



**farmsanctuary**  
rescue • education • advocacy

**Visual Arts Lesson: Grades 3-5**

For Traditional and Online Classrooms

# Animals & Art Curriculum

## The Story Behind a Portrait

Artist: Jane O'Hara

### Overview

**Animals & Art: The Story Behind a Portrait** engages students in learning about the lives of sanctuary animals and representing them as individuals through the creation of original animal portraits.

- Students will create art based on an individual animal's story to which they feel a personal connection.
- Students will explore animal stories as a basis for art-making and create artist statements to explain their personal artwork.
- Students will analyze components in visual imagery and the power of art to convey messages and shape ideas.

## LESSON PLAN

### SECTION 1: Introduction

Farm Sanctuary video

PowerPoint presentation: An  
Exploration of Animal Portraiture

### SECTION 2: The Story

Biographies of the Farm Sanctuary  
residents

### SECTION 3: The Portrait

Create a portrait

Write an artist's statement

Share your work with Farm  
Sanctuary!

## Lesson Resources

Click on the following links:

Video: [What is Farm Sanctuary? Youth Edition](#)

PowerPoint presentation: [An Exploration of Animal Portraiture](#)

Student Resource: [The Animal Stories](#)

Student Resource: [Write an Artist's Statement](#)

## Materials

Art materials such as crayons, markers, colored pencils, or paint

Paper

Writing utensil

## Environmental Sustainability

For tips on increasing environmental sustainability in art projects, check out this article from the Art of Education University:

<https://theartofeducation.edu/2017/09/28/moving-past-scrap-box-strategies-art-room-needs-go-green/>

## National Art Standards

- VA:Re.7.2.3a** Determine messages communicated by an image.
- VA:Re8.1.3a** Interpret art by analyzing use of media to create subject matter, characteristics of form, and mood.
- VA:Re.7.2.4a** Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.
- VA:Re8.1.4a** Interpret art by referring to contextual information and analyzing relevant subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media.
- VA:CR3.1.5a** Create artist statements using art vocabulary to describe personal choices in art-making.
- VA:Re8.1.5a** Interpret art by analyzing characteristics of form and structure, contextual information, subject matter, visual elements, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.
- VA:Cn11.1.5a** Identify how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society.

## ELA Common Core Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.3-5.4.A** Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.



Artist: Jane O'Hara

## SECTION 1: Introduction

### Farm Sanctuary video

Show students the "[What is Farm Sanctuary? Youth Edition](#)" introductory video and inform students that they will later be given the assignment of creating a portrait of a farm animal who lives at Farm Sanctuary.

### An Exploration of Animal Portraiture

The PowerPoint presentation, [An Exploration of Animal Portraiture](#), introduces students to the concept of portraiture and asks students to reflect upon what it means to include animals as subjects of portraiture. As a class, present the PowerPoint and facilitate a discussion.

Within the PowerPoint, in the notes for slides 25-32, you will find optional information to reference for discussion. For additional information, please visit <https://www.farmsanctuary.org>.

## SECTION 2: The Story

### Biographies of the Farm Sanctuary residents

Students should choose which farm animal they would like to create a portrait of by reading about at least three Farm Sanctuary residents in the student resource document, [The Animal Stories](#). Each story includes a photograph of the individual farm animal and their background story. After reading the stories, students should choose the farm animal whose story impacted them the most and create visual artwork of that individual using materials available to them such as crayons, markers, colored pencils, or paint.

The stories in this lesson include animals who are current Farm Sanctuary residents and animals who lived at Farm Sanctuary but have since passed away.

The farm animals included in this lesson are:



CHICKEN

Aria



CHICKEN

Bonnie



COW

Jay



COW

Stanton



DUCK

Monet



GOAT

Benedict



PIG

Lola



PIG

Nikki



SHEEP

Sophie



TURKEY

Cecelia





Floyd from SAINTS Rescue  
Artist: Twyla Francois



### Lesson Extension: Animal Story Videos

Students may watch short videos about some of the animals included in this lesson:

Lola the Pig: How I Was Rescued by Lola Pig. (3:33)

<https://youtu.be/Wp4lxWA9rIY>

Sophie the Lamb: This Little Lamb's First Steps Will Melt Your Heart. (0:59)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRb42RC6\\_BI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRb42RC6_BI)

Stanton the Cow: Better Together: Stanton. (1:46)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05DEgur-Da4>

## SECTION 3: The Portrait

### Create a portrait

Once students have chosen who will be the subject of their portraits, students should gather their art materials and create a portrait inspired by the animal's story and photograph. Students should consider the message they would like to convey in their portraits and how they want people to feel about the animal in their portraits.



**Daisy from SASHA Farm Animal Sanctuary**  
**Artist: Lindsay Leigh Lewis**

## Live Cams

Need further inspiration? Check out live cam footage of Farm Sanctuary's sheep barn, cattle pasture, turkey barn, and more at any time – day or night! Consider playing live cam footage while students work on their animal portraits.

<https://explore.org/livecams/farm-sanctuary>

## Write an artist's statement

To accompany their artwork, students should compose an artist's statement using the student resource document, [Write an Artist's Statement](#). Statements can be neatly handwritten or typed. If the portrait is two-dimensional, students should affix the statement to the back of their artwork. The statement might be one to three concise paragraphs.

### Prompts for students to consider when creating their artist's statement:

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | What is this animal's name and why did you choose this animal?                   |
| 2. | What do you find inspiring about this animal?                                    |
| 3. | What did you as an artist hope to convey about this animal through your artwork? |

## Share your artwork with Farm Sanctuary!

We would love to see the artwork and artist's statements created by your students! If you would like to share their portraits and writing with Farm Sanctuary, please email photos to [education@farmsanctuary.org](mailto:education@farmsanctuary.org).

## Sample Artwork



Photograph of Sophie at Farm Sanctuary



Julia P., age 9

## Thank you to the following sanctuaries whose resident animals are featured in Farm Sanctuary's Animals & Art Curriculum

Iowa Farm Sanctuary  
SAINTS Rescue  
SASHA Farm Animal Sanctuary

## FEATURED ARTISTS

**Dana Ellyn**

[Danaellyn.com](http://Danaellyn.com)

IG: @danaellyn

**Twyla Francois**

[Twylafrancois.com](http://Twylafrancois.com)

FB: @twylafrancoisart

**Denise Hof**

[Denisehofart.de](http://Denisehofart.de)

IG: @denise\_hof

**Lindsay Leigh Lewis**

[Lindsayleighart.com](http://Lindsayleighart.com)

IG: @lindsayleighart

**Nicola McLean**

[Artbynicolamclean.com](http://Artbynicolamclean.com)

IG: @art.by.nicola.mclean

**Jane O'Hara**

[Janeohara.com](http://Janeohara.com)

IG: @janeoharaprojects

**Jordan Rae**

[Etsy.com/shop/myrainbowveins/](https://www.etsy.com/shop/myrainbowveins/)

IG: @jordn\_rae



Artist: Jordan Rae