



**Lesson Name:** Names, Identity, and Visual Expression

**Curriculum Connections:** ELA, Social-Emotional Learning, Social Studies, Visual Arts

Students will explore graffiti as one of the foundational elements of hip-hop culture by creating a graffiti-style version of their name or nickname. The lesson introduces the difference between street art and vandalism while examining how artists use color, symbols, lettering, and design to communicate identity and messages visually.

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### Essential Questions

- How do artists communicate identity visually?
  - What is the difference between street art and vandalism?
  - How is graffiti connected to hip-hop culture?
  - How can art positively impact communities?
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### Grades 3–5 Focus

- Color and shape
- Creative self-expression
- Basic lettering styles
- Understanding community rules

### *Additional Support for Younger Learners*

- Letter templates
- Tracing options
- Pre-drawn bubble letters
- Guided color choices

### Grades 6–8 Focus

- Symbolism and visual identity
- Typography and design
- Social meaning of public art
- Art and community dialogue

### *Deeper Learning for Older Students*

- Study famous muralists
  - Research public art movements
  - Add social messages to artwork
  - Create digital graffiti designs
  - Compare graffiti styles across cities/countries
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## Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Understand graffiti as an element of hip-hop culture.
2. Identify differences between street art and vandalism.
3. Explore how artists express identity through visual design.
4. Create a graffiti-style name artwork using color, symbols, and lettering.
5. Reflect on how art communicates ideas and emotions.

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## Materials

- Drawing paper
- Pencils/erasers
- Markers or colored pencils
- Rulers
- Example graffiti alphabets
  - <https://www.bombingscience.com/graffiti-letters-61-graffiti-artists-share-their-styles/>
- Projector/slideshow of graffiti and mural examples
  - <https://blog.artsper.com/en/a-closer-look/art-movements-en/graffiti-styles/>
- Reflection worksheet

Optional:

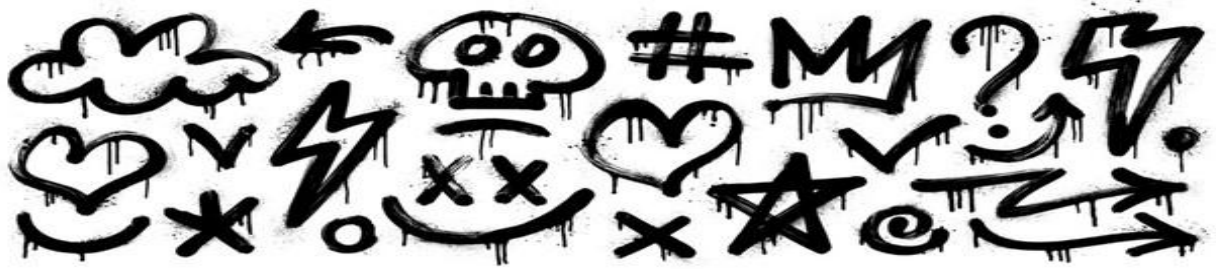
- Digital drawing apps
- Stencils
- Spray paint simulation tools online

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## Vocabulary

Word	Definition
Graffiti	Stylized writing or artwork in public spaces
Street Art	Public artwork created to communicate ideas or beautify spaces
Vandalism	Damaging or marking property without permission
Tag	A graffiti artist's signature style
Typography	Artistic lettering and text design
Mural	Large artwork painted on a wall

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## ACTIVITY OUTLINE

### Introduction to Graffiti & Hip-Hop

Display examples of:

- murals
- graffiti lettering
- community street art
- public art projects

Discuss:

- What do you notice?
- How do colors and letters communicate feelings?
- What messages do artists share?

Explain:

Graffiti is one of the original elements connected to hip-hop culture and developed as a way for artists to express identity, creativity, and visibility in urban communities.

### Street Art vs. Vandalism

Street Art	Vandalism
Usually created with permission	Done without permission
Can beautify communities	May damage property
Shares messages/art	May disrespect spaces
Often collaborative	Often unwanted

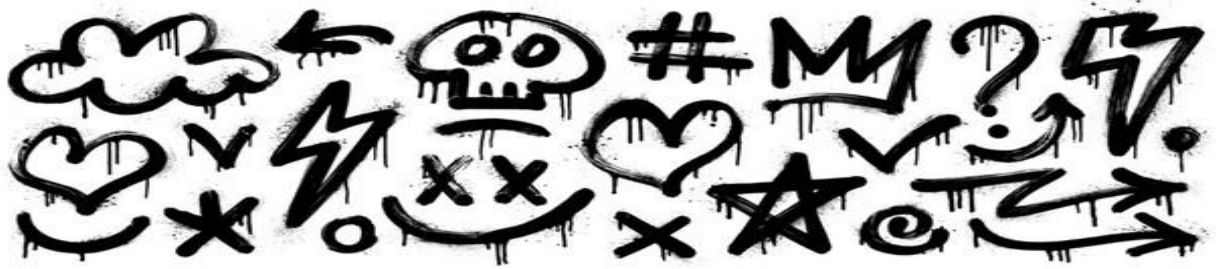
Artists can express themselves creatively while still respecting communities and property.

