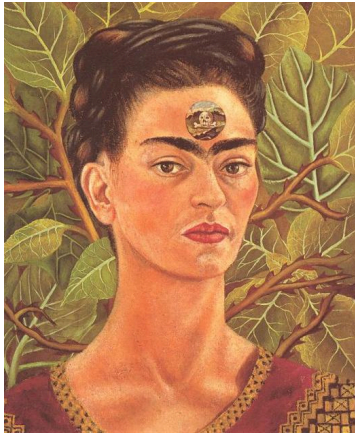


Curriculum Unit: Feelings of Freedom And The Art of Letting Go

6 Week Curriculum Unit - Lesson 1-4 for 1 week and 2 weeks for Lesson 5

Grade Levels: 9–12 (High School Visual Arts)

Theme: Self-healing and transformation through art and looking into our dreams. Students explore how personal experiences can be transformed into expressive visual language through color, composition, and mixed media. Using Frida Kahlo's surreal images and self-portraits as inspiration, students reflect with their writing and art making Sojournal (Sacred Originality Journal) on the emotional process of *letting go*—moving from boundaries and pain toward forgiveness and freedom - the art of letting go.



Grade 9–12 | Feelings of Freedom: The Art of Letting Go

This 5-lesson unit uses the art, life, and art process of Frida Kahlo's work - making art journals - exploring letting go through our art, as a springboard for exploring how art can transform personal struggles into empowerment. Students will document through art process through journaling, and lessons in line, drawings, collages, and acrylic paintings that build technical skill while also addressing themes of boundaries, symbolism, growth, and forgiveness. The culminating mixed media project represents the *feeling of freedom* that comes from letting go — anchored in art they keep as a reminder

(Unnamed? - Self-Portrait with Skull & Bones 3rd Eye)

Inquiry: Frida Kahlo's self-expression as a model of healing and empowerment.

Enduring Understandings

- Artists transform personal experiences into universal meaning.
- Art can help process emotions and anchor healing.
- Symbols and color can communicate freedom, growth, and resilience.

Essential Questions

- How can art help us let go of something and move toward freedom?
- What role do symbols, colors, and metaphors play in expressing emotions?
- How do artists use personal struggles to create work that resonates universally?
- How do our dreams give us as a way to heal? What colors, stories, & images heal you?

Curriculum Unit: Feelings of Freedom — The Art of Letting Go

Inspired by the Life and Art of Frida Kahlo

Title & Theme

Feelings of Freedom — The Art of Letting Go

Students explore self-healing, resilience, and transformation through art. Using Frida Kahlo's surreal paintings as cultural and emotional anchors, each lesson focuses on an aspect of letting go—Boundaries, Symbols, Growth, Forgiveness, and Freedom. Students journal, paint, and collage to express their emotional evolution from pain to peace.

Grade/Age Level

Grades 9–12 (High School Visual Arts)

Time Frame

6 Weeks

(1 week each for Lessons 1–4, and 2 weeks for the final mixed media project)

Standards (Texas TEKS + Corresponding CA Standards)

- **117.302(c)(1)(A)** – Develop themes for personal artworks from observation and imagination. (CA: VA:Cr1.2.1a)
- **117.302(c)(2)(B)** – Explore varied art materials and techniques to express ideas. (CA: VA:Cr2.1.1a)
- **117.302(c)(3)(B)** – Analyze how visual elements communicate meaning. (CA: VA:Re7.2.1a)
- **117.302(c)(4)(B)** – Reflect on artworks and personal connections through written or oral statements. (CA: VA:[Cn10.1.1a](#))



Lesson 1 — Boundaries = Clarity

Objectives

Students will learn color theory and symbolic linework to express emotional clarity and self-protection through design.

Focus Artwork

Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird (1940) – Frida Kahlo

Materials

Colored pencils, pens, sketchbook/journal, reference symbols.

Vocabulary

Line, Symbolism, Composition, Color Harmony.

Procedures

- **Anticipatory Set:** Discuss universal symbols across cultures (tattoos, spirals, sacred text).
- **Instruction:** Demonstrate color blending and mark-making for expressive lines.
- **Closing:** Reflect in journal: “What boundaries protect my peace?”

Accommodations/Modifications

Offer stencil outlines or symbol guides for students with fine motor challenges.

