

Elisabet Ney Museum Curriculum

Topic: Elisabet Ney's Life and Legacy



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Introduction

Welcome to the Elisabet Ney Museum's interactive curriculum, designed specifically for 3rd-4th grade classrooms. Through these lesson plan, students will explore the life and legacy of Elisabet Ney, a prominent German-American sculptor who worked during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This guide will incorporate Texas history, science, art and mathematics through an engaging, curriculum-aligned lesson plan and hands-on activities. Following this introduction, you will find a curriculum outline, a sample lesson plan with detailed instructions and additional materials including student activity worksheets.

Through this lesson, students will learn more about Elisabet Ney's background and explore the skills that she used as a sculptor. In **Elisabet Ney's Journey** and the **Elisabet Ney Journaling Activity**, students will read about Elisabet Ney's life and incorporate language arts and geography by writing a journal entry from her perspective and creating a map to trace her immigration to the United States. The **Vitruvian Man Exploration** will introduce students to Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man and his study of proportions. Next, students will learn more about human anatomy, and its significance to artists, through the **Skeleton Worksheet**. Finally, in the **Self-Portrait Activity**, students will think creatively and create their own "self-portrait" using a variety of materials.

For Student Museum Tours:

The Elisabet Ney Museum is open to the public Wednesday-Sunday, noon to 5:00 pm. Class visits may be scheduled earlier in the day as well. For more information on our field trip program, or to set up a class trip, please call 512-974-1628.

Curriculum Outline

Theme: Elisabet Ney's Life and Legacy

Grade Level: 4th grade

Guiding Questions

- How did events in Ney's life influence the type of sculptures she created?
- What struggles did Ney face as a female artist in the 19th century, and how did she overcome them?
- What is it like to imagine yourself as an artist like Elisabet Ney?
- Why is it important for artists like Elisabet Ney to study math and science?

Social Studies/History Connections

Students will read a short passage about Ney's connection to Texas history and her emigration from Europe and mark significant countries/states on the provided worksheet.

TEKS: 7B; 8A

English Language Arts and Reading Connections

Have students use biographical information about Elisabet Ney to write a journal entry from her perspective.

TEKS: 16A; 21B; 21C

Math Connections

Explore measurements and proportions of the human body used by sculptors and artists based on da Vinci's Vitruvian Man and other models.

TEKS: 1A; 8A

Science Connections

Learn about the skeletal and muscular structures that Ney would have had to understand as an artist.

Art Connections

Students will create an interpretive (can be abstract or figural) self-portrait from various materials using inspiration from Elisabet Ney.

TEKS: 2A; 2B; 2C; 3A

Field Trip Ideas

Visit [Elisabet Ney Museum](#), [Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](#) or [Blanton Museum of Art](#)

Career Connections

[Art educator](#), [biologist](#), [geologist](#), [doctor](#), [activist](#)

Technology

Students can create a PowerPoint presentation illustrating the timeline of Ney's life after completing the journal activity.

Vocabulary

Vitruvian Man

Skull

Femur

Pelvis

Metatarsals

Fibula

Tibia

Humerus

Immigration

Emigration

Abstract

Evaluation and Assessment

Students will be able to discuss Elisabet Ney's perspective and values after creating journals written from her perspective.

Students will gain knowledge of the math and calculations involved in creating sculptures and other works of art by using da Vinci's Vitruvian Man to discuss proportions.

Students will complete a diagram illustrating Ney's knowledge of human anatomy using the provided worksheet.

Students will create a self-portrait using basic art and design principles.

Sample Lesson Plan

Student Outcomes

Students will describe and appreciate Elisabet Ney's life, work, and struggles.

Objectives

Students will summarize Ney's connection to Texas and European history using a map.

Students will create journal entries reflecting Ney's perspective.

Students will explore math computations and measurements used by sculptors.

Students will label and define skeletal structures that a sculptor would need to know.

Students will design their own "self-portrait" taking inspiration from Elisabet Ney and other artists.

Introduction Activity/Guiding Questions

- How did events in Ney's life influence her artwork?
- What struggles did Ney face as a female artist in the 19th century, and how did she overcome them?
- What is it like to imagine yourself in someone else's shoes?
- Why is it important for artists like Elisabet Ney to study math and science?

