

JANUARY: TACTILE (Braille) ART

Art Appreciation with Jim Ballard

Essential Question: How can I celebrate World Braille Day with art?



Supplies Needed:	Art Vocabulary:	Learning Target:	Meets WA Learning Standard:
1 copy each of Braille Alphabet sheet (provided by ASNW)	Tactile	Students will be able to create a piece of tactile art (art you can 'see' with touch).	VA:Cr2.3.K
4" x 8.5" watercolor paper	Braille		
Markers, pencils, or crayons	Negative Space		
Liquid Glue (or seeds, optional)	Positive Space		
Watercolor paints & paper			
Brushes + cups for water			

Instructions:
January 4 is “World Braille Day”, so we can celebrate Braille in January! Ask students to imagine how they would be able to ‘look’ at or appreciate visual art if they were visually impaired or blind. How can the visually impaired community experience visual art?
Show them examples by local Edmonds artist, Jim Ballard who creates visual art for the visually impaired community.
Give each student a copy of the ASNW Braille Alphabet Chart. Have students practice a simple word like their name or “pizza” or “art” in the empty boxes. Show them how to transfer one letter at a time. It’s like a secret code!
Next, give each student a piece of watercolor paper, and ask them to use a pencil and draw dots on the page for the word they want to represent in their tactile art. Make sure the dots line up like letters in a word. If students want, they can color over the pencil dots, if they want their dots to be colored.
Next, using liquid glue, place ‘beads’ on top of the braille. Let the glue dry. Set aside to dry fully (this may take a full day). For younger students, see note at bottom.
Last, use tape to create a border and using watercolor paint, fill in the negative space (background). When the whole art piece is completed, the glue or bead will make the work tactile, so people who are visually impaired or blind can see the artwork with their hands. Decorate the border after removing the tape.

Pro Tips For Success:

- For younger students (K-2) they can watercolor paint the paper first, and let it dry. Then, they can glue seeds, puff balls, or large sequins (see items in the Ultimate Craft box in your Dedicated Art Library) instead of glue dots for the braille word or letter. You could do a class set of the alphabet or individual words.
- Remind students when writing with braille, the dots need to be in a line with each other and drawn next to each other. Have them write it with pencil first, in case they make a mistake and can erase it.
- If students make a mistake, or the word is incorrect, that is okay. This is about exposing students to braille and making tactile art. It doesn’t have to be perfect! Have fun!!
- For older learners who like a challenge, or work quicker than others, ask them to draw items or objects that represent their word on the border of the paper.
- For more challenges, older learners have students to ‘draw’ with the liquid glue and/or outline a drawing. Once dry, paint over that dried glue so you can feel the art and the braille word.
- If glue spreads, no worries! Wipe the liquid glue away with your finger and do it again. You can also use Q-Tips from your Dedicated Art Library to help with this.
- To get a good size ‘bead’ of glue, squeeze out a sufficient dot, then slowly lift the tip up.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L

M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X

Y	Z										

PRACTICE A WORD or NAME IN THE EMPTY SPACES ABOVE