

What Is Art?

Enhancing Persuasive Writing
Through Philosophical Debate



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summer art camps

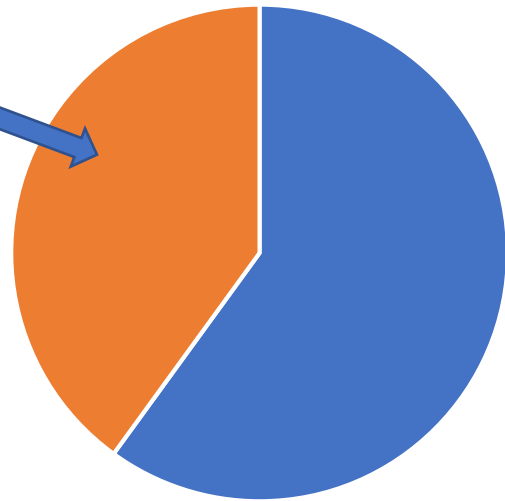
with dan and rachelle kuehl



Many students are ill-prepared
to write at the level required
for successful college
completion

**40 % of
college-bound
students did
not pass ACT
writing test**

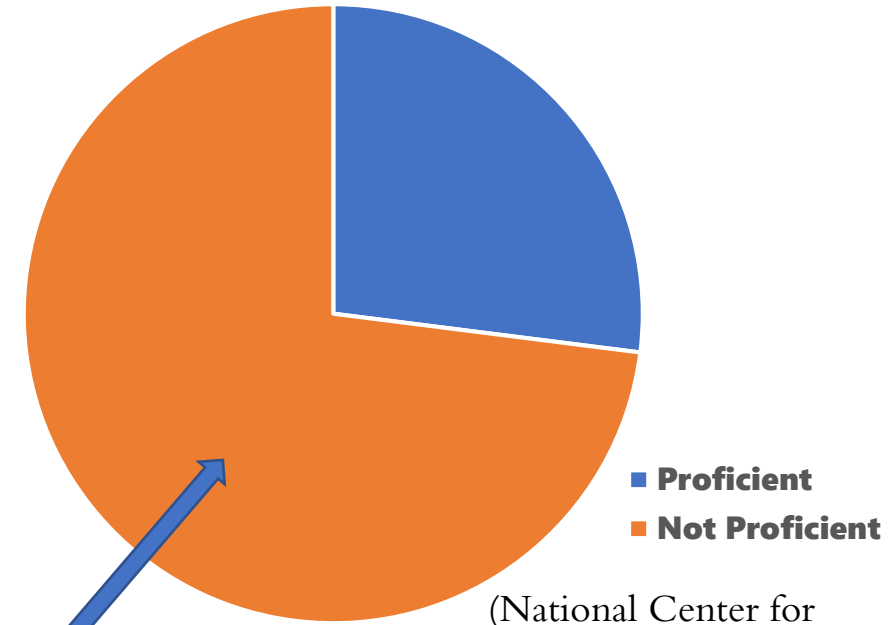
Pass Rate on ACT Writing
Assessment Among College-Bound
Students



■ Passed ■ Did Not Pass

(Goldstein, 2017)

Pass Rate of 8th graders/12th graders on
National Writing Assessment



(National Center for
Education Statistics, 2012)

**73% of
8th/12th grade
students did
not pass
writing test**

Argument “is at the heart of critical thinking and academic discourse, the kind of writing students need to know for success in college . . . and career.”

(Hillocks, 2010, p. 25)



Students must be able to

- state a claim
- present relevant evidence
- consider alternative viewpoints
- arrive at a sound conclusion that convinces others to adopt their viewpoint

(Song & Ferretti, 2013, pp. 67–68)

Purpose

To learn how to use short intervals of writing about **aesthetic** considerations to increase participation in class discussions and improve students' reasoning and **writing** skills.

“Everyone who uses the word ‘**art**’ in ordinary conversation has a concept of art” (Lankford, 1992, p. 4)

BUT . . .

because the question of **aesthetics** has no absolute answer,

AND . . .

because people often differ on their opinions about art,
participants must use **reason and logic** to convince others.



This technique

- Brings broader participation from students who feel more comfortable sharing their ideas after articulating them in writing first (Lemov, 2015).
- Forces students to **listen** and respond to the opposing viewpoint
- Motivates students by **setting a real purpose** for writing



“incorporating
counterarguments and refuting
them are crucial for maximizing
the extent of persuasiveness in
argumentative writing”

