

Imagine Your Artist's Book

How do artists and writers use their journals as a source for new work?

How is an artist's book like a container for ideas?

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will have an opportunity to review all of their artwork and writings and to choose a concept for their final artists' books. When reviewing their work, they will select text and illustration techniques to use in their final books and will choose a book form to house their words and images. Students will explore the idea that an artist's book is a container for housing an idea.

LENGTH OF LESSON: Two 45-minute sessions

KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT VISUAL ARTS AND WRITING

- An artist's book is a container for ideas.
- Creating artists' books requires imagination and planning.
- Journals, sketchbooks, and past work can be sources of ideas for new work.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students will:

Visual Arts and Writing

- Review their work for ideas they would like to expand or rework
- Work with a partner to choose text, materials, and a book form for their final artists' books
- Understand that the book form they choose should help express the content of their artists' books
- Imagine what their artists' books will look like and describe it in words or images
- Write a list of materials they will need to construct their books

FOR THE TEACHER

Choose a few interesting objects in your room to use in a class discussion about artists' books as containers for ideas. You will ask the students to imagine how they could use the objects (a mailing tube, tissue box, water bottle, globe, ball—any object will do) as book structures and what kinds of writing might go with it.

SUPPLIES

- Student journals
- All of the students' work to date: student folders of art, writings, and book forms
- Sticky notes (optional)



INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN: OBSERVE, CREATE, AND REFLECT**Quick Write**

Tell students they are about to begin a new phase of the project in which they synthesize what they have learned and create final artists' books. Give students a few minutes to respond to one of the following prompts:

- Some ideas and techniques I would like to use in my artist's book are _____.
- I would like to create something that _____.
- One thing I have learned that will help me create my next artist's book is _____.

Introduction

Tell students they will choose an idea and a book form for their final artists' books and will begin planning how to put their books together. They will review all of the work they have created during the year to help them choose ideas for their books (it can be an idea that is expressed visually, in writing, or both) and develop the content for their books. They will then choose book forms that will help express the ideas for their books. Some students may prefer to choose a book form first and then choose an idea that corresponds to its form.

First, students will continue to explore the idea that an artist's book is a container for ideas. They will then examine a few objects in the classroom and imagine how they could be used as book forms.

Observe: Look and Discuss

Show students the object you chose. Ask them to examine it carefully and to consider how they could use the object as a book structure.

- What ideas does the object bring to mind?
- How could the object be used as a book structure?
- What could the book be about? Which ideas make the most sense for the shape and form of the object?
- What kind of writing would go with it—a poem, recipe, descriptive words, story, or set of instructions?
- Where could text be added to this form?
- What else could be added to the structure to help it convey a message?

Ask students to describe how their structure will work together. What does it mean that an artist's book is a container for ideas?

Create: Artists' Books

To begin planning their artist's books, students will choose:

- an idea
- a book form
- text
- images
- materials



Students may work in any order as long as they address each step in the planning process before beginning to construct the book.

1. Choose an Idea

Give students some time to individually look over their artwork and read through their journals and other writings. Students should look for ideas, words, sentences, and images they like and may want to include in their books. They can either circle the words and images, mark them with sticky notes, or write or sketch them on a new sheet of paper. Then, have students work in pairs to review their own and each other's work.

2. Choose a Book Form

When students have found a few good ideas, have them discuss with their partners what kind of book form would best express their ideas. Students should discuss how ideas and images can work with the shape of the book.

In their journals, have students write or sketch the ideas for their books and the book forms they will use.

3. Text and Images

Have students begin to think about the text and images for their books.

What kind of writing do they want to include in their books—a short story, poem, descriptions, or memories? What have they already written that can be used in their books?

- Have students go through their journals and quickly write again to find words and sentences they want to use. Have them circle the words or mark them with sticky notes.

What kind of images do they want to include in their book—abstractions, realistic drawings, graphic designs, or illustrations? What have they already created that can be used in their books?

- Have students look again at their artwork and either write, sketch, or mark with sticky notes examples of artwork they would like to use.

4. Choose Materials

Have students begin thinking about the art materials they will need to create their images and book forms. Have them make a list of materials in their journals.

- Will they need paper, cardboard, or found materials to create the book form?
- Will they use watercolor, crayon, collage, pencil drawings, a combination, or something else? How will the materials they use shape their images and help convey their ideas?
- How can they reuse artwork made in earlier lessons, such as decorative papers or rubbings?

Reflect

Have students respond to one of the following prompts in their journals, or use the prompts to generate a class discussion about envisioning their artists' books.

- What does reviewing your work make you realize or wonder?
- What surprises you about the work you have created?
- What questions do you have?



LESSON EXTENSIONS**Visual Arts and Writing**

- Have students add depth to one of their ideas by incorporating a vivid written description or by using artistic techniques to create the illusion of depth on a flat surface (see Lesson 5).
- Ask students to sketch the artists' books they would like to create.