

# CREATIVE FACES

Donna Cariola

Albert Einstein once said, “Creativity is intelligence having fun.” As a long-time art educator, this quote stands as a mantra to me. I often try to implement things into my art program that encourage students to take creative risks, problem solve, and think outside of the box. I want them to feel free to do the unusual or unexpected without judgment. This activity encourages spontaneity, originality, and is a great one-day lesson that you can use at any time. It could also be a great icebreaker for the beginning of the semester, and it can be adapted across most grade levels.

## The Challenge

Students enter the room and see nothing on the table but black and white paper (or you can use any color). I tell them that, today, they’re going to cre-

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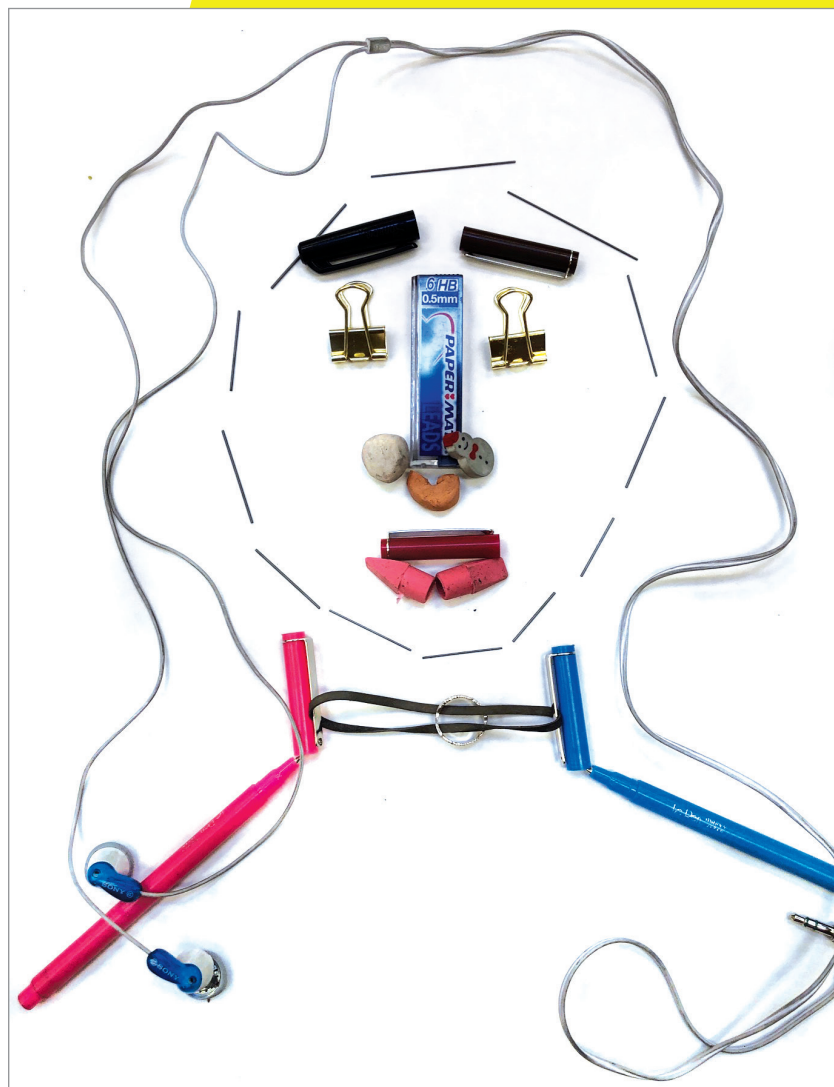
ate a face. However, they aren’t going to draw the face; instead, they’re going to assemble a face using whatever they’ve brought to class with them. I ask, “If you have not brought anything today, think for a moment. Can you use something you have on you? Think about what you are wearing, what is in your hair, pockets, etc.”