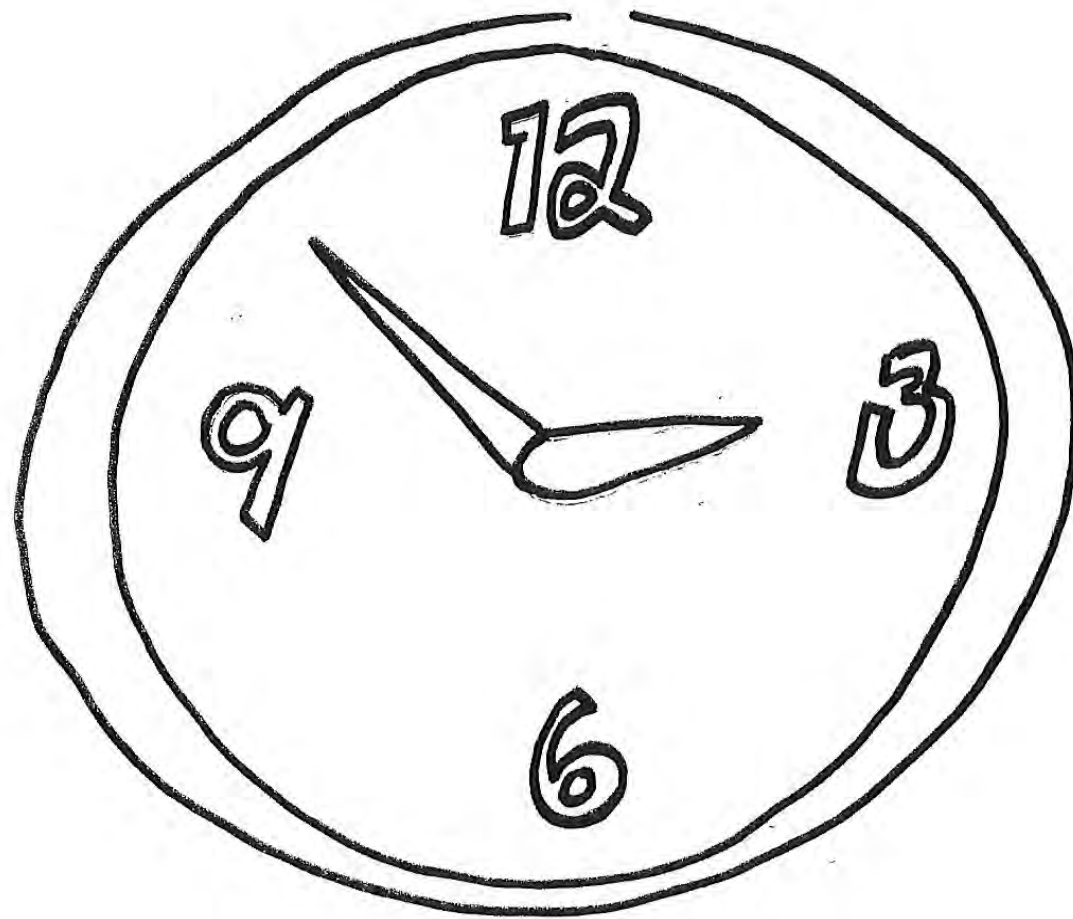
(Liu & Stapleton, 2014).



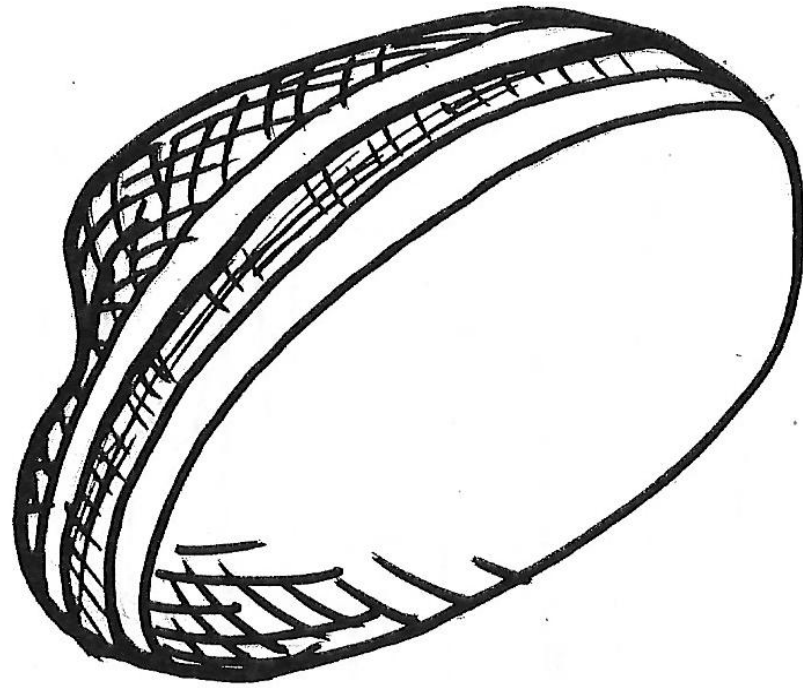
What Is Art?