Influential graffiti and street artists:

- Banksy
- Keith Haring
- Jean-Michel Basquiat
- Lady Pink

Ask:

- Why do people want to leave their mark?
- How can art make communities stronger?
- When does public art become harmful?



## Sketch Warm-Up

Teach graffiti art features:

- outlines
- fill colors
- shadows
- symbols
- arrows
- patterns
- 3D effects

Students practice:

- bubble letters
- block letters
- outlines
- shadows

Discuss how artists use:

- colors to show emotion
  - See Color Psychology Chart on pg. 6
- symbols/tags to represent identity
  - <https://graffitifun.com/graffiti-as-a-form-of-visual-identity/>
- lettering styles to create mood

## Artwork & Reflection

Students begin final artwork:

- Create graffiti-style name/tag
- Add meaningful symbols/colors
- Include outline, color, details, shading, a background or border

Students respond:

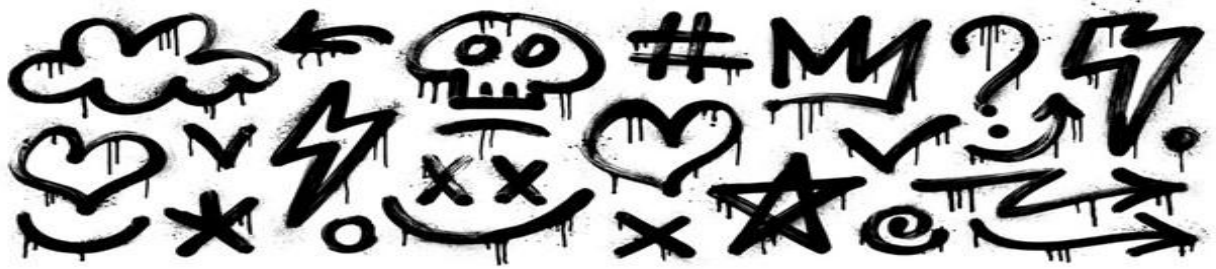
- What does your artwork say about you?
- What symbols or colors did you choose and why?
- What is the difference between art and vandalism?

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## Reflection Discussion

Ask:

- How does art tell stories?
- What makes visual art powerful?



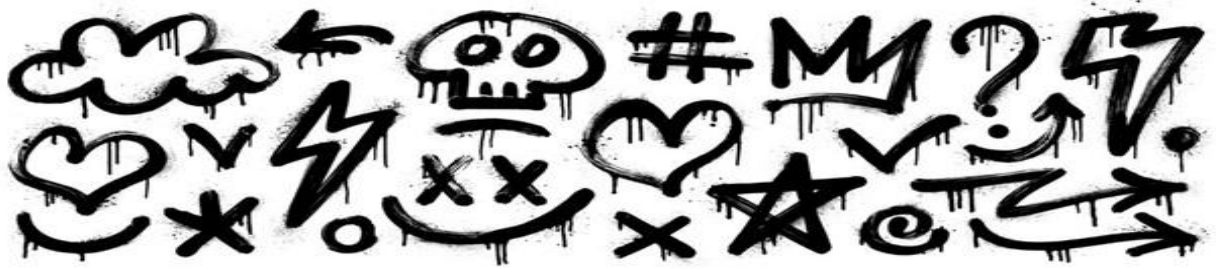
- How did students show identity differently?
  - Why is permission important in public art?
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### Supplementary Classroom Activities

- **Community Mural Project:** create a collaborative class mural on paper.
  - **Gallery Walk:** display artwork around the room.
  - **Graffiti Alphabet Book:** students design one stylized letter each.
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### Teacher Notes

- Emphasize legal, respectful artistic expression.
- Avoid glamorizing illegal vandalism.
- Focus on graffiti as visual communication and cultural history.
- Encourage positive self-expression and identity exploration.
- Use age-appropriate examples of murals and public art.



## A LITTLE SPOT and COLOR PSYCHOLOGY

CONNECTING COLOR AND EMOTIONS

