

No one knows you like you know yourself. In this lesson you will think about adjectives that describe you, imagine metaphors and strong verbs that denote those traits, then create a structured poem about YOU. Using those ideas and symbols common to cattle brands, you'll then create a personal "brand" and use it in a simple art project.

Materials: paper and pencil/pen for notes or a computer, the Structured Poem and Brands worksheets, collage materials (your choice), sturdy paper for the collage, glue, markers, crayons, or pastels etc. for completing the art piece.

The Lesson:

This lesson helps you explore and express your personality three different ways. Each part builds on the last, so I suggest doing the projects in order but take your time to complete the whole lesson. You may want to do the sections at different times. Enjoy!

1. **Think and imagine.** There are many ways to describe people you know, characters you create, or yourself. After the introduction, take a few minutes to write down five single words that describe you. Have them? Write down their opposites (antonyms). Now choose two of the words and list as many synonyms as you can. Here're two examples:
 - a. Kind (mean); helpful, caring, empathetic, supportive, friendly
 - b. Funny (serious); silly, crazy, bubbly, happy, hilarious, jokester
2. The nuances of **choosing the right words and symbolic words** – metaphors and similes. Using your word list, write down some symbolic expressions. An example:
 - a. Silly like a clown; lovable like a teddy bear.
 - b. Read the words below and choose one character trait (adjective) that each reminds you of a: lion, teddy bear, mountain, song, devil, snake, eagle.
3. **Create:** Now that you've thought about the right word choice and ways to use symbolic words, **write a structured poem about you** – think carefully about the words and symbols you use.
4. **Understand brand symbolism** - review visual symbols used in Western cattle brands and ways you can use those to create your own brand.
5. **Create your own brand.** Draw it! Write two to three sentences about what it means.
6. **Design a self-collage.** Think about colors that represent you. Write them down.
 - a. **Now look at these examples of collage.** Can you tell what the artist used to make different parts of the art? <https://www.elisakleven.com/portfolio?lightbox=image1nn4>
<https://www.elisakleven.com/portfolio?lightbox=imageunw>
 - b. Use those colors as you gather your materials. Think of your personal brand. **Plan your collage** with symbols to represent you and using colors and things that feel good to you. Include your brand somewhere in the collage!
7. **Create a collage** that is uniquely yours. When you are done, **share it** with someone. Tell them why you designed it the way you did. What does it mean to you?
8. If you like this lesson, read through the extensions, and try more ideas on your own.

Connection to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for the Fine Arts

- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic work and ideas.

Grades 3-5: ELA Content Standard, Vocabulary Acquisition and Use; 5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

- 5a. Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context. (grade 3)
- 5a. Explain the meaning of simple similes and metaphors (grade 4)
- 5a. Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context. (grade 5)

Grades 6 ELA Content Standard , Vocabulary Acquisition and Use, 5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meaning.

- 5c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions).

Grades 7 and 8: ELA Content Standard , Vocabulary Acquisition and Use,

- 5c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions). and
- 6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Nevada Visual Arts Standards:

- VA:Cr2.3.1 Create personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.
- VA:Cr1.4.1 Brainstorm multiple approaches to a creative art or design problem
- VA:Cr2.5.3 Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.

Connection to Literacy: There are many ways to communicate through words, body language, visual art, music, etc. This lesson blends visual symbolism with poetry and self-reflection to help students explore both visual and verbal expressions. Students who struggle with words may be inspired by creating their own brand and an art piece to go with their structured poem. Those who say, "I don't know what to draw," may feel more confident when they have first thought about a specific concept and expressed it with language. As students grow more confident with communication – no matter what its form – they should also grow in reading comprehension, facility in writing, and interpreting the words and expressions of others.

Resources:

See poetry examples from *Do You Hear Me: Poems and Writing by Teenage Boys* edited by Betsy Franco, Candlewick Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 2000.

For more ideas for structured poems see <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/article-write-a-structured-poem>

A blog with more ideas for mixed media collages: <https://artfulparent.com/mixed-media-collage-kids/>

For more art and writing lessons that go with this video see attached sheet – *The Real You Extensions*

Just for fun and for more practice with choosing just the right words, imagine naming your own farm or ranch. See <https://toughnickel.com/starting-business/farm-names>

About the Artist

Suzanne Morgan Williams

Suzanne Morgan Williams is the author of the middle grade novel, *Bull Rider* (Margaret K. McElderry Books) and eleven nonfiction children's books with more books on the way. From the time she wrote her first book, *Made in China, Ideas and Inventions from Ancient China*, (Pacific View Press) to the present, her work has taken her into classrooms to connect with students, to universities and museums to work with experts, and to communities to share experiences.

A former teacher, she is now an author, speaker, and workshop leader. She's worked in all kinds of classrooms from special education to ESL, from pre-K to middle school and high school. She has teaching credentials in Washington and California as well as a Montessori Certificate and an M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education. For information on her speaking and school visits see

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Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster

The Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster is an online resource for schools, organizations and communities seeking to engage teaching artists. Roster artists are experienced in collaborating with schools and communities to conduct arts learning and cultural experiences in, through and about the arts.

Explore the roster at <https://www.nvartscouncil.org/rosters/teaching-artists/>