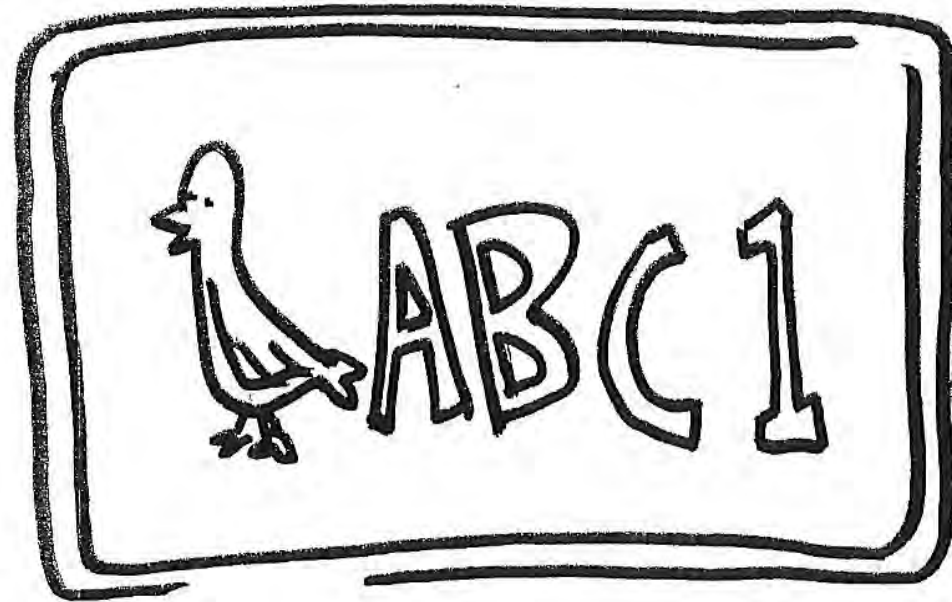
The Mona Lisa by
Leonardo Da Vinci



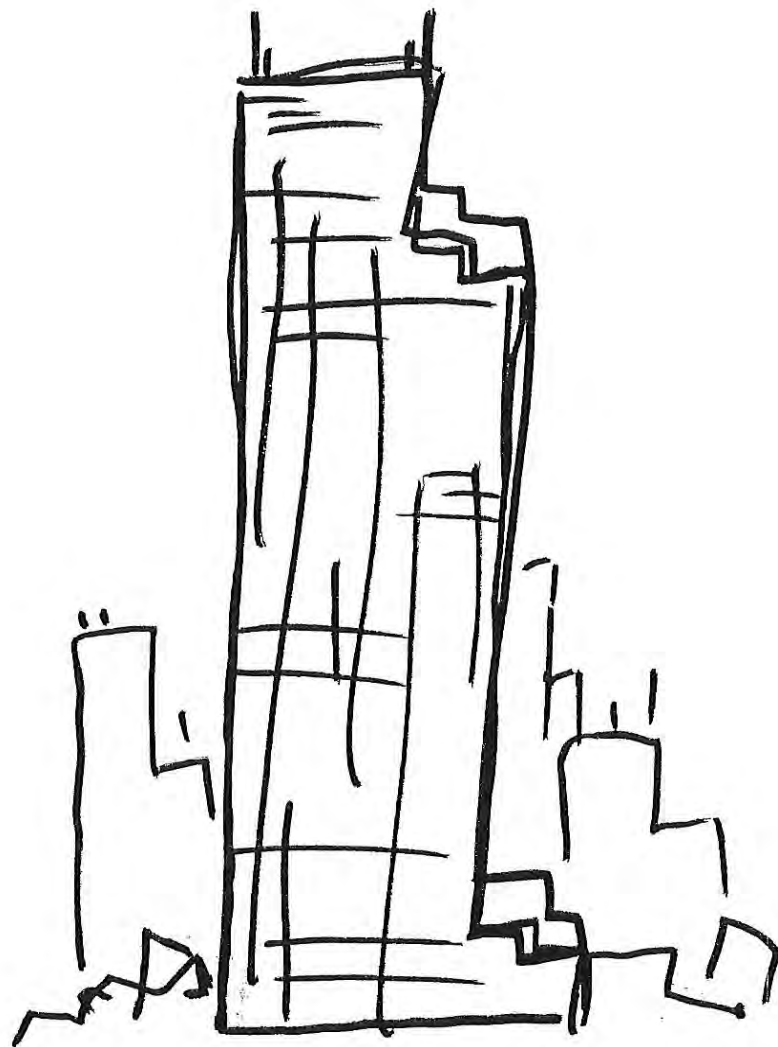
A clock with
fancy numbers



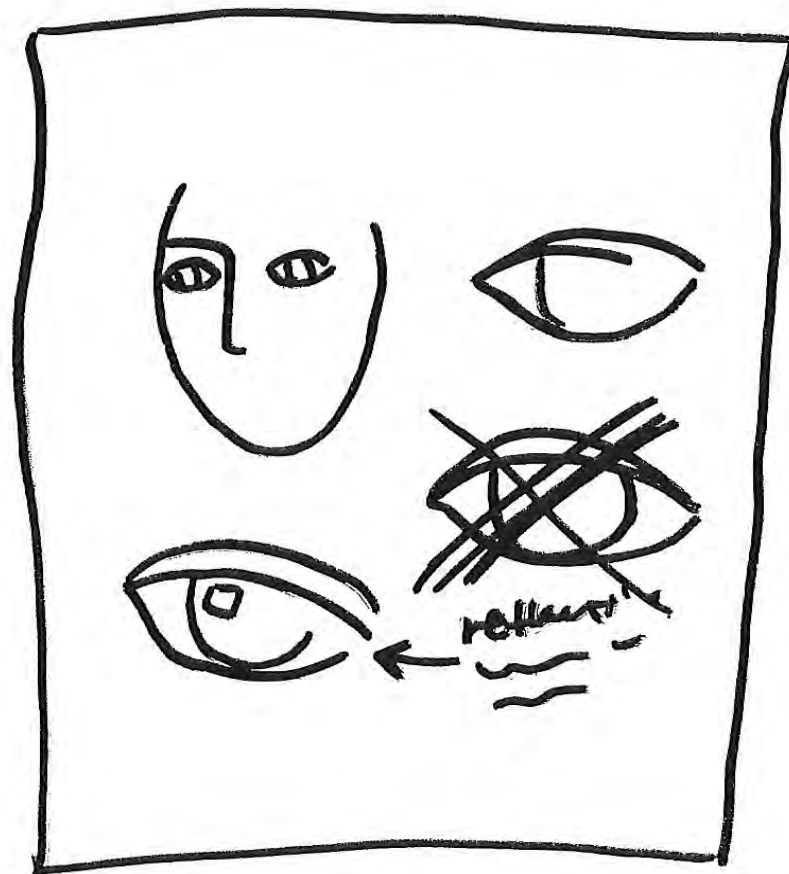
A river polished
stone with
stripes of color in
the middle



