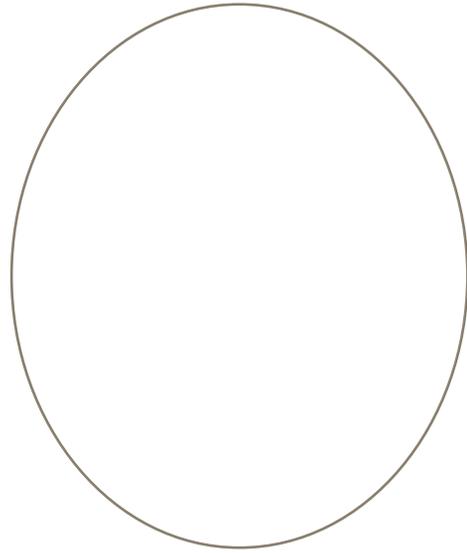
Next class we’ll decorate both of our clay puppets so we can have plenty of emotion puppets to choose from if we decide to do a puppet show.

Name _____

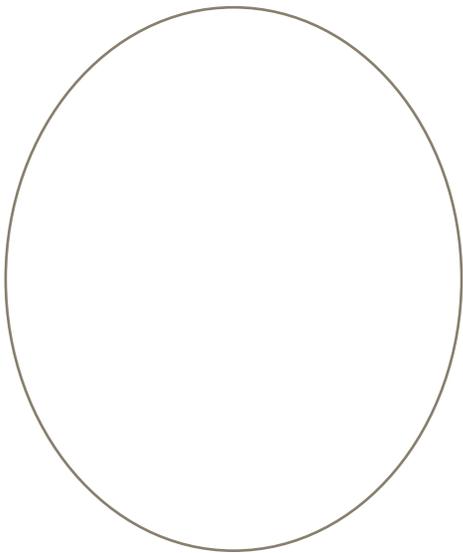
Emotions Four-Square



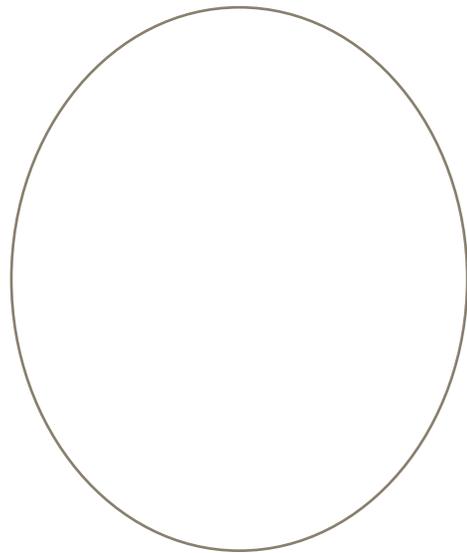
EXCITED



HURT



ANNOYED



NEUTRAL