

Public Sculpture Lesson Series: “Faces, Feelings, and Imagination”

Framework for Grades K-6

Based on Dumpty Humpty by Brett Douglas Hunter



This project is supported by:



ART + DESIGN

Lesson Plan 1: K–2

“Many Faces”

Exploring Emotion Through Shape and Color

Core Idea: A sculpture can show different feelings depending on where you stand and what you notice.

Part 1: Outdoor Observation

Duration: 5–15 minutes

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Identify facial expressions and emotions
- Observe how color and shape communicate feeling
- Recognize that one artwork can contain multiple moods

Outdoor Activity

1. Emotion Walk

Students walk around the sculpture slowly without speaking to others.

- Prompt:
 - a. “How many faces can you find?”
 - b. “Do all the faces feel the same?”
 - c. “What colors make you happy? What colors make you sad?”
 - d. “What name would you give him?”

2. Freeze Face Game

Teacher points to one side of the sculpture.

- Students:
 - a. Copy the expression using their own faces
 - b. Freeze like the sculpture
- Ask:
 - a. “Does this face feel happy, silly, worried, confused?”

3. Color Hunt

- Students identify:
 - a. Bright colors
 - b. Repeated shapes
 - c. Favorite details
- Prompt:
 - a. “Which colors feel loud?”
 - b. “Which shapes repeat?”
 - c. “Does the size of faces changes how you feel?”
 - d. “What color you would add and why?”

Part 2: Indoor Studio

Duration: 30–45 minutes

Materials

- Paper plates or paper cups
- Markers, paint sticks, crayons, beads, pebbles
- Construction paper shapes or ready-made foam shapes

Studio Activity

Students create a “many-feelings face sculpture.”

Each side shows a different emotion and uses different colors/shapes to match the feeling.

Encourage exaggeration:

- Giant eyes
- Curved mouths
- Primary colors

Closing Reflection

Ask:

- “Which face is your favorite?”
- “Can colors change how a feeling looks?”
- “How do you like the sculpture after these exercises?”
- “Do want to see more objects from this artist?”
- “Would you like to have this sculpture at home?”

Lesson Plan 2: Grades 3–4

“Strange Characters”

Storytelling Through Sculpture

Core Idea: Artists can invent characters that communicate emotions, humor, and personality without using realistic forms.

Part 1: Outdoor Observation

Duration: 15–30 minutes

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Analyze how artists use exaggeration
- Connect visual details to character-building
- Interpret narrative possibilities in sculpture

Outdoor Activities

1. Character Detective

- Students look for:
 - a. Expressions
 - b. Patterns
 - c. Repeated symbols
 - d. Contradictions (happy/sad at the same time)
- Prompt:
 - a. “What kind of creature or character could this be?”

2. Perspective Shift

Students move around the sculpture.

- Ask:
 - a. “Does the personality change from one side to another?”
 - b. “Which side feels friendliest? Weirdest? Most sad?”

3. Story Prompt

Students complete:

- “This creature lives...”
- “Its biggest problem is...”
- “It secretly likes...”

Part 2: Indoor Studio

Duration: 20–45 minutes

Materials

- Cardboard boxes or folded templates
- Paint, markers, collage materials
- Markers, paint sticks, crayons, beads, pebbles

Studio Activity

Students design a 3D character sculpture with:

- At least two emotions
- Patterns or symbols
- A backstory

Encourage:

- Humor
- Contradiction
- Emotional contrasts

Reflection

Students introduce their creature:

- Name
- Personality
- Emotional “mood shifts”

Lesson Plan 3: Grades 5–6

“Symbols, Emotions, and Public Art”

Core Idea: Public sculptures can communicate complex emotions and ideas using simplified forms, humor, and symbolism.

Part 1: Outdoor Analysis

Duration: 30 minutes

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Interpret symbolic meaning in sculpture
- Discuss how public art changes shared spaces
- Analyze emotional ambiguity and visual language

Outdoor Discussion

Introduce idea:

- The sculpture combines smiling and frowning expressions

Ask:

- “Can something feel funny and uncomfortable at the same time?”
- “Why might an artist combine different emotions?”

Visual Analysis

Students identify:

- Repetition
- Contrast
- Symmetry/asymmetry
- Color intensity
- Color symbolism

Prompt:

- “What details feel playful?”
- “What details feel strange or unsettling?”

(This age group can handle that nuance.)

Public Art Conversation

Ask:

- “How does this sculpture change this outdoor space?”
- “Would it feel different indoors?”

Part 2: Indoor Studio

Duration: 45–50 minutes

Studio Challenge

Materials

- Cardboard boxes or paper mâché
- Paint, markers, collage materials
- Acrylic paint, watercolors

Create a sculpture or mask that combines:

- Multiple emotions
- Contrasting symbols
- Bold visual language

Students should think about:

- What viewers notice first
- How color changes interpretation
- How humor can communicate ideas
- How color can communicate emotions
- How scale can change perception

Students examine:

- positive and negative space
- line
- movement
- abstraction

[Visual examples](#)

Critique / Reflection

Students respond:

- “What emotion do you notice first?”
- “What details change the meaning?”
- “How colors in this sculpture make you feel?”
- “What name would you give to this sculpture?”
- “Would you want to have this sculpture close by where you live?”

Why this progression works

Lessons are rooted in:

- Emotional literacy
- Imagination
- Symbolic thinking
- Public interaction
- Character and narrative
- Spatial awareness
- New vocabulary

And importantly: It respects the artwork’s visual language instead of forcing it into a framework it does not naturally reflect.