

## Graffiti/Street Art/Creative Lettering

**Theme:** Identity

**Lesson Title:** Tag the Hallways

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**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Time:** 5 days, 30 min./day (2.5 hours total)

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**Art Concept:** Creative Lettering; Personal Expression

**Artmaking Processes and Techniques:** Designing and Drawing names using a graffiti font, Using oil pastels to create airbrush effects, cutting out final designs for display

**Art Elements/Principles of Design:** Line, Color, Shape, Balance

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**National Standards: (5-8)**

**1b.** Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

**5b.** Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry

**5c.** Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures

**State Goals, Learning Standards and Benchmarks:**

**26.B.3d**

Demonstrate knowledge and skills to create 2-and 3-dimensional works and time arts (e.g., film, animation, video) that are realistic, abstract, functional, and decorative.

**25.B.3**

Compare and contrast the elements and principles in two or more art works that share similar themes.

**27.B.3**

Know and describe how artists and their works shape culture and increase understanding of societies, past and present.

**Comprehensive Components:** AH, AE, AP, AC

**Domains:** C4. C5. C6, A1

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**Overview:** Students will learn about graffiti art and various styles of creative lettering. They will experiment using these styles to create their own personal “tag.” They will draw their names using a large graffiti font, and then add color to their designs using an oil pastel blending technique. The students will cut out their final designs to hang in the school hallway for display, and then participate in a group critique.

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**Rationale:** By creating personal graffiti “tags,” students will learn new uses of line and color for personal expression. By comparing more traditional artforms such as painting and pottery to more contemporary artforms such as public or graffiti art, students will realize the multitude of possibilities for what can be considered as art.

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## Objectives

*As a result of this unit, students will*

**Artmaking:** using graphite and oil pastels, incorporate at least three colors to create a 12" x 18" name design inspired by graffiti art and creative lettering styles.

(5-8) 1b, 26.B.3d, C5

**Historical/Cultural Context:** orally, and as a group, analyze and describe at least two ways that public art is used, and describe the work of at least one public or graffiti artist.

(5-8) 5b, 27.B.3, C4

**Criticism:** orally, and as a group, compare and describe how elements and principles of art and design such as line, color, shape, and balance are effectively used in various ways within their own work and the work of artists studied.

(5-8) 5c, 25.B.3, C6

**Aesthetics:** write a brief paragraph, stating and defending their opinion regarding the value of contemporary public art compared to traditional art forms.

(5-8) 5b, 27.B.3, C6

**Participation:** demonstrate a willingness to learn about personal expression and public art by positively contributing to the discussion during the lesson and participating in the art making activities. (A1)

## Vocabulary

### Artmaking

**Graffiti:** markings, as initials, slogans, or drawings, written, spray-painted, or sketched on a sidewalk, wall of a building or public restroom

**Oil Pastels:** an oil-based art medium used to add color; can be easily blended

### Historical/Cultural (*if appropriate*)

**Banksy:** a British street artist who makes satirical, politically motivated art

**Alexandre Orion:** Brazilian street artist who combines painting and photography to create interactive public artwork

**Jean-Michel Basquiat:** artist who combined visual images with written words to communicate his ideas via public art

**Keith Haring:** American artist known for using bold lines and simple shapes to create pictures in the subway stations and sidewalks of New York

**Motivation:** Basquiat book, teacher-made example, Images of street art and artists

**Student Pre-requisite:** Experience using drawing and coloring media, writing in various fonts

**Instructional Methods:** Examples will be shown and discussed. Teacher demonstration. Hands-On student involvement.

## Learning Activities

### Historical/Cultural (Day 1)

#### Procedure (Teacher Directed)

1. **Set Induction** Ask students a number of questions about graffiti and public art.  
**Ex:** Have you ever seen graffiti around the city? What did it look like? Do you consider that to be art? Why do you think people choose to make public art? Etc.