## Arranging Faces

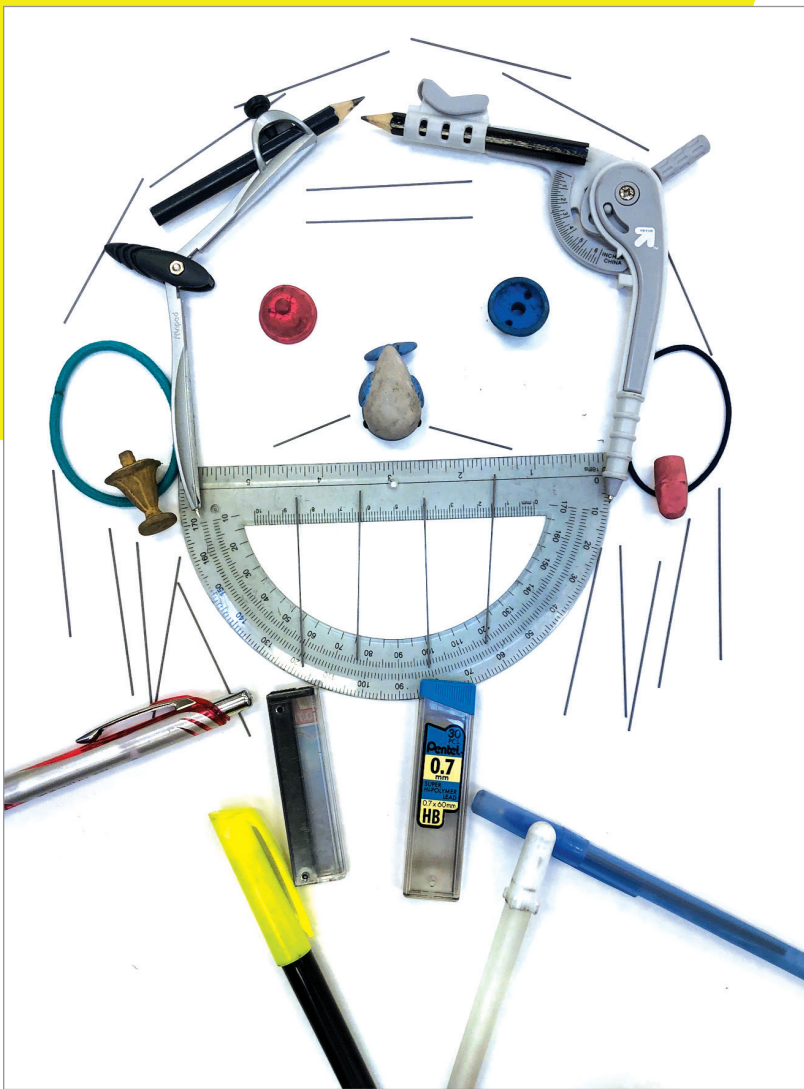
If students feel they need more items to work with, I give them a few minutes to go around the room and gather more materials. I give them about twenty-five minutes to arrange their faces. Some students will ask ques-

tions. If they do, I just remind them of what I originally asked them to do and say, “If I didn’t say you couldn’t do something, assume that you can!” I don’t want them to have specific rules as to what they can or can’t do. As students are working, I walk around and notice the brainstorming, the laughter, the struggles, and the successes.

There might be some students who finish in just a few minutes and others who struggle to come up with ideas. I gently remind them to try to use the entire time allotted, and to think about details in faces and how ideas can be stretched. I don’t give ideas out, though—this is the time for them to solve their own problems.



Emma C., grade eight.



Regan S., grade eight.

Some students may just need to sit and think for a bit, or they may look over at another classmate at work and that could spark them to continue on.

### Making Observations

When the time is up, students get up and walk around to look at their peers' creations. I encourage them to

stand above the arranged composition and look directly down to get the full effect. I love how students get so excited when they see a great idea in use and they compliment each other. At this time, I go around and take a photo of each face. I remind students that not all art is permanent, but we can preserve it in a photograph.

### Time for Responding

Next, we have a class discussion about the end results. I ask questions to prompt some additional thoughts about what they did. Some of the things I ask include, "Did anyone make a face that was *not* human, like an animal, robot, or alien?" This gets them thinking, "Oh...she didn't say we had to make a human face!"

I also ask, "Did anyone build up and sculpt?" "Who used an object in a very unusual way?" "Did anyone create a specific type of character?" "Who put thought into creating a face with a specific expression?" "Did anyone include a neck, or shoulders?"

### Taking Risks

I had one student in our last group who included an entire body. She broke the rules in a creative way and produced a unique and intriguing image! By having these reflective questions and discussions, students can assess themselves and see if they really stretched their creativity or think about what may be holding them back. We talk about how their fear of being "wrong," "silly," or "ridiculous" may have hindered their ability to fully let go and take a creative risk. This lesson is always one of my students' favorites and mine! Try it and it will surely be one of yours as well. ☺

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### NATIONAL STANDARD

*Creating: Generate and conceptualize artist ideas and work.*

### RESOURCE

Timberlane Art Twitter: [twitter.com/timberlane\\_art?lang=en](https://twitter.com/timberlane_art?lang=en)