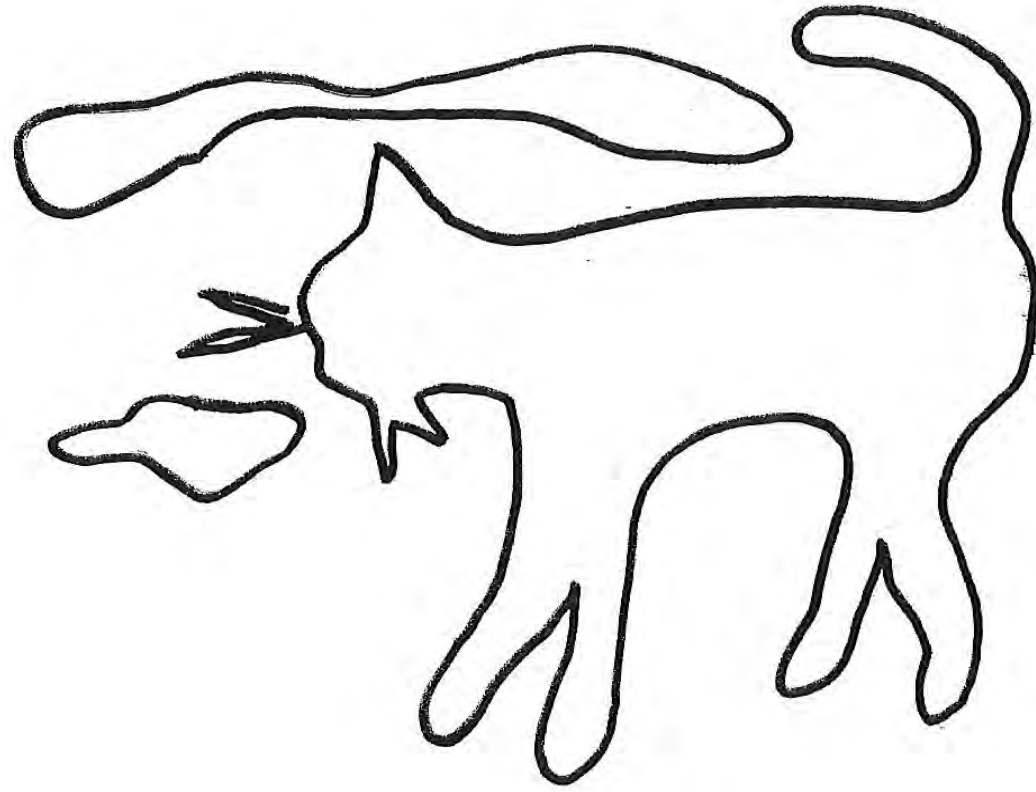
A license plate
with a bird
on it



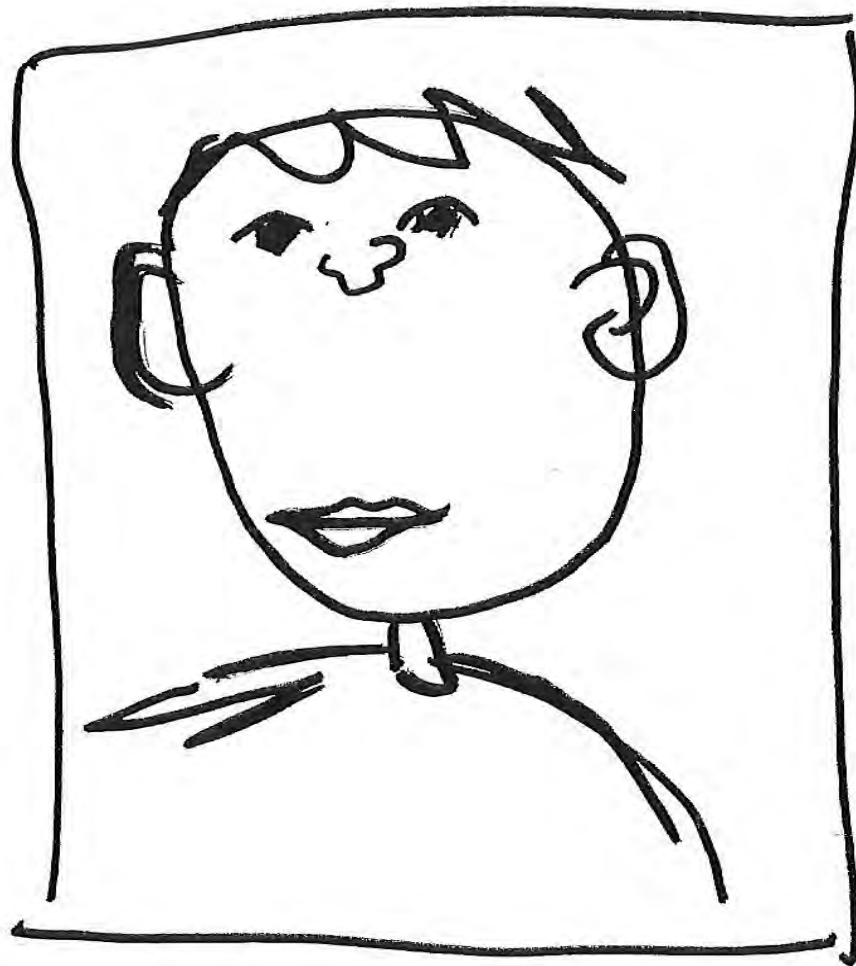
A skyscraper



