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## Breaking the Chains, Rising Out of Circumstances (Beginning Level)

**Grades/Level:** Upper Elementary (3–5)  
**Subjects:** Visual Arts, History–Social Science  
**Time Required:** 3–5–Part Lesson  
**2–3 class periods**  
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### For the Classroom

- Curriculum Home
- Lesson Plans
- Image Bank
- Related Works of Art
- Glossary (PDF, 343KB)
- Print and Web Resources (PDF, 191KB)
- Standards Charts (PDF, 724KB)

### Lesson Overview

Students will analyze the emotions and personality conveyed in an 18th-century sculpture bust of a strong and confident African man and learn that such a portrayal is unique for its time. They will then create an original portrait bust of a strong person who has faced difficult situations.

### Learning Objectives

*Students will be able to:*

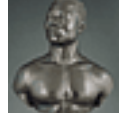
- describe a type of portrait called a bust.
- model posture and facial expressions in art.
- create a portrait bust of someone not usually put on a pedestal.

### Materials

- Reproduction of *Bust of a Man* by Francis Harwood
- Background Information and Questions for Teaching about Harwood's sculpture
- Internet access
- Student Handout: *A Person on a Pedestal*
- Self-hardening clay, such as Crayola® Model Magic®
- Toothpicks
- Toothbrushes
- Straws
- Forks
- Pencils
- Dried-out pens or markers for carving tools



Download this lesson (RTF, 467KB)



Bust of a Man, Harwood (PDF, 280KB)



Student Handout: A Person on a Pedestal (PDF, 38KB)



Timeline, *Breaking the Chains...* (PDF, 184KB)

### Lesson Steps

1. Tell students that they are going to look at a type of portrait called a bust. Explain that a bust is a portrait sculpture representing a person's head, neck, and shoulders, and perhaps the upper chest and upper arms. Explain that the posture and facial expressions of a person portrayed in a bust are important when describing the character or emotions of the individual. While students are sitting at their desks, instruct them to use only their facial expressions, necks, shoulders, and torsos to show what a sad person might look like. Remind them that they cannot say any words, make any sounds, or use their hands or any part of their bodies below the waist. What would a happy person look like? While the class shows with their faces what a happy person looks like, instruct one student at a time to look at their classmates and describe what he or she sees. What would an angry person look like? What would a strong person look like? What would a confident person look like?

2. Display a reproduction of the 18th-century sculpture *Bust of a Man* by Francis Harwood. Have students take the time to look closely at the work of art. Then ask them to describe what they see. Tell them to discuss with a partner all the details they notice about the work. Prompt students with the following questions:

- How do you think the man feels? What do you see that makes you say so?
- Look closely at the tilt of the man's head. Next look at his shoulders and chest. Now mimic the pose. When someone is posed in this way, how do you think the person feels?
- What other details do you notice about this man?
- The bust is displayed on a yellow base or pedestal called a socle. What does it mean to "put someone on a pedestal"?

3. Tell students that the sculpture was made about 250 years ago by Francis Harwood, an English artist who was working in Florence, Italy. Discuss the fact that the identity of the man depicted by Harwood is a mystery, but that it is possible that he might be a freed slave or an athlete who worked for an English duke. For information about the life of a freed slave who lived at the same time when the Harwood sculpture was made, see "[Oludah Equiano](#)" on the PBS Web site *Africans in America*.

4. Point out that Harwood was going against standard representations of Africans in European art at this time by depicting this individual as confident and strong. Discuss the fact that Africans in Europe and the Americas were not treated fairly and did not have the same opportunities as white Europeans and Americans. For instance, many Africans were slaves. Starting about 600 years ago, Europeans kidnapped Africans and traded them as property for guns, gold, and other goods, and transported them by boat to Europe and the Spanish Caribbean. American plantation owners saw how profitable it was for Spanish farmers in the Caribbean to keep Africans as slaves, so they tried to force Native Americans to tend to their crops. Most Native Americans, however, were dying from diseases brought to the colonies by Europeans, including smallpox and tuberculosis. Therefore, European ships brought about 12 million Africans to plantations in the Americas to be used as slaves.

