



## Faces of Alabama – Symbolic Collage Portraits

**Target grade:** 6th (adaptable to other grades)

**Length:** 2 to 3 - 45 minute sessions

**Enduring Understanding:** People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with art.

**Essential Question:** How does art help us understand the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures?



**Objective:** Students will use pre-printed text and images to create collaged mini-“portraits” of historical figures and people of personal interest.

**Arts discipline:** Visual Arts

**Visual Arts: Alabama Anchor Standard 11:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

**Creating 2** – formulate an artistic investigation & discovery of relevant content for creating art.

**Creating 3** – use elements of art (line, shape, color, value) & principles of design (patterns, proportion, variety) & various materials, methods, & approaches to create works of art.

**Non-arts discipline:** Social studies, language arts

**Social Studies – 4. a, b, c, & d.** – identify notable people (writers, musicians, artists, inventors, etc.) during the Harlem Renaissance, the Jazz Age, and the early 1900s (Zora Neal Hurston, F. Scott & Zelda Fitzgerald, W.C. Handy, Erskine Hawkins, George W. Carver, Wilbur & Orville Wright, Helen Keller, Margaret Washington, Tuskegee Airmen)

**Social Studies – 9. a, & b.** – key figures in the modern Civil Rights Movement (Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Fred Shuttlesworth, John Lewis); important artists since WWII (Hank Williams, J. Kelly Fitzpatrick, Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald).

**English Language Arts – 22.** – write informative or explanatory texts to convey ideas, concepts & information;

**English Language Arts – 35** – include multimedia components & visual displays to clarify information

**Materials and supplies:**

- Unlined index cards -2 cards/student
- Printed text from magazines, newspapers, maps & other sources
- Colored and patterned paper
- Pencils & erasers
- Scissors
- Glue sticks or Elmer’s glue in cups (with glue brushes)
- Thin water soluble markers
- Watercolor brushes
- Colored pencils

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**Prerequisite knowledge arts:**

- Understand that a “portrait” of a person may be expressed in symbols and words, as well as by drawing and painting.
- Understand that a collage is artwork made from cutting and assembling different images to create a new whole.

**Prerequisite knowledge – non-arts:**

- Introduce historical people in Alabama from the early 1900s (writers, artists, musicians, inventors, etc.) & notable people associated with the modern Civil Rights Movement.
- Choose a person of interest or historical figure from Alabama to depict in a collage.
- List attributes and achievements that characterize the person chosen to depict.

**Arts vocabulary addressed:**

line, color, shape; pattern, variety; background, foreground, negative & positive space, portrait, symbol, collage

**Non-arts vocabulary addressed:**

biography, attribute, accomplishment, contribution, influence, context, Alabama Bicentennial (on Dec. 14, 1819, Alabama became the 22<sup>nd</sup> state in the U.S.), notable people & events of the early 1930s, modern Civil Rights Movement.

**Introduction:**

Discuss the *Faces of Alabama* project in relation to the 2018 Alabama Bicentennial theme of “People”, sharing knowledge about historical & important people in Alabama. Tell the students that they will be creating collaged and symbolic “portraits” of well-known historical figures or someone of personal interest in their life.

Student artworks from this project are displayed on our website at:

<https://www.alartsalliance.org/student-works-bicentennial-workshops>

**Sequence of activities:**

1. Choose a person of interest or historical figure from Alabama to depict in a collage.
2. List attributes and achievements that characterize the person chosen to depict.
3. Cut out a variety of shapes from different colored and patterned paper and glue them on a blank index card to create an interesting background.
4. Look through magazines, maps, newspapers, and other sources to find text and images that describe the person you are portraying in the collage.
5. Cut out the text and images and glue them on the card to create an interesting arrangement for the foreground.
6. Using fine tip markers or colored pencils, draw other symbols and/or words on the collaged card to represent historical associations and characteristics of the person portrayed.
7. If desired, use a small amount of water on a brush to blend the colors created by the water based markers.
8. On a second index card, write a paragraph describing the person portrayed in the collaged portrait and why they have inspired you.
9. Put both cards (the collage and the writing) together back to back in a plastic sleeve or by gluing them together.

**Fun Variations to Try:**

- Paste a section of an Alabama map, patterned or colored paper on the card before adding collage elements.
- Use watercolors, tempera or acrylic paint to cover the index card; let this painting dry and then add collage images.
- Consult the online Encyclopedia of Alabama for more content: <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org>