Vocabulary Words

Vitruvian Man

Skull

Femur

Pelvis

Metatarsals

Fibula

Tibia

Humerus

Immigration

Emigration

Abstract

Procedures

Elisabet Ney's Journey: Students will either listen to or read a short account of Elisabet Ney's life and her journey from Europe to America. After listening/reading, they should identify locations on a map where she lived and traveled to. Students can draw pictures to accompany these labels describing the climate, vegetation and culture of each location.

Journal Activity: Students will use their newfound knowledge of Elisabet Ney's life to create a journal entry from her perspective. They should include dates and facts from her life as evidence. The instructor may provide students with a brief reading passage about Elisabet Ney and a timeline of her life if desired. Students should try to write from her unique voice.

Vitruvian Man Exploration: Provide students with Vitruvian Man handout. Offer a brief background on da Vinci and the Vitruvian Man and discuss why bodily proportions might be important to sculptors and other artists. Have students use rulers to measure da Vinci's Vitruvian Man and complete the provided chart. Next, have students measure their own arms and legs. Students may then complete the chart and see how their measurements compare to the Vitruvian Man's. For a more advanced mathematics activity, calculate the scale of the Vitruvian Man in comparison with students' measurements.

Skeleton Worksheet: In order to create realistic paintings and sculptures, artists must have a strong understanding of the human body. Introduce this idea to

students and have them complete a worksheet illustrating the skeletal structure that Ney would have had to understand as an artist.

Interpretive Self-Portrait Activity: Introduce this activity by showing students an image of Elisabet Ney's self-portrait along with an image of Elisabet Ney. Present other images of famous artists and their self-portraits through the provided PowerPoint. Ask students whether or not they think the artists' self-portraits look like their photographs/images and discuss why this might be and what the artists are trying to convey about themselves. Following this, students will construct their own self-portrait, taking inspiration from Elisabet Ney and other artists. Students may create realistic or more abstract self-portraits and may use colors, shapes and images to represent themselves. Suggested materials include construction paper, pipe cleaners, string, markers, paint, etc.

Technology Needed

Microsoft PowerPoint

Evaluation

Students will be able to discuss Elisabet Ney's perspective and values after creating journals written from her point of view.

Students will have a greater understanding of the math computations involved in art making and sculpture through the use of da Vinci's Vitruvian Man to understand proportions.

Students will complete a diagram illustrating Ney's knowledge of human anatomy using the provided worksheet.

Students will create a self-portrait using basic art and design principles.

Elisabet Ney's Journey

Social Studies Activity Guide

TEKS: 7B; 8A

In this activity, students will learn more about Elisabet Ney, a German-American sculptor who worked in Texas during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Students will begin by either reading or listening to a short account of Elisabet Ney's life and her journey from Europe to America. After completing the passage, students should identify significant locations on the provided map. Some of these locations might include Münster, Munich, Berlin, Germany, Georgia, Texas, and Austin. Have students provide their best estimate of relevant cities, states and countries. After marking these places on their maps, students may draw pictures to accompany the labels and provide additional information about each location. Pictures might describe the climate, vegetation and culture of the location or describe events from Elisabet Ney's life.

Students may also use the attached timeline or the following resources to find additional information about Elisabet Ney's life.

- *Elisabet Ney: Sculptor of American Heroes*, Marjorie Von Rosenberg, pages 16-25
- Elisabet Ney Museum Biography: <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/elisabet-ney-biography>
- Women in Texas History Biography: <https://www.womenintexashistory.org/biographies/elisabet-ney/>
- Texas State Historical Association Biography: <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fne26>