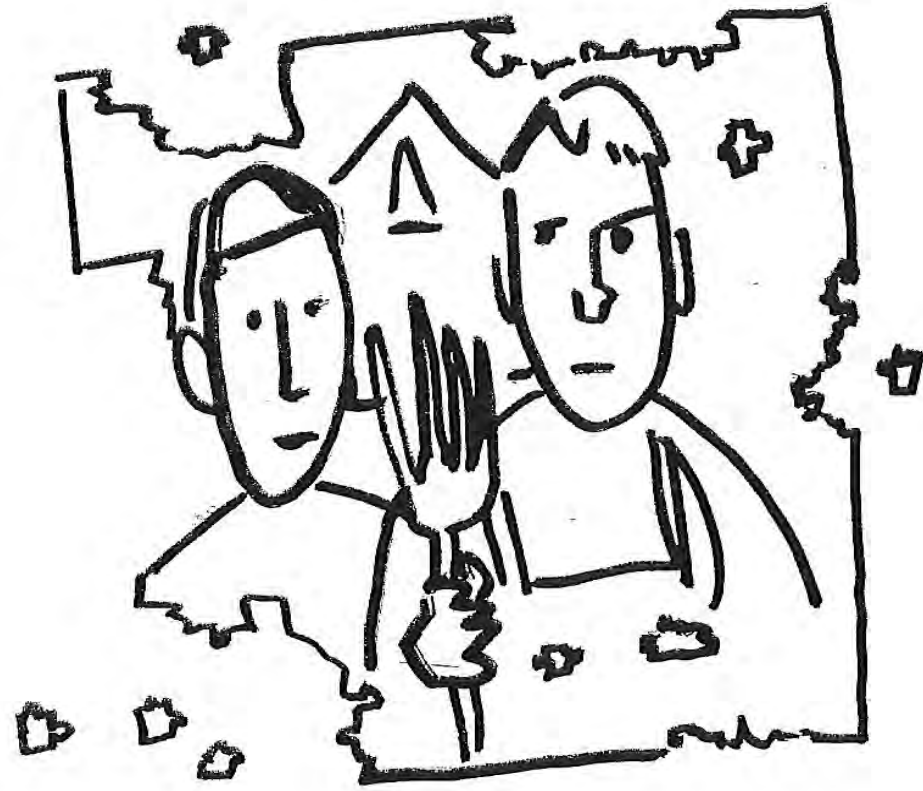
practice sketches
from a
famous
artist



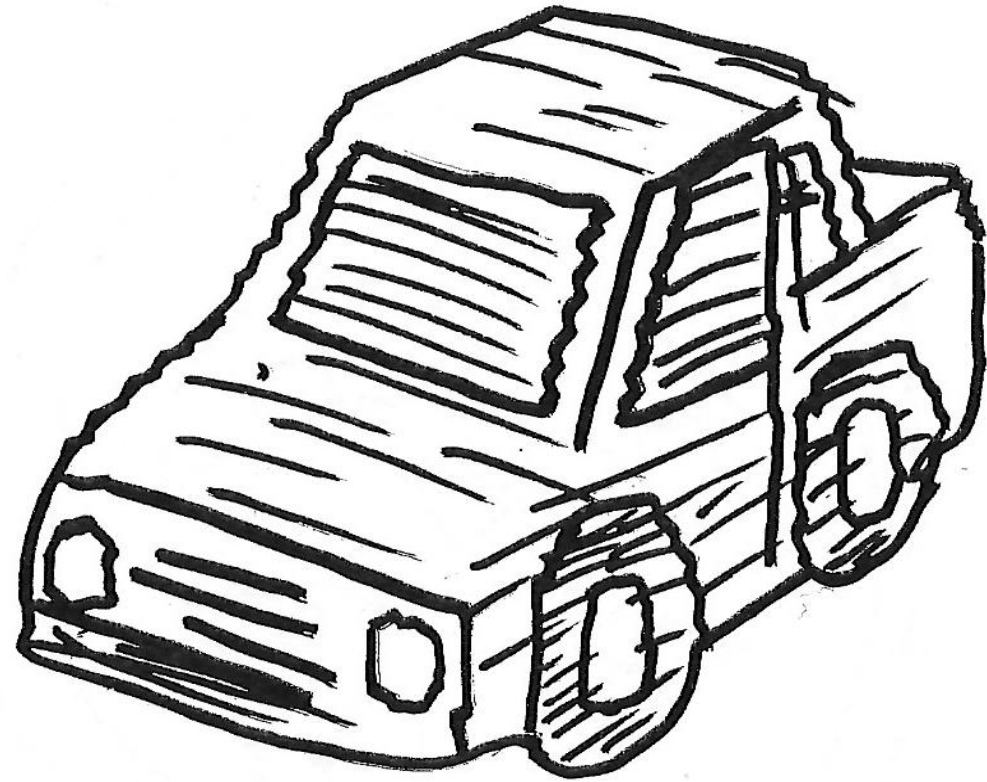
A cloud in
the shape of
