Students engage in a drawing exercise where a simple scribble or an abstract shape is turned into a recognizable character or scene. First, teaching artist Jim Gill demonstrates the process using a volunteer’s scribble. Then, students partake in the same activity. Selected students present their original drawings to the class. Personification is demonstrated as the teaching artist turns a simple drawing of a pencil into a character while giving examples of pop culture personified characters like “Cars” and “SpongeBob.” Basic story elements are discussed. Emotions/feelings are discussed, then students are led through a drawing exercise where specific emotions are conveyed through cartoon facial drawings. Students gain valuable knowledge about how facial features can change the expression and representation of emotions. Body language is briefly discussed. Finally, the teaching artist leads students through a drawing exercise where each child creates a character utilizing basic geometric shapes.

### Objectives

1. **Engage** in creative use of imagination and visual depiction.
2. **Participate** in presenting their work in front of the class.
3. **Recount** basic story elements: characters, setting and plot.
4. **Understand** how facial expressions and body language convey emotions.
Before the Program

Lead a brief discussion of story elements: character, setting, and plot.

Point out examples of illustrations in use around the classroom stressing the fact that pictures convey ideas.

Briefly discuss with teaching artist what students are currently covering in Language Arts class so that immediate reinforcement can be part of the presentation.

After the Program

Use the illustrations created during the workshop as a prompt for a creative writing assignment (frequently students will verbally tell a story when presenting their illustration to the class).

Teaching artist will leave behind a list of websites that offer how-to drawing exercises.

Vocabulary

Alliteration: The use of the same letter or sound at the beginning of words in a sentence or phrase

Juxtaposition: The act of positioning close together (or side by side) so that differences become more pronounced

Personification: The act of attributing human characteristics to an inanimate object

Onomatopoeia: Words such as “buzz” and “thud” that sound like the sound which they refer to

About Jim Gill

Jim Gill is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art with a BFA in Illustration. He has worked as associate professor of Illustration at The University of Akron and as a drawing instructor at the Beck Center for the Arts in Lakewood, OH. As an illustrator, he has been an artist/writer for American Greetings for 22 years as well as doing freelance work with Paper Magic Group, McGraw-Hill Children’s Publishing, and School Specialties Publishing. Jim has now been a teaching artist with the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning for over 16 years.

Resources

Jim’s Website
www.gillustration.com

How to Draw Index
www.chunkymonkey.com/howto

Step by Step Drawing Lessons
www.drawingnow.com/how-to-draw-cartoons

About the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning

Through a balance of demonstration and audience participation, the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning teaching artist performances and workshops introduce students to an art form, support various curricular areas, and inject excitement and wonder into the school day.