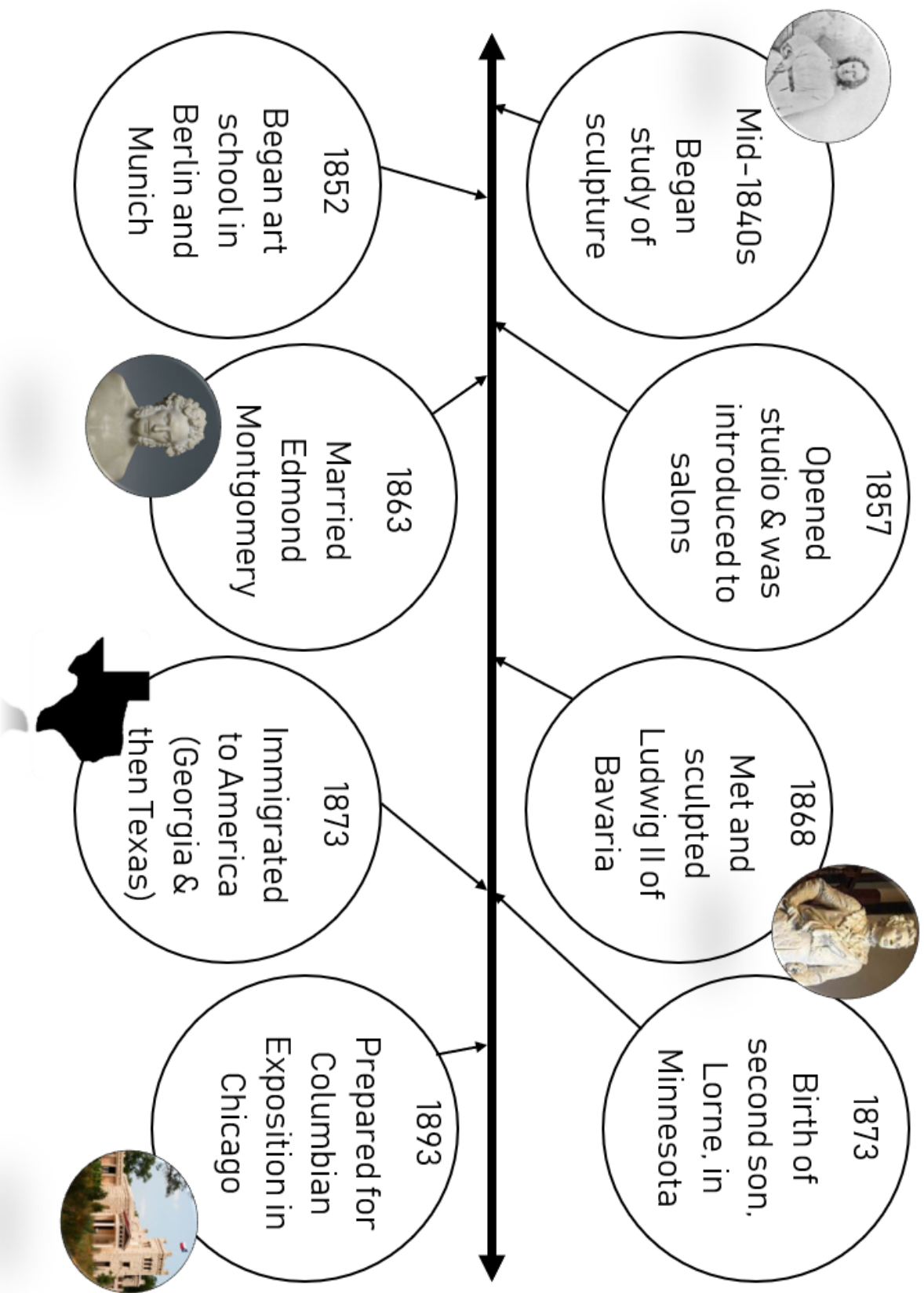
Elisabet Ney's Life and Legacy

Elisabet Ney was a prominent sculptor during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Born in Münster, Westphalia (modern-day Germany) in 1833, Ney was the first woman to study sculpture at the prestigious Munich Academy. She later attended the Academy in Berlin, where she continued her study under the instruction of Christian Rausch, an influential sculptor. Ney was well known for sculpting “the famous men of the world,” both during her time in Europe and later, after immigrating to Texas. Ney’s works include sculptures and busts of many historical figures including Arthur Schopenhauer, Giuseppe Garibaldi, King Ludwig II, Stephen F. Austin, Sam Houston and William Jennings Bryan.