a cat



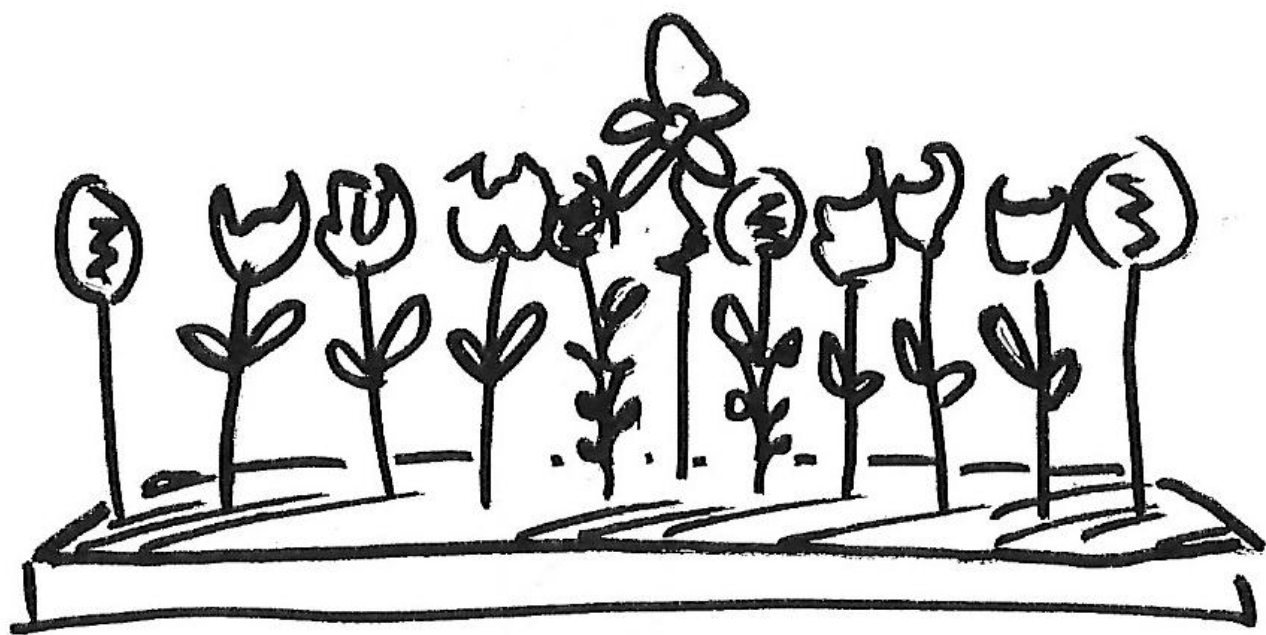
A badly painted
portrait of
a boy



A famous work of
art turned into
a puzzle .



