

# FINDING IDEAS

Idea Generating

High School Lesson

Art Foundations

Objective:

Where do ideas come from? Students will explore this question through a series of activities in this lesson. They will come away with tricks for thinking of their own original ideas, lists of unique and personal questions and answers, as well as a unity in the class as a safe place to share, grow, and exchange ideas.

Time:

One 90 minute class period or two 40 minute class periods

Homework from last class:

Bring in each of the following: (1) a quote you love, (2) a picture of an artwork that inspires you, (3) a photograph of something that is your favorite (person, place, thing). Print these out. Color is better but black and white will work. These will be public. These will not be returned.

Warm-Up/Bell-ringer:

1. Cut out any excess off of your pictures you brought in, and then add them to the blue bulletin board.
2. Find the most boring object in the room. In your sketchbook draw an improved version of this object.

Introduction:

*(Share warm-up as a round table, explain bulletin board is now our inspiration board)*

Today we will be discussing how artists find ideas. As an artist, the most important thing you can be is original. You may be very talented, masterly skilled, or well networked, but if you don't have your own unique ideas nothing else matters. But how do we come up with an original idea? We will be going through a series of different activities today that are all about helping you think of new ideas.

Activity One: The Conversation Game

**Set-Up:** In your sketchbook open to two blank pages, on one write "questions," on the other write "answers."

**Directions:** For this game I want you to think about a question that you would ask someone that you wanted to get to know better. For instance "What do you do on a rainy Saturday morning?" Now everyone write down your answer to my question on your answer page. Then take a few minutes and try to think of some questions, record them on your questions page. I encourage you to think of as unique questions as possible. Give students 5-10 minutes to think of as many unique questions as possible.

**Version 1:** (best for big classes that would have difficulty working in groups) Go around the room and ask each student to share their favorite question that they came up with. Everyone else should write down their own personal answer to that question on their answer page. Ask that students do not repeat questions that have already been shared.

**Version 2:** (best for smaller classes that need more motivation) Break the class into small groups. In the group they should take turns asking each other questions and recording their answers. After each person has shared one question go around the room and share them as a class. Students who ask the most unique questions get a point for their group. Continue with another round or two – the questions will get more original the more you play.

## Video:

Where Great Ideas Come From

At this point take a few minutes to watch this great video of Steven Johnson talking about Where Great Ideas Come From

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NugRZGDbPFU>

## Warm-Up/Bell-ringer for next class:

Without looking, choose two slips of paper (from Activity 2), create a drawing by combining these two ideas into one piece.

## Extension:

Another inspiring video if you have time, especially great for more advanced students:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HBja279i8M>

A great resource with interesting activities:

<http://www.bartelart.com/arted/ideas.html>

## Activity One: The Conversation Game Continued

\*Note: I started off doing version 2 with my first class. This kept them engaged with the points and we got very unique questions, but it was very drawn out and took a long time. Student had a hard time during the end keeping focus. So I changed to just two rounds and had everyone in the room record answers when they announced the question but I still felt like this was too drawn out so I modified it to Version 1 for my last class and felt that this worked the best.

Wrap-Up: On the pages in front of you, you have a list of questions and a list of answers. Any one of these could spark your next artwork. Take a minute and glance through your lists, as you do so envision each of these as a piece of art. I will be posting this list of questions on our inspiration board for you to visit if you like.

Based off: <https://www.goshen.edu/art/ed/self.html>

## Activity Two: Quantity over Quality

Set up: Have art based resources read for students to look at, 1-2 per amount of students. Have post-it notes or small papers for students to record ideas.

Introduction: Now I want to focus on the quantity of ideas rather than the quality. Sometimes we get so worried about whether an idea is good or not that we let potential greatness slip right through our fingers. Right now there is no such thing as a bad idea, I just want you to think of as many as possible.

Directions: In small groups I will pass out a few art resources (books/magazines) to you. I want you to flip through them and see how the visuals or text inspire you. When you see an image that gives you an idea I want you to write it down on a small paper, put it in the middle of your group, and announce it to the group. You don't have to discuss it, just state your idea and move on. For example, this picture of an elephant in the wild makes me think of a world where there are only animals and no humans. I would write down that thought, share it with my group and keep looking.

Activity: Divide into groups, pass out the materials. It is best to give each group a stack so that they can quickly move through them. I walked along and switched the stacks up between groups after I had noticed they had already looked through them.

\*Note: If you want to make it a competition, you could give an award to the group that has the most ideas in the end.

Wrap-Up: Sometimes all we have to do is step away from the paper or canvas and let ideas come to us without judgment. Add your ideas to the Inspiration Board.

Based off: <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/nvmsi.eng.lpideagen/generating-ideas/>

## Homework:

Reflect on the lesson today by choosing one question or one answer to create a sketch about in your sketchbook.

Also, be on the lookout for ideas all around you. Be ready to capture them when they come to you.

## Lesson Wrap-Up: Idea Web

Gather the class around the white board. We have had some practice thinking of ideas, so let's see if we can figure out where they come from. As a whole class, ask students "Where do artists get their ideas from?" Write their answers on the board in the form of a web.