As a young woman, Ney found it difficult to establish herself in a field dominated by men. Her parents were initially unwilling to allow her to attend art school and she had to apply multiple times before she was accepted. However, Elisabet Ney excelled and following her training she was granted sittings with notable political and social figures. The process of sculpting is very intimate, and Ney often developed personal relationships with her patrons. Her friendships with men including Giuseppe Garibaldi and King Ludwig II impacted her own beliefs and ideas. However, in 1871, events unfolded that forced Elisabet Ney and her husband, Edmond Montgomery, out of Europe. War was underway and King Ludwig II suspected that Ney had been involved in a plot to force him into the war. Ney’s discovery that she was with child and her husband’s failing health also prompted their decision to leave Europe and immigrate to the United States. They first settled in an artists’ colony in Georgia, but eventually moved to Texas.

After fleeing Europe, Ney did not resume her career as an artist for almost twenty years. However, in 1892 Elisabet Ney designed a studio to be built in Austin as she undertook the task of creating portraits of Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston. The marble versions of these pieces reside in the Texas State Capitol today. Ney would also complete many other sculptures in Austin including the busts of several Texas governors and one of her last works, Lady Macbeth. Ney remained in Austin until her death in 1907. Elisabet Ney’s studio is considered the first art museum in Texas and now houses most of her work.

Timeline of Elisabet Ney's Life (1833-1907)



Name: _____

Elisabet Ney's Journey Map Activity

What country was Elisabet Ney born in? Draw a star there.



What state did Elisabet Ney first immigrate to? Mark a point and draw a dotted line from the country where she was born to the state that she first moved to.

Which state did Elisabet Ney eventually move to? Mark a star here and connect the dots once again to show Elisabet Ney's journey.



Elisabet Ney Journaling Activity

English Language Art and Reading Activity Guide

TEKS: 16A; 21B; 21C

Use the materials provided in the activity for **Elisabet Ney's Journey** and continue a class discussion on the intriguing sculptor and her legacy. Students will use their newfound knowledge of Elisabet Ney's life to create a journal entry from her perspective. They might include dates and places mentioned in her biography to create the setting. Students should try to write from Ney's perspective, conveying her emotions. They should try to think creatively and imagine how they would feel in Ney's situation! Journal entries should be 1-2 paragraphs in length. Following the activity, students may also publish these entries in chronological order as a blog or combine them into a "journal"/booklet for the class to read.

Have students consider the following guiding questions as they write their journal entries:

- How did events in Elisabet Ney's life influence her art?
- What struggles did she face as a female artist, and how did she overcome them?
- What was it like to imagine yourself in her shoes?
- How do you think Elisabet Ney felt like as she was moving to the United States?
- Have you ever experienced movies cities/states/countries? What was that like?

