

# My Life in Pieces!

Inspired by the project [Haiti to Hood](#) by Daveed Baptiste presented at Photoville 2020 by the Haiti Cultural Exchange

Explore photography through reflecting on the multiple elements that make up your identity (home, family relationships, expectations vs reality, sense of belonging, and the everyday objects that are connected to your lived experience and family stories). Students will learn how to tell their personal story through design, images and objects/materials/textures that come alive through a diorama.



Photo Breakdown Diagram by Daveed Baptiste

## Students will be able to:

- Reflect on their family relationships, contrast between home/friends/school, expectations vs. reality, their sense of belonging and the possibility of “being more than one thing” through connecting to everyday objects that tell a story.
- Students will learn the basics of photo composition in relationship to the concepts of foreground and background, arranging and scale of objects in a photo set, and framing.
- Share a non-linear story through a photo collage, juxtaposing items and reflecting on where they come from, who they are now and into the future.

FEATURING PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
**Daveed Baptiste**

## AUTHORS

**Aliza Greenberg,  
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## FACILITATOR/EDITOR

**Natalia Guerrero**

## GRADE LEVEL

**6th - 12th grades**

## SUBJECTS

**Visual Arts, English  
Language Arts**

## TIME REQUIRED

**1-4 Sessions**

## KEY IMAGES

[Image Bank](#)  
[Artist Talk](#)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Artist Website](#)  
[@daveedbaptiste](#)  
[Authors Brainstorm](#)  
[photoville.com/edu](#)

## MATERIALS NEEDED

[Photo Breakdown Diagram](#), [Example Moodboard](#), Camera, Small cardboard box, Glue, Scissors, Scrap paper, Arts & Crafts materials, Printer or app to create online collage (i.e. [Adobe Spark](#) or [Canva](#))

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## LESSON PART 1: INTRO

**Facilitation Notes:** Use these icebreakers as an opportunity for students to learn more about each other and begin their journey as story-tellers. Inspired by “From Haiti to Hood” students will also be working with materials/objects/textures from home to tell a story. Watch [Daveed Baptiste's Artist Talk video](#) and go over [Daveed Baptiste's work](#)! Think about the title of the project “From Haiti to Hood” and the photographs and consider the photographer's choices around images, texture, set design, political context and contrasts in the images. Some questions to consider are: “What makes the hood, the hood?” or “What are peoples experiences around expectations versus reality when being an immigrant pursuing the ‘American’ dream and then being confronted with issues around race and class?”

We are surrounded by objects, color, textures and our relationship to them hold stories and reflect back on people's identities and/or family history.

1. Provide students a box or ask them to recycle one! It can be the size of a shoe box or a little larger. On the first day of class, ask them to pick one item in their home that has a meaningful story behind it. They will share the story and then put the item in the box. You can ask them to put multiple items at once. This will become an incubator of stories and ideas for their photo collage project.
2. Ask students to choose a sheet or linen in their home that they love the most. If you are learning virtually, they should use the backdrop for class and share why they picked that sheet. If you are teaching in person, have them use it as a backdrop set design to take a self portrait. Make sure to use yourself as an example! Your students want to know you as well.
3. Facilitate a discussion reflecting on the idea of home:
  - What does it mean to bring in your whole class into your home virtually, or come into your student's homes as we all learn online? Many people have opted for utilizing sheets to create more privacy when on zoom.
  - If you are teaching in person, what does it mean to learn about each other's experiences and family histories through the objects we bring/share with the group?
  - What can we learn from each other if we create spaces to share more personal parts of our identities and family stories as a way to build a sense of community or identification?

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4. Thinking about what's around them and their family history growing up, have students reflect on the following questions.

- What materials are you attracted to the most? Why?
- What textures make something fancy, girly, "hood", boogie, masculine, sleek, childlike, antique, rustic, old-school, vintage...
- Are there certain fabrics or objects in your home that you know are important or passed down through generations?

Bring some of those items or ideas into the shoe box!

## LESSON PART 2: ACTIVITY

**Facilitation Notes:** Reflect on the contrast between the object and the person. How can you get to know who the person is by the objects that become a portrait of that person?

1. Talk to an elder in your family and ask them to share an object that belongs to them and holds deep emotional/historic value. Record or take notes of their story. Below are a few sample questions:
  - What piece of who you are does this object represent?
  - How did this object come to belong to you?
  - What does this object mean to you? What memories and stories does it hold?
  - When do you think of, or interact with this object?
2. Take a photo of the object in a place that feels right to both of you or where it usually is kept at! Are you choosing to stage it with a cloth underneath it? Is it lit by natural light or artificial light? From what perspective are you taking the photo (close-up, birds-eye, from an angle etc)?
3. Ask your family member to find a place where they would like to be photographed. Take a portrait of them.
4. Use an editing app or virtual program to place both photos next to each other.
5. Share photos and stories with the group and/or larger community/family.