Assessment & Rubric

- Line Quality – 3 pts
 - Symbolic Expression – 3 pts
 - Craftsmanship – 3 pts
- Total: 9 pts**

Lesson 2 — Symbols = Meaning

Objectives

Students will layer imagery in collage to connect meaning, color, and metaphor for emotional release.



Focus Artwork

What the Water Gave Me (1938) – Frida Kahlo

Materials

Magazines, scissors, glue, paper, colored pencils, watercolor wash.

Vocabulary

Collage, Metaphor, Contrast, Rule of Thirds, Composition.

Procedures

- **Anticipatory Set:** View *What the Water Gave Me* and discuss symbolic imagery.
- **Instruction:** Demo cutting, layering, and color palette planning.
- **Closing:** Write in journal: “What do I need to let go of to stay afloat?”

Accommodations/Modifications

Provide pre-printed images for ELL or ADHD students who need visual aids or time supports.

Assessment & Rubric

- Symbolism & Color Use – 3 pts
 - Alignment & Composition – 3 pts
 - Creativity & Risk Taking – 3 pts
- Total: 9 pts**

Lesson 3 — Exploring = Growth

Objectives

Students use abstract acrylic painting to express transformation, balance, and growth through color and form.

Focus Artwork: *Roots* (1943) – Frida Kahlo



Materials

Acrylic paints, brushes, palette knives, canvas or heavy paper.

Vocabulary

Abstraction, Balance, Blending, Transformation.

Procedures

- **Anticipatory Set:** Discuss how “Roots” symbolizes both grounding and evolution.
- **Instruction:** Demo acrylic blending and layering to create abstract doorways or paths.
- **Closing:** Journal reflection: “Where am I growing toward light?”

Accommodations/Modifications

Offer guided sketches or templates for students with executive functioning challenges.

Assessment & Rubric

- Color Blending – 3 pts
 - Composition & Movement – 3 pts
 - Symbolic Expression – 3 pts
- Total: 9 pts**

Lesson 4 — Forgiveness = Freedom

Objectives

Students embed a personal or universal symbol of forgiveness within an abstract acrylic painting to express compassion and inner balance.

Focus Artwork:

Two Nudes in the Forest (The Earth Itself)
(1940) – Frida Kahlo

Materials

Acrylic paint, brushes, texture tools, canvas.

Vocabulary

Symbolism, Integration, Harmony, Texture.

Procedures

- **Anticipatory Set:** View and discuss balance and unity in Frida's *Two Nudes*.
- **Instruction:** Demo layering symbolic imagery into abstract color fields.

- **Closing:** Journal: "What symbol represents forgiveness in my life?"

Accommodations/Modifications

Allow optional use of collage overlay for students preferring a more representational anchor.

Assessment & Rubric

- Symbol Integration – 3 pts
 - Texture & Harmony – 3 pts
 - Emotional Resonance – 3 pts
- Total: 9 pts**



Lesson 5 — Layers of Letting Go: Feelings of Freedom

Objectives

Students synthesize all prior techniques in a mixed media piece symbolizing personal freedom, renewal, and gratitude.

Focus Artwork: *Moses (Nucleus of Creation)* (1945) – Frida Kahlo



Materials

Combination of materials (student choice): acrylics, collage, ink, watercolor, paper, found textures.

Vocabulary

Synthesis, Expression, Freedom, Unity.

Procedures

- **Anticipatory Set:** Review previous artworks and discuss how each represents stages of letting go.
- **Instruction:** Students combine at least two media; create layered painting of their essence of freedom.
- **Closing:** “Freedom Circle” share — optional verbal reflection or silent gallery walk.

Accommodations/Modifications

Choice-based media and self-paced timeline; quiet reflection spaces for introverted students.

Assessment & Rubric

- Symbolism & Theme – 3 pts
- Integration of Mediums – 3 pts
- Skill Application – 3 pts
- Creativity & Risk-taking – 3 pts
- Craftsmanship – 3 pts
- Presentation/Reflection – 3 pts

Total: 18 pts

Unit Through-Line

Frida Kahlo’s art teaches students that self-expression is healing. Through color, texture, and symbol, students journey from defining **boundaries** to embodying **freedom**. The unit celebrates art as emotional release — proof that letting go is both a creative and spiritual act.