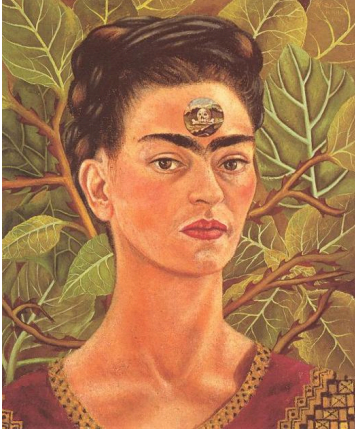


Curriculum Unit: Feelings of Freedom — The Art of Letting Go



Focus Audience: Grades 9–12 (High School)

Theme - This unit explores the connection between self-expression, healing, and freedom through art inspired by the life and paintings of **Frida Kahlo**. Students will examine how Kahlo used surrealism, symbolism, and color to process pain, reclaim power, and express her truth. Each lesson explores a different stage of *letting go*—Boundaries, Symbols, Growth, Forgiveness, and Freedom—culminating in a mixed-media artwork that embodies emotional release in our Feelings Of Freedom Final. The unit encourages students to see how art can serve as a powerful language of transformation, turning struggle into beauty and clarity into strength.

Standards:

Creating

- **VA:Cr1.2.1a (CA / NCAS):** Shape an artistic investigation of personally relevant content.
- **TEKS 117.52(c)(2)(C):** Express ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill.
- **VA:Cr2.1.1a:** Engage in making works of art exploring personally meaningful themes.

Responding

- **VA:Re7.2.1a:** Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.
- **TEKS 117.52(c)(3)(B):** Compare and contrast relationships that exist between art and its cultural context.

Connecting

- **VA:Cn10.1.1a:** Document personal experiences and connections through art.
- **TEKS 117.52(c)(4)(C):** Investigate and analyze personal perceptions of artworks through informed judgment.

Focus Artwork

The unit draws inspiration from five paintings that reflect Frida Kahlo's emotional and symbolic journey:

1. *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* (1940) — Boundaries and endurance
2. *What the Water Gave Me* (1938) — Memories and release
3. *Roots* (1943) — Growth and regeneration
4. *The Love Embrace of the Universe, the Earth (Mexico), Myself, Diego and Señor Xólotl* (1939) — Forgiveness and balance
5. *Moses (The Sun and Life)* (1945) — Freedom and transformation

The whole process is about - The Art of Letting Go - documented in their private Sacred Originally Journal. And each artwork guides one lesson about the Art of Letting Go through the lens of an artist - as we study Frida Kahlo and builds toward a mixed-media piece - that is the Feelings of Freedom Final.

History and Culture

Frida Kahlo (1907–1954) was a Mexican painter whose work blended personal pain, surreal imagery, and cultural symbolism. After surviving a near-fatal bus accident at 18, she turned to painting during recovery. Her art reflected her physical pain, emotional struggles, and relationships—particularly with muralist Diego Rivera. Kahlo's use of color, animals, plants, and spiritual imagery became a visual language for resilience.

During a time when women's voices were marginalized, Kahlo painted her inner world fearlessly. Her art transcended surrealism by expressing real emotions and universal truths about suffering and strength. Students will connect her process to their own emotional landscapes, exploring how art can serve as both mirror and medicine. As we see the life she led as an artist - and we are inspired to allow our art process to deeply heal us and be grateful to our creative spirit.

Visual Literacy

The *element of art* for this unit is **color**, and the *principle of design* is **symbolism** through composition. Students will explore how Kahlo used color and symbolic imagery—such as thorns, water, roots, and dual figures—to express emotional truths. They will analyze how placement, repetition, and balance affect meaning in her surreal compositions. As a visual exercise, students will create a "Symbol Map," illustrating how color, object, and form can

communicate feelings such as pain, hope, or renewal as a representation of their Feelings Of Freedom for what they let go of - that it become an anchor for that change.

Discussion prompts:

- What emotions do you see represented through Kahlo's use of color?
- How can abstract symbols speak louder than realistic images?
- What colors or shapes represent your own healing?