Vitruvian Man Exploration

Math Activity Guide

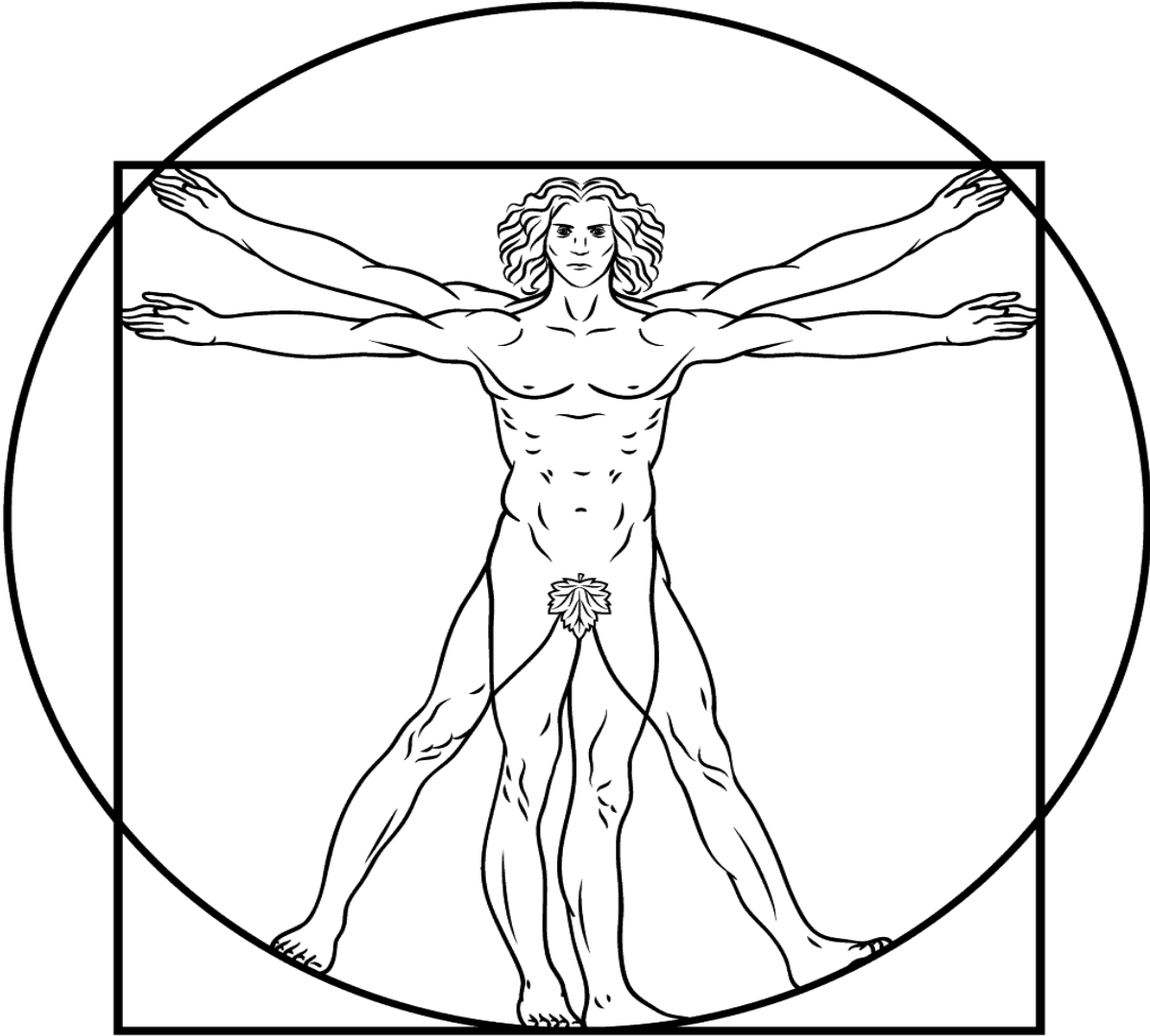
TEKS: 1A; 8A

The Vitruvian Man Exploration will allow students to learn more about artistic principles and proportions. Introduce the activity by providing brief background information about Leonardo da Vinci and his Vitruvian Man. Da Vinci was as much a scientist as an artist and he created many sketches of advanced inventions and scientific reasoning. For fun facts about Leonardo da Vinci, visit the following website:

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/scientists/leonardodavinci.html>.

Engage in a class discussion about why math and bodily proportions might be important to sculptors and other artists. Distribute handouts of the Vitruvian Man along with rulers. Allow students to measure da Vinci's Vitruvian Man. Students should measure the arms and legs of both figures, and complete the provided chart with the measurements. Next, have students measure their own arms and legs using a tape measure or lengths of string and a ruler. Students should then complete the chart and see how their measurements compare to the Vitruvian Man's. For a more advanced activity, you may have students calculate the scale of their own legs/arms to that of the Vitruvian Man.

Vitruvian Man Exercise



paint the world
SUPER
COLORING

Name:

Date:

Vitruvian Man Worksheet

	Vitruvian Man (Legs Together)	Vitruvian Man (Legs Apart)	Me
Left Arm Length (cm)			
Right Arm Length (cm)			
Left Leg Length (cm)			
Right Leg Length (cm)			

