

# BEFORE YOUR ARTIST'S VISIT

## ACTIVITY ONE: FOLK ART DISCUSSION & SLIDESHOW

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**Learning Goal:** Students will be able to understand different mediums of art, as well as artists' reasons for creating art.

**Materials:** PowerPoint or image file presentation of different folk artists work and a means for the class to view it.

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1. Discuss why people create art
  - A. For fun
  - B. To remember someone or something
  - C. Religious reasons
  - D. To help them communicate
  - E. To help them deal with difficult emotions or situations
  
2. What is folk art?
  - A. Folk art is art created by common folks—ordinary people.
  - B. Most folk artists did not go to school to learn about art. They usually learn their skills from someone in their family or community, or they use their own imagination to teach themselves how to create art.
  - C. Folk art can be traditional (made long ago or like things that were made long ago), or contemporary (being made today or about things that are happening currently).
  - D. Though there are many different kinds of folk art, they all have a lot in common. Themes include utility, community, individuality, and symbolism.
  - E. You may hear folk art called different things: self taught, outsider, naïve, and primitive art are all other names for what many people call folk art.
  
3. Explain the difference between folk artists and fine artists
  - A. Folk artists are self-taught or have minimal instruction
  - B. Fine artists learn to create through formal instruction
  
3. View the slideshow of the Artists in the Schools for this year. Compare and contrast as you go.
  - A. Allow for the students' interests and observations to guide the discussion. Ask open-ended questions to provoke responses and sharing.
  - B. Encourage the students to use their own words to describe what it is they see in the artworks and where they see it, rather than just having them use their fingers to point.
  - C. Share the background information on these objects as it pertains to the discussion and at a level appropriate for your students.
  - D. Example questions:
    - 1) What is happening in this picture?
    - 2) What other title might you give this work?
    - 3) What is this object made of?
    - 4) How is reusing objects to make art good?
    - 5) Why do you think the artist created this?
    - 6) How does the artwork make you feel?

# BEFORE YOUR ARTIST'S VISIT

## ACTIVITY TWO: ART FROM FOUND OBJECTS

**Learning Goal:** Students will be able to understand that art can be made from a variety of materials and mediums and express themselves through their choice of "Inspiration Items."

Outsider artists are just like you! They haven't gone to school to study art, and they usually create their art by using found objects, or everyday things that they find all around them! To get ready for your visit from a Kentucky Festival Artist, you will be creating your own art works using found objects!

The objects you use can be recyclable materials like egg cartons and pieces of plastic, natural materials like leaves and sticks from your backyard, or even things from your house like toys or pictures. If you're using anything that used to have food in it be sure to rinse it out, and if you're using anything from your house be sure to ask your parents before you take it!

Once you have gathered your items, think about how you might want to use them. Will you make a collage, a sculpture, a drawing, or use them to decorate an existing object? Once you have an idea, start creating! To complete your artwork, you might also want to use glue, tape, paint, markers, or colored pencils!



Bottle Caps



Rocks



Feathers



Leaves



Yarn

### OTHER POSSIBLE MATERIALS

- Cardboard
- Poster Board
- Shoe Boxes
- Glue
- Tape
- Markers
- Colored Pencils
- Clay
- Picture Frames
- Paper Plates
- Plastic Containers



Magazine Pages

# BEFORE YOUR ARTIST'S VISIT

## ACTIVITY THREE: WRITING FROM ART

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**Learning Goal:** Students will learn to write a haiku about a specified topic, which they have researched.

**Materials:** Internet access (either as a group or individually), paper, pencils.

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### WRITING FROM ART

Writing is a common inspiration for many visual artists, but there are just as many writers who are inspired by visual artwork! As you learn more about folk art, you'll probably notice that many of the art works are either inspired by writing, particularly the Bible, or have writing as part of the piece itself.

Research the art of your school's artists and select at least one piece of art that makes you feel something. The piece can make you happy, sad, or angry; it can make you laugh, it can make you think of something in your past, or it can remind you of a family member or friend. Once you've chosen your piece, write a haiku inspired by the artwork.

A haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry that consists of 3 lines. The first and last lines of a haiku have 5 syllables and the middle line has 7 syllables. The lines rarely rhyme, but they can if you'd like.

**Name of the artwork I chose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Artist's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials used in the artwork:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**My Haiku:**

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THE 54<sup>TH</sup> KENTUCK  
FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS  
OCTOBER 11-12, 2025

# AFTER YOUR ARTIST'S VISIT

## ACTIVITY FOUR: AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN ART

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**Learning Goal:** Students will learn what an autobiography is and create their own through a work of art.

**Materials:** paper, pencil, colored pencils, markers, crayons, photo of Howard Finster's Coke bottle (included), and example of autobiographical art (included)

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Most of the Artists in the Schools create their work using everyday items they find all around them, including boxes, driftwood, fabric scraps, recyclable items, and bits of plastic. Many artists use a text in combination with drawings to make their own autobiography—the story of their lives.

Look at the photo of the work of self-taught artist Reverend Howard Finster as an example. For this challenge, you will be creating your own autobiography. (Look at the example.) Divide your paper into at least six sections; these can be in any shape or configurations you'd like. Each section will represent a different part of your life or personality, or something that's really important to you. Finster's work often used repeated lines, simple images, and often split a word between two lines without using a hyphen, to fill the surface he was working on. After you've decided which ideas you want to express through your autobiography, begin filling in those spaces with words and pictures. You can choose to leave your work in black and white, or you can go back and add color using markers or colored pencils.

Once you have finished creating your autobiography, write a paragraph on notebook paper describing your autobiography. What does each section mean? Who is included? Why did you make the choices you did?

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# AFTER YOUR ARTIST'S VISIT

## ACTIVITY FIVE: WRITING A THANK YOU NOTE

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**Learning Goal:** Students will recall events and thank their guest in writing.

**Materials:** Thank you cards and envelopes, pencils, stamps, address of visiting artists (provided by Kentuck)

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When people do something nice for you, it is important to thank them. Each time you thank someone, you are showing that you have good manners and that you appreciate what they have done. One great way of saying thank you is to write a letter.

Now that you've met the artist, seen his or her artwork in person, and created your own artwork, you know how much energy goes into creating art. Write a thank you note to the artist who visited your class to let them know how much you enjoyed it.

Use the questions and prompts below to help you write a thank you note to your artist.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

*What did your visiting artist do? Thank him or her sincerely. How did you feel when he or she did something nice for you?*

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*Did something good happen to you because of what you learned with the artist? Tell him or her any good news you might have. Is there anything else you would like to share with this person?*

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*Once more, thank the artist for his or her kindness and generosity. Tell him or her how much you appreciate having someone like him or her in your life and that you look forward to seeing him or her again.*

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Closing \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_