Art Production and Artmaking

Skill Building (Lessons 1–4)

Each week focuses on one medium and an aspect of letting go:

1. **Line Drawing / Boundaries = Clarity:** Explore color theory and symbolic mark-making.
2. **Collage / Symbols = Meaning:** Combine imagery and composition to represent personal symbolism.
3. **Acrylic Abstract / Exploring = Growth:** Create abstract pathways using color and light to symbolize transformation.
4. **Symbolic Acrylic / Forgiveness = Freedom:** Embed a personal or universal symbol into an abstract painting as an act of emotional release for what you have let go.

Culminating Artmaking (Lesson 5)

The final project, *Feelings of Freedom*, is a two-week mixed-media painting combining at least two of the prior mediums. Students integrate color, texture, and symbolism to represent the freedom found through letting go.

Each student will include a short artist statement or journal reflection on what they released or transformed during the process.

Art Production and Skill Building

To create their final artwork, students will:

- Integrate techniques from drawing, collage, and painting.
- Layer textures and symbols to express a central emotion or theme.
- Reflect on how composition and contrast contribute to meaning.
The focus will be on craftsmanship, expressive coherence, and the emotional authenticity of the piece.

Art Criticism

Students will participate in a “Friendship Circle” critique. Each artist will present their final piece and discuss the choices that convey transformation or release. Peers will respond using the “**Two Glows and a Grow**” format—offering two appreciations and one growth suggestion.

Guiding questions:

- What emotion or symbol stands out most to you?
 - How do color, texture, and composition contribute to the feeling of freedom?
 - What did you learn about yourself through this process?
- Reflections will be documented in each student’s *Sacred Originality Journal*.

Assessment Overview

Formative Assessments:

- Weekly journal reflections
- Color/symbol maps and sketches
- Class discussions and visual analyses

Summative Assessment (Lesson 5):

- **Artistic Skill (6 pts)** – Technique, craftsmanship, and creative use of materials.
- **Creative Expression (6 pts)** – Symbolic and emotional depth; originality.
- **Presentation & Reflection (6 pts)** – Verbal and written expression of meaning.

Total: 18 points

Differentiation

- **ELLs:** Visual vocabulary cards, bilingual glossary, peer support for reflection writing.
- **ADHD:** Clear task chunking, visual timers, and choice of pacing.

Art Production — Artmaking Lesson for Lesson 5 - Culmination

Project: *Feelings of Freedom — The Art of Letting Go*

Students combine at least two mediums from prior lessons (drawing, collage, acrylic) into one mixed media piece that represents the feeling of freedom gained through letting go. They may include words, color fields, or personal symbols that embody release and renewal with layers of collage, acrylic paint, color pens or pencils - all set to the tone of Feelings Of Freedom so you feel that when looking at it. This whole curriculum unit is a gift to your future self who will appreciate you allowing growth now. Be sure to continue with your (S.O.Journals) Sacred Originality Journals and share what you feel good about - let us witness your growth and feelings of freedom that it has birthed.

Goal: Integrate skills, materials, and emotional insight into a unified visual statement.

Presentation Share: Students will present their work, optionally sharing their theme of letting go or simply describing how their choices express freedom.

Assessment – Final Rubric (Lesson 5 – 18 Points)

Criteria	1 – Developing	2 – Proficient	3 – Advanced
Symbolism & Theme	Weak tie to freedom	Basic connection	Powerful symbolism
Integration of Mediums	1 medium only	2 with basic integration	2+ seamless integration
Medium Skills	Not applied	2 skills with control	Multiple skills refined
Creativity & Risk-Taking	Minimal	Some originality	Bold & innovative
Craftsmanship	Rushed	Neat	Polished
Overall Creativity & Expression	Unclear	Some clarity	Anchors freedom, strong presentation share

Total = **18 points**

Closing Reflection

Frida Kahlo's art teaches that healing is not about erasing pain, but transforming it into beauty. Through *The Art of Letting Go*, students learn to express personal freedom and emotional truth while developing technical and symbolic fluency across multiple media.

By the end of the unit, their mixed-media pieces will serve as anchors—a visual reminder that art can turn even the heaviest emotions into wings.



Rise Of The Super Empath -

Soul∞Blossoming

Mixed Media by Aliah Selah

This painting is a good example of the 5th Lesson - Feelings Of Freedom Final - Mixed Media Painting

That combines all the lessons:

- 1) drawing - **Boundaries = Clarity**
- 2) collage - **Symbols = Meaning**
- 3) acrylic abstract - **Exploring = Growth**
- 4) adding a subject/symbols to acrylic abstract - **Forgiveness = Freedom**