Skeleton Worksheet

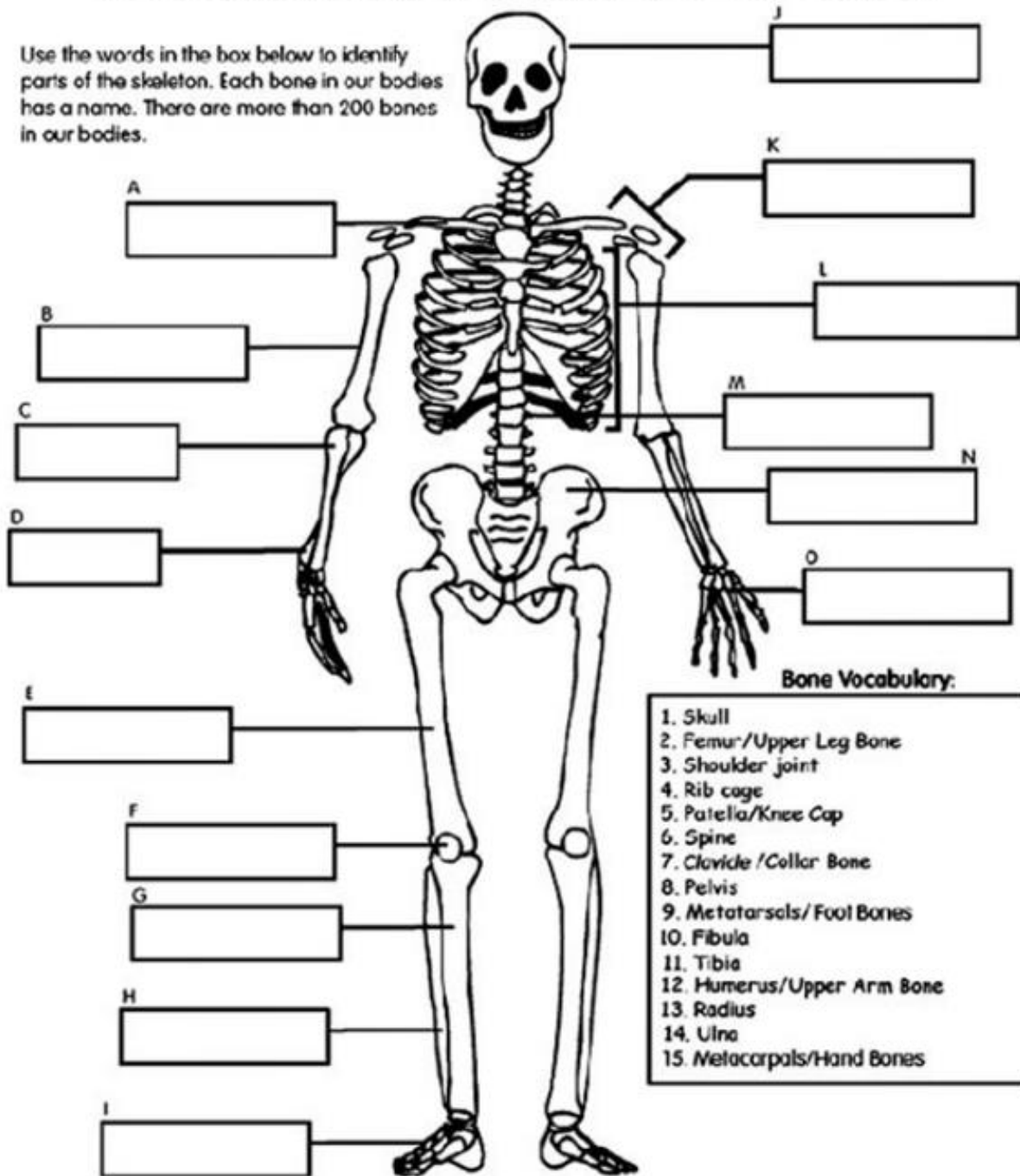
Science Activity Guide

Knowledge of human anatomy is incredibly important for artists (and particularly sculptors!). In order to create lifelike sculptures, artists usually undergo training in anatomy. In this activity, students will learn more about the human body, much like Elisabet Ney would have. Students should complete the following worksheet using the provided word bank.