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## LESSON PART 3: REFLECTION/EXTENSION

**Facilitation Note:** Students can create a collage (virtually or with materials from home), a physical photo set like Daveed Baptiste or a small scale set inside a box! Encourage students to get as creative as they want, Take photos of objects that are too big to fit in the box and print them to include them inside. Students can also utilize images from magazines/newspapers, words or writing, and backdrops with patterns and textures that relate to the story. They can use their mood board for inspiration and ask family members for ideas!

Everything around you is a resource! It is up to each person to decide what they want to use. During COVID-19 the artist got commissioned to work with the brand Converse. Daveed did not have access to any of his materials in his studio, so he looked around his home! He found colorful combs which then became a central creative piece in his photo work for that brand.

1. Students will now take their experiences from the icebreaker and the activity with their family elder, and create their own photo collage, set or diorama.
2. To start the activity, ask youth what is the most beautiful thing in their house? What is something they wish they had? Are there any items they themselves or family collect?
3. Continue exploring the idea of collecting materials you use everyday and those that are part of your home and family. Have youth write a list of these materials or even better gather them and put them in a box. Use [Daveed's Photo Breakdown Diagram](#) as an example. This is part of his creative process and technique when building photo sets. Ex: the stories behind the electronics, the wallpapers, posters.
4. Create a physical, [digital or photo mood board](#) of the items they listed. (For digital mood boards you can use Google drive, [Google Jamboard](#) or private IG account)
5. Ask students to choose which items will stay in the box/virtual platform and what story they want to tell with them. Here are a few questions to help guide this decision making:
  - Which of these items hold the most meaning/memory to you?
  - Think about the relationship between these items. Do they show how you can "be more than one thing"?
  - Which items reflect where you come from, who you are now, and into the future?
6. Create a photo set collage utilizing the objects selected. This can be on paper/canvas, a physical set created at small-scale inside a box, life-size photo set like Daveed's work, or a virtual set created using a digital application such as [Canva](#) (free) or [Adobe Spark](#).

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7. Use this opportunity to go over composition techniques, foreground and background, utilizing scale to make an important object seem bigger/smaller and how all those objects together tell a story.
8. Have students bring their photo collage sets to share with the class. Give your classmates a tour of your space, sharing why you selected these objects and why you arranged them in this way.

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## STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7](#)

Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5](#)

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C](#)

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

### [NYC Visual Arts Blueprint Strands](#)

#### Art Making

- Collage
- Sculpture
- Graphic Design
- Digital Media

#### Developing Art Literacy

- Developing Visual Arts Vocabulary

# Photoville Education Resources


Browse the Photoville Education Resource library for over 20 free lesson plans and resource guides for incorporating photography and storytelling into the classroom.

These lesson plans were developed in collaboration with over 150 educators through our [Educator Labs](#). Educators across subject matters interested in incorporating visual storytelling into their curriculum participate in a free one-day professional development workshop that culminates in a hands-on lesson planning session in collaboration with the artist.


We always love hearing how our exhibitions are used in the classroom; if you would like to submit feedback and stories of your experience, please email us: [education@photoville.com](mailto:education@photoville.com).

## Filter Lesson Plans By THEME


[SHOW ALL](#)[COMMUNITY STORIES](#)[ENVIRONMENT](#)[REPRESENTATION & IDENTITY](#)[SOCIAL ISSUES](#)




**Who We Are**  
Students will create a visual project that tells a counter-narrative about themselves and/or their community.  
Inspired by Griselda San Martin




**Music As Artifact**  
Students will look at the music traditions in their own lives, and as a way to connect with a community member.  
Inspired by No Wahala, It's All Good




**Not Only**  
Students will create a narrative that reveals two sides of their partner through portraiture and story writing.  
Inspired by The Players' Tribune




**Me: Inside/Outside**  
Students will use photos to learn about ourselves and each other, both inside and outside of the classroom.  
Inspired by #ThisIs18




**Portrait Of A Space**  
Students will create a photo story that personifies a space that they choose or claim as their own.  
Inspired by Janna Ireland




**Empathy And Photography**  
Students will explore how empathy and representation affect our perceptions of a set of photos.  
Inspired by Bethany Mollenkof



**Typecast**  
Students will reflect on identity and stereotypes inherited from the world.  
Inspired by Haruka Sakaguchi and Griselda San Martin



**Finding Nature**  
Students will make personal connections to the environment through photography.  
Inspired by Culture Trip and Waterkeeper Alliance



**The Story Of A Space**  
Students will tell the story of a community through focused long-term documentation of a small section space.  
Inspired by Michele Asselin

[LOAD MORE](#)

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