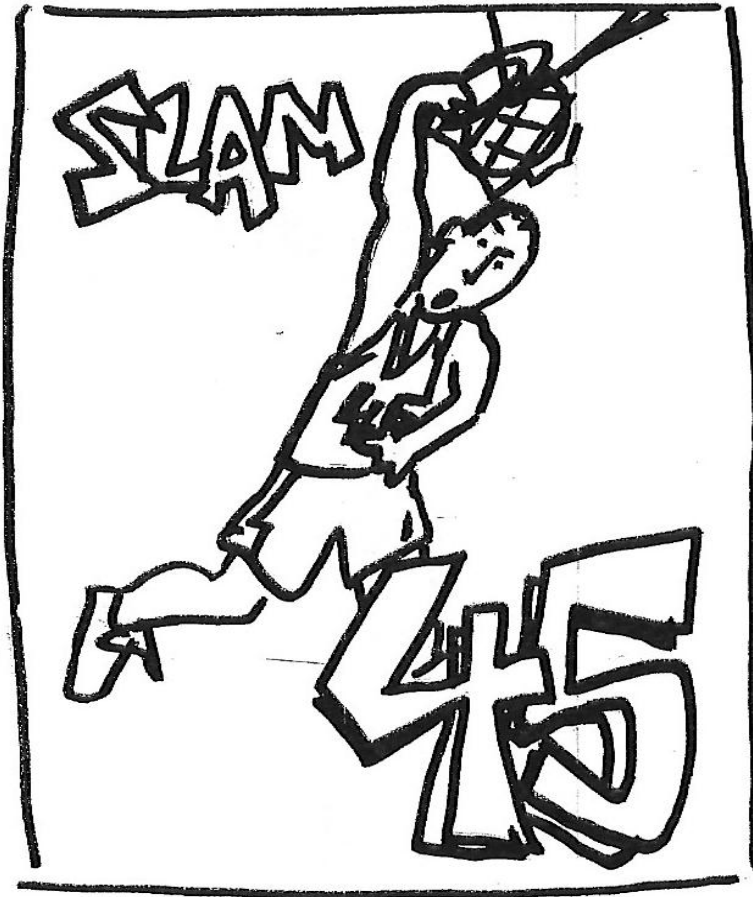
A full-size car
made out of
Legos



A garden
of
flowers



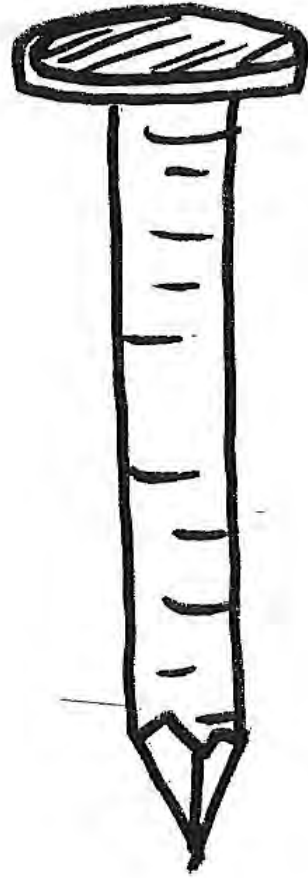
A carved
pumpkin



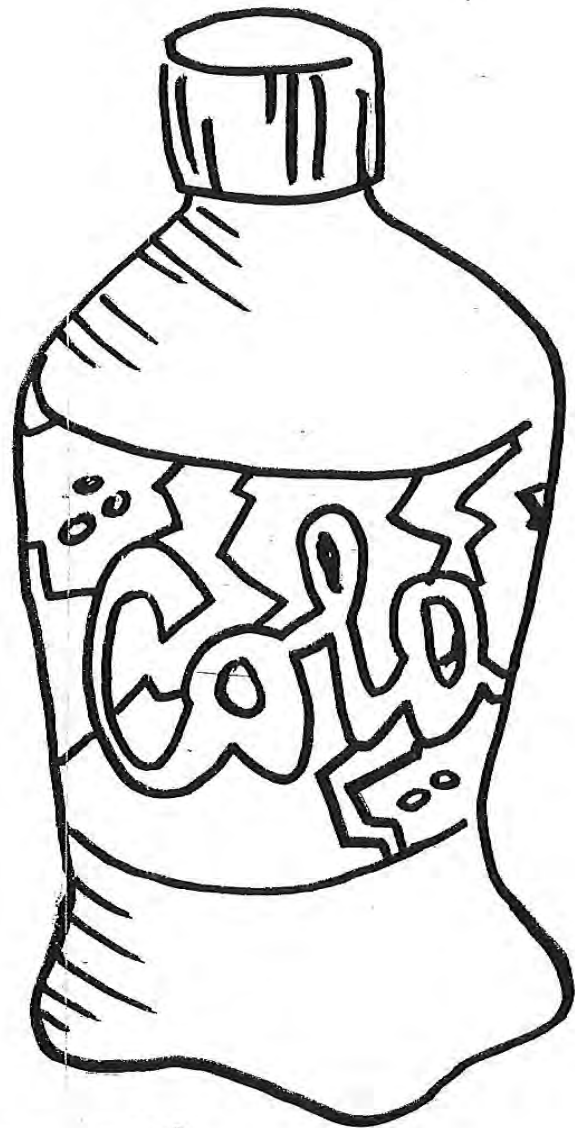
A poster of
a basketball
star



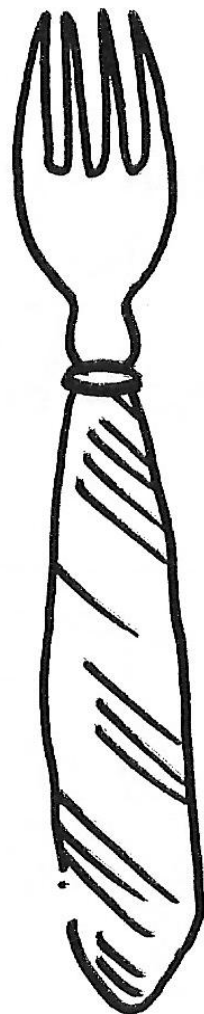
A cookie jar
made out of clay



A nail



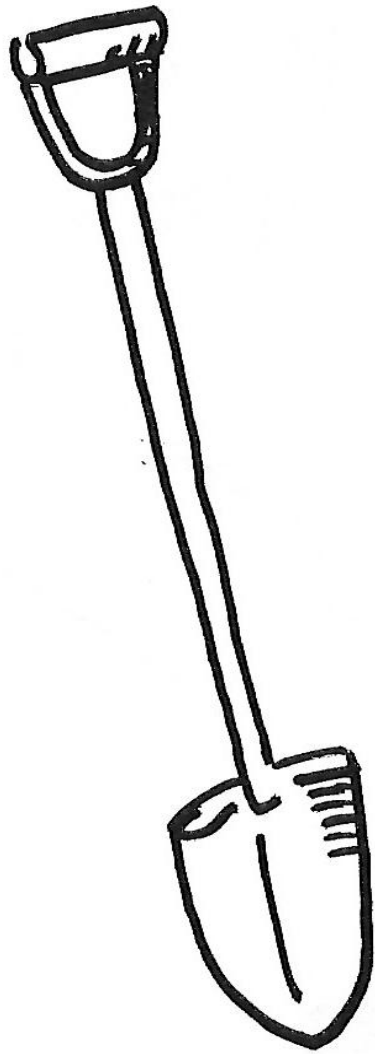
A bottle of
soda



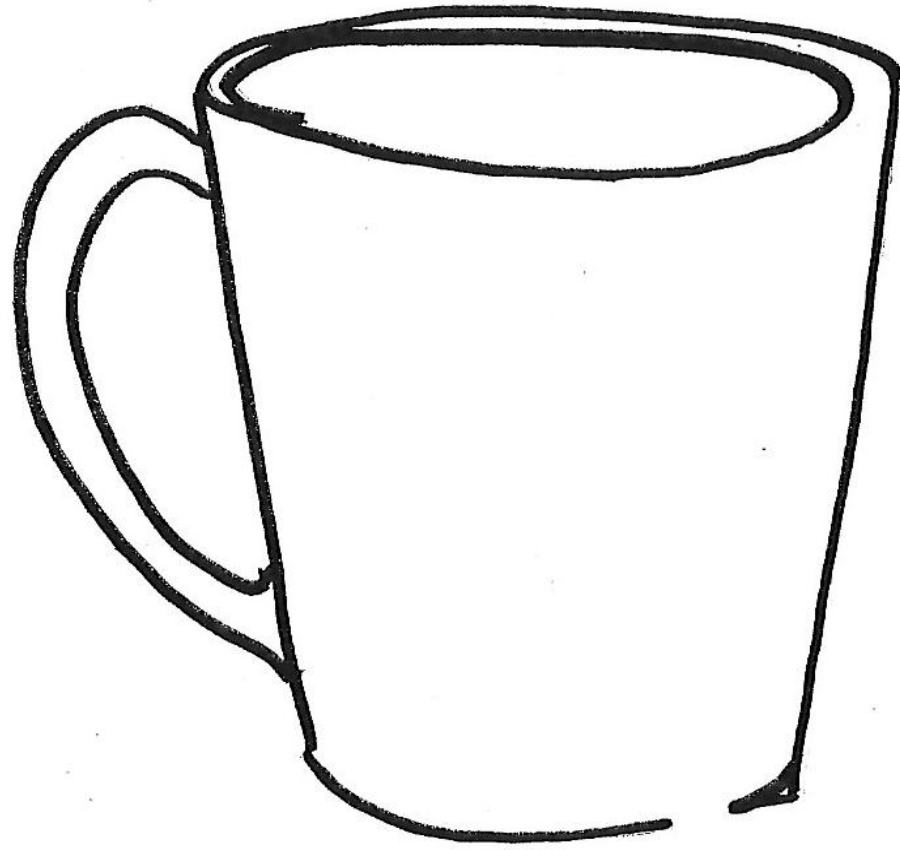
A fork with a
plastic handle



A Scribble
drawing of
a 3 year-old



A wooden shovel
with a red handle



A white coffee
mug



A sock with
blue stripes



A copy of Mona
Lisa by an unknown
artist



What Is Art?

Try it!

1. Ask students to write a **definition of art**.
2. Show multiple images, voting with **RED** or **GREEN** cards for each. Offer students the chance to explain why the object is or is not art.
3. Make note of contentious items, **selecting two** for the debate.
4. **Divide class in half**. One half debates the first item, the other half debates the second item.
5. On their red or green card, students **write an argument** to convince the judges (other half of the class) of their opinion.
6. In turn, each student reads his or her statement (they may not add extra words). Judges raise their **red** or **green** cards to vote—the winner is the one with the most votes. The second group debates.
7. Students **revise their original definition** of art.

A solid green square card with the word "YES!" written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters in the center.A solid red square card with the word "NO!" written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters in the center.

References

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