Name: _____

HUMAN SKELETON

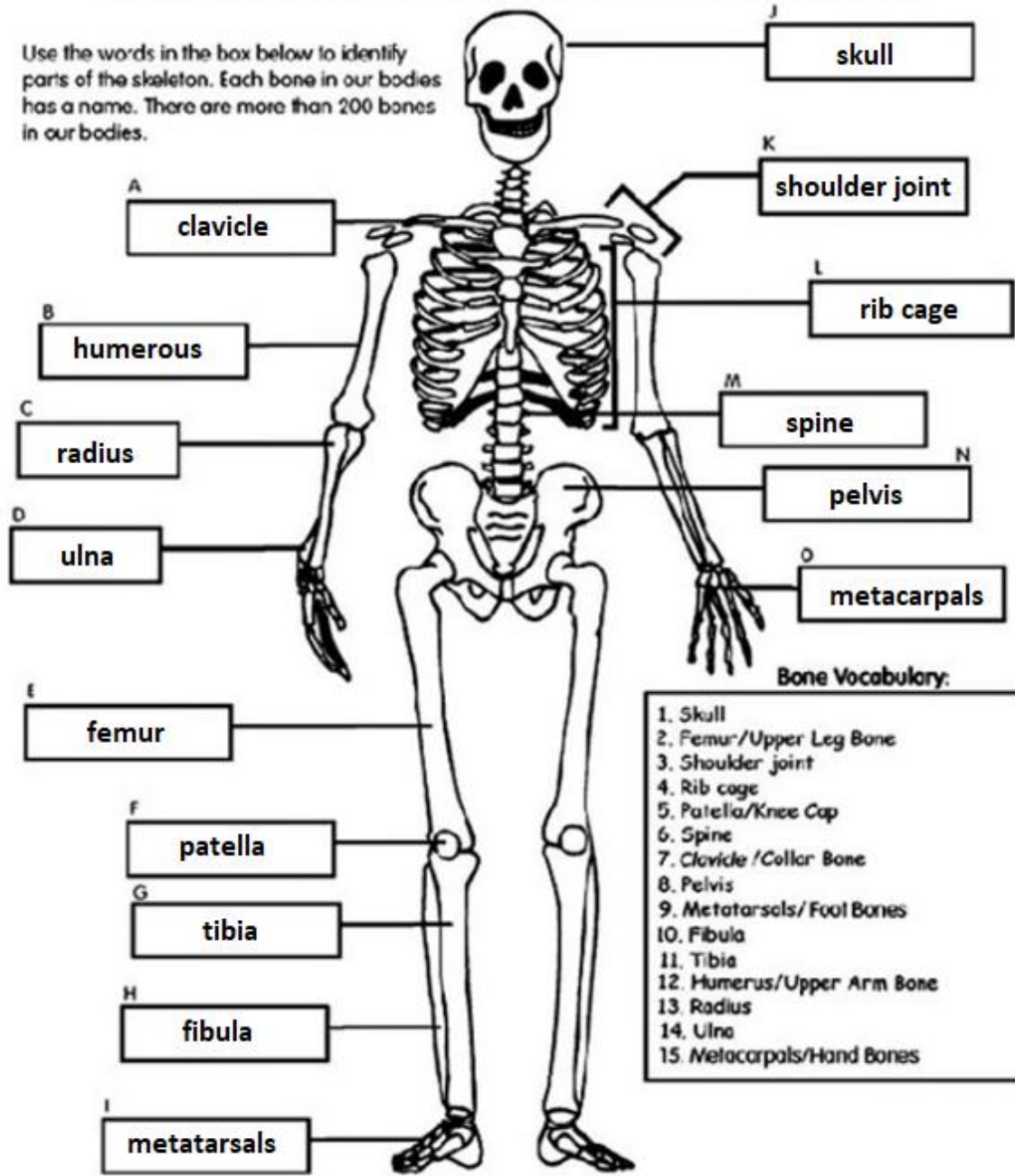
Use the words in the box below to identify parts of the skeleton. Each bone in our bodies has a name. There are more than 200 bones in our bodies.



Skeleton Worksheet: Key

HUMAN SKELETON

Use the words in the box below to identify parts of the skeleton. Each bone in our bodies has a name. There are more than 200 bones in our bodies.



