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Lyrical Poster Illustration

Best for: grades 7-12



Description: create a personalized illustration inspired by song lyrics.

Vocabulary: lyrics, metaphor, symbol, calligraphic marks

Required materials:

- large drawing paper
- eraser
- pencil

Optional materials:

- fine point ink pens
- colored pencils
- markers
- compass
- ruler



Images:

French, *Antiphonal Page: Illuminated Manuscript Page of Sheet Music*, about late 15th century, colors and gold on parchment. Gift of Mrs. O.F. Davisson. 1933.15
Hendrick Terbrugghen (Dutch, 1588—1629), *A Boy Violinist*, 1626, oil on canvas. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Elton F. MacDonald. 1960.7

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Instructions

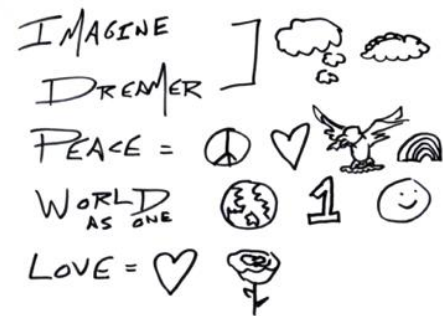
1. Select a song, listen to the **lyrics** (the words that are sung or said) and write down any words or phrases that evoke an idea or feeling.

Helpful hint: if song lyrics can be found online, print out and circle all words or phrases of interest.

2. Sketch a list of images or **symbols** (images that represent words or phrases) to best represent the words or phrases (ex: draw a dove for peace, clouds for dreams, etc.)

Note: drawings can include **metaphors** (a figure of speech that refers one thing to another) or further interpretation of those ideas (ex: for the word kind, draw a heart of gold).

Helpful hint: for best results, make a list of several symbols for each word.



3. Select 3-5 **symbols** from the list to best represent the song. Create quick several quick sketches combining all symbols into one illustration.

Note: words can also be included in the illustration. Explore **calligraphic marks** (decorative handwriting) to make lettering more expressive, often seen in illuminated manuscripts (see resources below for examples).

Helpful hint: explore several possible combinations before selecting a final design. Merge **symbols** together to layer meaning or interpretation where possible (ex: peace sign + world = world peace).

Optional: scan and print drawings to collage them together and test out several ideas quickly).

4. Select best design from concept sketches and create a full-size illustration using pencil, colored pencils, or markers.



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Helpful hint: draw lightly in pencil first so it is easier to adjust before adding color or marker.

Helpful hint: create richness by adding several layers of colors over top of each other with colored pencils. Add layers from lightest to darkest and slowly push harder into the paper with each new layer.



Helpful hint: if colors get too dark, use eraser or color over with white colored pencil to blend and lighten layers. White oil pastel or chalk can also lighten a layer, only if it is the final layer.

Helpful hint: create colors by blending colored pencils (ex: create green by lightly coloring blue over top of yellow).



Extensions

For extra challenge:

1. Illustrate an instrumental song. Listen to the music and list words, emotions or images that come to mind. Alternatively, create a full set of lyrics based on the instrumental inspiration. Once list is made, apply same steps as above.

Web Resources

[Listen to John Lennon's "Imagine"](#)
[Dayton Art Institute's illuminated manuscript](#)
[More illuminated manuscript examples](#)

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