5. You may wish to show students paintings, engravings, and drawings of African slaves that were more typical of the time period, such as the following images:

- [William Hogarth's painting \*Marriage A-la-Mode: 4. The Toilette\*](#) on the National Gallery, London's Web site
- [Nicolas de Largillierre's painting \*Princess Rákóczi\*](#) on the National Gallery, London's Web site
- [Slave with Iron Muzzle](#) from the PBS Web site *Africans in America*
- [A View of Calabar](#) from the PBS Web site *Africans in America*
- [Living Africans Thrown Overboard](#) from the PBS Web site *Africans in America*

6. Pass out self-hardening clay, toothpicks, toothbrushes, straws, forks, and pencils. Brainstorm a short list of people who are normally not "put on a pedestal." Tell students to create their own strong and confident portrait bust of someone from a story they have read who has faced difficult situations. Instruct students to include the head and shoulders of this individual and place the portrait on a socle of their choice. For step-by-step instructions on how to create a portrait bust, see the lesson plan "[Friendship Portraits](#)" from the Getty Museum's *Working with Sculpture* curriculum.

7. Have students write a paragraph or discuss with a partner why they chose to put a specific person on a pedestal.

### Assessment

Students will be assessed on their ability to model posture and facial expressions as observed through their participation in the kinesthetic class activity. Students' portraits should depict someone not usually put on a pedestal, and written paragraphs should describe why each student chose to put a specific person on a pedestal.

### Standards Addressed

#### Common Core Standards for English Language Arts

#### Grades 3–5

##### SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- 3.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- 3.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.
- 4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- 4.6 Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion); use formal English when appropriate to task and situation. (See grade 4 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)
- 5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- 5.3 Summarize the points a speaker or media source makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence, and identify and analyze any logical fallacies.

#### Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California State Public Schools

##### Grade 3

- 2.0 Creative Expression
- 2.5 Create an imaginative clay sculpture based on an organic form.

##### 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

- 3.1 Compare and describe various works of art that have a similar theme and were created at different time periods.

##### Grade 4

- 2.0 Creative Expression
- 2.3 Use additive and subtractive processes in making simple sculptural forms.

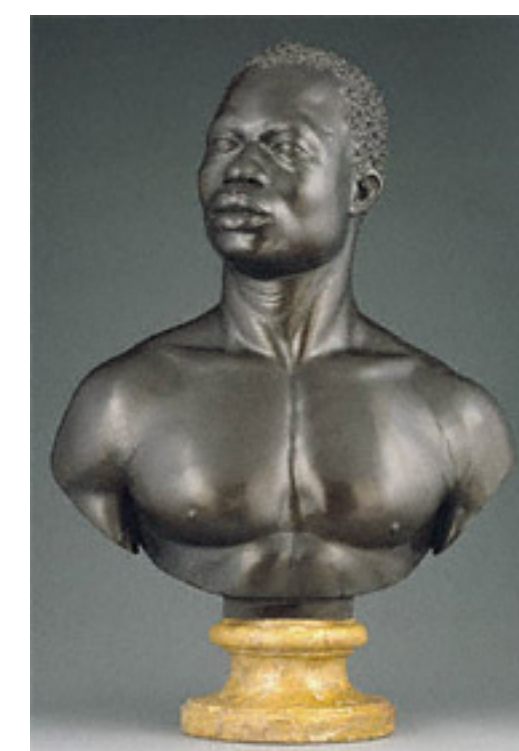
##### Grade 5

- 2.0 Creative Expression
- 2.7 Communicate values, opinions, or personal insights through an original work of art.

#### History—Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools

##### Grade 5

- 5.4 Students understand the political, religious, social, and economic institutions that evolved in the colonial era.
- 6. Describe the introduction of slavery into America, the responses of slave families to their condition, the ongoing struggle between proponents and opponents of slavery, and the gradual institutionalization of slavery in the South.



Bust of a Man, Francis Harwood, 1758



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