

Brainstorming Artistic Ideas

By Amber DuBoise-Shepherd, Shawnee

www.amberlduboise-shepherdart.com

[Watch Amber's Spotlight Video](#)

Summary

1. Big Idea and/or Question(s): **Many artists are asked about their process, and every artist is different in the way they create their artwork. In this lesson, students will brainstorm and elaborate on ideas for an art project. Using a sketchbook or notebook, students will think about the subject & theme, style & technique, medium, time, and resources for their idea. They will take the time to critically think about their projects beforehand, and making changes before putting paint brush to paper, or hands to clay. Students should keep these questions in mind:**
 - What Is the theme of the piece? What is the art trying to convey to others? Color? A message? A feeling?
 - What style should this be created in? How big should it be? Bright and colorful? Monochromatic? Textures? Narrative? Self-portrait? Abstracted?
 - What medium would best express the idea? Would it look better 2d or 3d? Video or photograph? Paint? Watercolor? Clay? Metal?
 - How long will it take to finish this piece? Do I have a deadline?
 - Will the artwork need other resources like reference photos of figures or objects? More research on the subject matter or theme? Guidance from other artists?
2. Medium(s): **drawing paper, sketchbook, notebook, & drawing tool (pen, pencil, marker...)**
3. Grade Level: **High School 9th - 12th**
4. Time Breakdown: **Approx. 30 minutes to an hour: 5 - 10 minutes discussion, 30 - 50 minutes brainstorming, 5 - 10 minutes discussion to answer questions and wrap up.**



Materials

1. Students can use a piece of paper, a sketchbook, notebook to sketch, draw, or write their notes for their art idea. They may need a pen, pencil, marker, or other drawing tools to brainstorm.

Discussion + Activity

- a. **Introduction:** Yá'át'ééh, bozho, menwikîshekî, my name is Amber DuBoise-Shepherd and my Sac and Fox name is Mokehmehshe. I belong to three different tribes, Navajo, Sac & Fox, and Prairie Band Potawatomi. I live in Shawnee, OK my hometown. I have been an artist for a while but didn't take it seriously until high school. I have an associate of arts from Seminole State College, and a Bachelor of Fine Art from Oklahoma State University with a minor in business entrepreneurship. I enjoy working in oil paints and mixed media tools such as pen & ink, graphite, Copic Markers, colored pencils, and watercolors.
- b. **Big Idea and Essential Questions:** What does my art mean to me? What am I expressing through my art? Do I want to try a different medium? What mediums have I never used? Brainstorming, sketching & doodling, and taking notes on your idea helps you evolve those ideas. You may discover something new, or answer questions you may have had, giving you a "light bulb" moment.
- c. **How My Spotlight Project Connects:** When creating my artwork for the 2021 Momentum exhibition, I spent a month playing around with the idea for my large three pieces. I had guidance from the curators to help me navigate pieces that were different than my previous pieces. I create bright colorful pieces, but these pieces are all black and white, included text, and audio. I had to sit and sketch, call family about the Native language used, and figured out the best way to display these large pieces with the help from my framer. I had several resources to pull from to help me along with this project.
- d. **Activity for Investigation:** As an artist, or anyone in any field, you want to test and try different techniques, ideas, and mediums. Sometimes when looking back at your artwork or projects, there may be something you may want to try different in the future. Or maybe you see a someone else's project that inspires you and you would like to try it yourself. So how do you go about that? Same as the lesson state above, BRAINSTORM!
 - First brainstorm on a piece of paper or in a sketchbook about your idea.
 - Give a list of mediums you would like to use (in the project above I used pen & ink, markers, charcoal, graphite).
 - Take out a big piece of drawing paper (mixed media and heavyweight paper would be good to), this will be your testing area. If using clay or 3D material make sure you have a nice big space to work.
 - Try out mediums and just doodle, overlay the mediums, play with them and see what each one does. If using 3D materials, try different tools, bend it, shape it, and just have fun exploring.
 - Once you have finished brainstorming and you have finalized your idea, you are now ready to start your project! (If still struggling ask peers, teachers, or other artists for input.)
- e. **Wrap-Up:** Every artist is different and has a different process of brainstorming. I myself spend a lot of time in the brainstorming process, while others may not have to. Brainstorming allows you exploring an idea further, and experiment with various mediums. You are also creating a plan of action so you know what the next step will be, and how to complete a finished work of art.