Bone Vocabulary:

1. Skull
2. Femur/Upper Leg Bone
3. Shoulder joint
4. Rib cage
5. Patella/Knee Cap
6. Spine
7. Clavicle /Collar Bone
8. Pelvis
9. Metatarsals/ Foot Bones
10. Fibula
11. Tibia
12. Humerus/Upper Arm Bone
13. Radius
14. Ulna
15. Metacarpals/Hand Bones

Self-Portrait Activity

Art Activity Guide

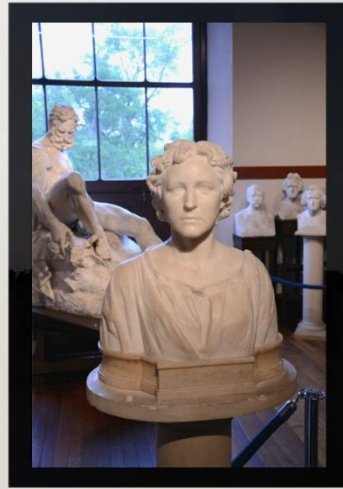
TEKS: 2A; 2B; 2C; 3A

This activity will allow students to create an expressive self-portrait using basic principles of art and design. Introduce this activity by showing students an image of Elisabet Ney's self-portrait along with an image of Elisabet Ney. Use the provided PowerPoint to present other images (realistic paintings, photographs, etc.) of famous artists and their self-portraits. As a class, discuss each of the works. Ask students whether or not they think the artists' self-portraits look like their photographs/images and discuss why this might be and what the artists are trying to convey about themselves.

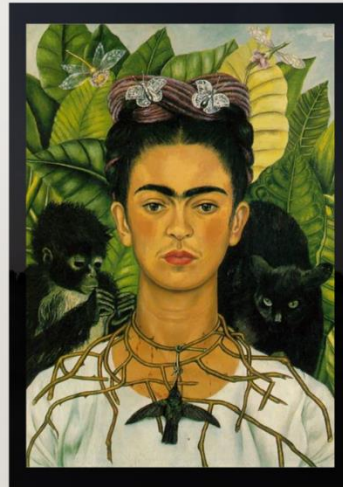
Following this, students will get to create their own self-portrait, taking inspiration from Elisabet Ney and other artists. Students may create realistic or more abstract self-portraits and should use colors, shapes and images to represent themselves. Suggested materials include construction paper, pipe cleaners, string, markers, paint, etc. Encourage students to consider some of the guiding questions provided as they create their self-portrait. After students create their self-portraits, they may present their work to the class and discuss the different elements they used to represent themselves.

Self-Portrait Presentation Preview

ELISABET NEY, SELF-PORTRAIT, 1903



FRIDA KAHLO, SELF-PORTRAIT WITH THORN NECKLACE AND HUMMINGBIRD, 1940



EGON SCHIELE, SELF-PORTRAIT WITH STRIPED ARMLETS, 1910



Art Activity Suggested Materials

Pipe cleaners

String or yarn

Pens/markers

Construction paper

Wire

Air-dry clay

Paint

Washi tape

Pom-poms

Markers

Self-Portrait Activity Checklist

- How many different materials did you use?
- Did you choose a figural or abstract style?
- What does your artwork communicate about yourself?
- Did you choose to create a realistic portrait of yourself, like Elisabet Ney, or did you decide to create something more symbolic?

Additional Resources

- For more information about Elisabet Ney’s background, visit:
 - Elisabet Ney Museum Biography: <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/elisabet-ney-biography>
 - Women in Texas History Biography: <https://www.womenintexashistory.org/biographies/elisabet-ney/>
 - Texas State Historical Association Biography: <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fne26>
- To learn more about Da Vinci and his Vitruvian man, explore the following resources:
 - Leonardo da Vinci Facts: <https://www.coolkidfacts.com/leonardo-da-vinci-facts/>
 - Museum of Science Learning Activities: <https://www.mos.org/leonardo/activities>
- For ideas on how to create self-portraits with students, visit:
 - How to Teach Self-Portraits: <https://scribbleartworkshop.com/blog/what-self-portraits-teach-us-about-teaching>
- The full “Self-Portrait Presentation” is available on the Elisabet Ney Museum’s webpage.