

Artists in the Making

Creativity is all around us. It's in the music we hear and in the fashion we choose to wear. It's in the paintings we look at and in the plays we watch. This text set explores the theme of innovation by featuring various artists' creative processes and their impact on the world.

Essential Questions

1. What defines an artist?
2. What inspires people to create? Where do they get their ideas from?
3. What effects do artists have on their communities? What lessons can readers take away from reading about creative people?
4. How do different artists and their creative processes compare and contrast?

Introduction to the Theme

Ask students to reflect on something that they feel proud to have created. This could be anything from a picture they drew, to a story they wrote, to a dance they choreographed. Have them think about what inspired their creations. Then have them make a list of what they think inspires other people to create.

Informational Text

Below is a set of TIME for Kids articles that can be used to discuss the theme of innovators.

1. **"8 Questions for Elisabeth Anisimow"** (March 15, 2019) Twelve-year-old Elisabeth Anisimow paints live models in historic settings.
2. **"Hidden Treasures"** (January 25, 2019) Story Pirates is a theater group that performs musical comedies based on kids' ideas.
3. **"Art in Action"** (December 7, 2018) Artist Nick Cave seeks to connect people through his costume creations.
4. **"8 Questions for Amanda Gorman"** (May 4, 2018) In 2017, Amanda Gorman was named the first National Youth Poet Laureate.
5. **"Music Maker"** (May 5, 2017) At the young age of 11, Alma Deutscher composed an opera retelling of Cinderella.
6. **"Star Ballerina"** (February 5, 2016) Misty Copeland is one of the first African Americans to become a principal dancer at a leading international ballet company.

Literary Text

These fictional texts can be used to discuss the theme of innovators.

1. ***The First Rule of Punk***, by Celia C. Pérez. Twelve-year-old Malú overcomes obstacles to keep her punk band alive.
2. ***Inkling***, by Kenneth Oppel and Sydney Smith. One day, the ink from Mr. Rylance's sketches comes alive. The living ink splotch, known as Inkling, changes Mr. Rylance's life.
3. ***Finding Langston***, by Lesa Cline-Ransome. Eleven-year-old Langston finds comfort in reading poems by his namesake Langston Hughes.
4. ***Leonardo and the Flying Boy***, by Laurence Anholt. Growing up in 17th-century Italy, little Zoro has the opportunity to be an apprentice to the famous artist Leonardo da Vinci.

Optional Extensions

Ask students to think of a creative person—perhaps a famous musician or a creative relative—who has inspired them. Have students conduct research on that person and write a paragraph about that person's creative journey, including answers to questions such as: How did this person get his or her start in a creative field? What inspired this person? What challenges did he or she encounter along the way? How did this person's art make a difference, either personally or in the world?

Once students have studied the creative person who has inspired them, encourage them to choose a medium that conveys a visual of that creative person. The lesson can culminate with students displaying their work and doing a gallery walk to learn about the people who have inspired their classmates. Optionally, you may choose to have students create a living wax museum exhibit featuring their inspiring and creative people.

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