**Materials:** Basquiat book, Images of graffiti art, Powerpoint presentation

#### Procedure (Teacher Directed):

1. Introduce concepts and purposes related to public art
2. Show Powerpoint presentation with images and information about street art and artists, including early forms of public art such as cave paintings.

#### (Guided Practice) Students will:

1. Participate in a discussion about graffiti as an art form
2. Identify and describe the different ways that street artists used elements and principles of art to communicate to their viewers
3. Compare and contrast early forms of public art with contemporary street art

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### Artmaking (Days 2-4)

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#### Materials:

1. Large sheets of butcher paper, at least 12" x 18" for each student
2. Pencils
3. Oil Pastels (classroom set, at least 3 colors per student)
4. Scratch paper to practice fonts
5. Printed graffiti fonts for students to view and practice

#### Procedure (Teacher Directed):

1. Instruct students about the definitions and importance of using elements and principles such as line, color, shape, and balance when planning out their name designs
2. Demonstrate writing name in various graffiti fonts on the board

#### (Guided Practice) Students will:

1. Use smaller, blank sheets of copy paper to practice experimenting with various fonts
2. Begin planning the shape, flow, and size of their name designs
3. Plan out what 3 colors they will use in their final design

#### (Teacher Directed)

1. Demonstrate blending technique with oil pastels to achieve airbrush effects
2. Explain the steps of artmaking process to students: sketch in pencil, add details, then add color, and cut out final designs for display

**(Independent Practice) Students will:**

Complete the artmaking process as instructed.

1. Plan and sketch graffiti-style names LARGE enough to fill their page
2. Add details or decorations such as spray paint drips, characters, etc.
3. Use at least 3 different colors of oil pastels and the blending technique to add color to their work
4. Cut out final designs with a unique border that follows the outline of the letters

**(Closure)**

1. Ask students what their favorite part of the artmaking process was
2. Ask students who their favorite street artist is

**Adaptations:** grips for writing utensils for students with limited motor skills; assistance of aides

**Enrichment:** books on Basquiat and other street art/artists

**Activities for Early Finishers:** Create an additional work of art inspired by the graffiti style but incorporating (appropriate) pictures and words of their choice; practice writing names or phrases using different graffiti styles

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## Art Criticism/Aesthetics

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**Procedure:**

**(Teacher Directed)**

1. Review elements and principles of art and design: line, shape, color, balance
2. Lead group discussion, having students analyze their own and their classmates' artworks
3. Remind students of artists studied and ask to compare and contrast their own work with that of artists such as Banksy, Basquiat, Haring, and Orion.

**(Guided Practice) Students will:**

1. While viewing displayed artwork in the hallway, Orally identify and describe ways that they and their classmates successfully incorporated elements and principles of art to create meaning in their work.
2. Orally, and as a group, compare and contrast their own work with that of artists studied.  
(AC)

**(Independent Practice) Students will:**

1. Write a brief paragraph, stating and defending their opinion regarding the value of contemporary public art compared to traditional art forms. (AE)

## Assessment of Student Learning

### Did students:

**Artmaking:** use graphite and oil pastels and incorporate at least three colors to create a 12” x 18” name design inspired by graffiti art and creative lettering styles

**Historical/Cultural Context:** orally, and as a group, analyze and describe at least two ways that public art is used, and describe the work of at least one public or graffiti artist

**Art Criticism:** orally, and as a group, compare and describe how elements and principles of art and design such as line, color, shape, and balance are effectively used in various ways within their own work and the work of artists studied

**Aesthetics:** write a brief paragraph, clearly stating and defending their opinion regarding the value of contemporary public art compared to traditional art forms

**Participation:** Teacher Observation and Checklist

### References

<http://www.alexandreorion.com/meta/>

<http://www.banksy.co.uk/QA/qaa.html>

<http://www.basquiat.com/artist.htm>

<http://dictionary.reference.com/>

<http://www.haringkids.com/>

<http://www.haring.com/>

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