

Now-and-Then Portraits

Lesson Plan

A resource developed through the *Longfellow and the Forging of American Identity* program

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Suggested Grade Level: High school (easily adaptable for grades 3-8)

Subject Area: Art

Maine Learning Results targeted:

Visual and Performing Arts, secondary level:

Creative Expression: A1, A3, A8

Cultural Heritage: B2

Criticism and Aesthetics: C1

Time Required: 2-3 days

Materials and Resources Required:

- Pencils, roller ball pens, felt markers, colored pencils, charcoal, pastels, brush and ink, crayons, or other durable drawing medium
- Sturdy ground: 9 x 12 inch size paper, such as 90 lb white bond, inexpensive 190 lb watercolor paper, poster board, or light-colored heavy stationery stock

Preparation Required/Preliminary Discussion:

Students would benefit from previous lessons on proportions and feature placement and practice drawing portraits.

Students will *examine* and *discuss* examples of Longfellow's portraits from the Maine Memory Network slide show entitled "Celebrity's Picture: Using Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Portraits to Observe Historic Changes," selected from different time periods.

Recommended: Slide 2 (MMN 12227)
Slide 5 (MMN 15906)
Slide 16 (MMN 15913)
Slide 19 (MMN 15896)
Slide 21 (MMN 16445)
Slide 22 (MMN 15904)
Slide 24 (MMN 16395)
Slide 26 (MMN 15483)
Slide 30 (MMN 16469)
Slide 33 (MMN 15894)

Note stylistic differences, especially between family and professional artists, and attend to conventions of poses, such as bust view, full figure, turned left or right, profile.

Variations on two themes introduced on the title page might suggest to the teachers some directions to take and other questions to ask:

1. Observe changes in cultural mores through nineteenth century portraiture. Compare the family's interpretations of the sitter (Longfellow) with interpretations drawn by professional artists.
2. Examine the famous man's aging process and biography through his changing appearance. Can we read the events of his life in his face?

Instructions:

Each student will *produce a pair of self-portraits* in either color or black and white. One drawing will be from *observation* in a mirror, any pose (i.e. anything from full figure to head and shoulders), any style, attempting accurate proportions, features placement, shading for depth, and likeness. Working with that drawing, the student will draw an imaginative projection, a *prediction*, of what he or she will look like in forty years (no dead bodies allowed!), still attempting accurate proportions, features placement, shading for depth, and likeness.

Display "Then" portraits first and ask students to figure out who's who. Display "Now" portraits to *critique* style, effort, expectations, satisfactions, frustrations.

Variation: Students will work in pairs to *draw each other* from observation rather than draw self-portraits for the "Now" image. Each will *trade* pictures then work from someone else's interpretation to draw himself/herself for an imagined "Then" self-portrait.

Assessment summary:

- Imaginative, expressive compositions
- Project Requirements met, as outlined
- Careful craftsmanship, neat presentation of final product
- Increasing mastery of techniques
- Cooperative group interaction