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IT'S A FINE ART

HAVE you ever drawn or painted a picture of someone?
If so, you have created a portrait.

Portraits are paintings, sculptures, photographs or another type of art which represent a person.

They usually focus on a person's face and reveal not just their appearance, but aspects of their personality, character and even their mood.

Perhaps the person appears to be proud, or happy, or thoughtful, or annoyed, or sad.

The most common portrait in modern times is a photograph.

There may be framed portrait photos of you or other members of your family on display in your house, or perhaps group portraits of more than one person.

But if you have visited an art gallery or museum, or a stately home like Government House in Hobart, you will have seen painted portraits and other forms of portrait art.

The materials an artists uses to create a work of art are called a 'medium' and the plural of medium is 'media'.

As well as different media, artists use different styles.

Artworks might be realistic or abstract, such as the large picture, right.

Abstract artists use shapes, lines and colours to portray emotions and thoughts and not just what the eyes see.

So an abstract portrait might not be a realistic portrayal of a person's appearance, but it may reveal many important things about them.

This is especially the case if the artwork is a self-portrait, a portrait an artist produces of themselves.

Picture: iStock/ Sloop Communications

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It is fun to examine a portrait and think about what the artist was trying to capture or reveal about the subject, who is known as the 'sitter'.

Often historical portraits of rulers capture the sitter's strength, or wealth and power.

Of course one of the great things about art is there is no right or wrong way to 'read' a portrait, and different people see the artist's clues in different ways.

Your challenge is to produce a self-portrait using any media you like.

You could draw or paint your portrait, or create the artwork using unwanted materials from around the house.

Things like cardboard, buttons, wool, feathers, beads - any unwanted item that can be

recycled (ask an adult family member first).

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) ran a fantastic online school holiday activity about portraits such as this, and the video is still available here:

www.facebook.com/118688216788/videos/852952878518341/

Perhaps you might like to try



The Mona Lisa is generally considered the best known artwork in the world.

The masterpiece was painted by Italian artist Leonardo da Vinci in the early 1500s, and has been on permanent display at the Louvre Museum in Paris since 1797.

Much has been said and written about the expression on Mona Lisa's face, and particularly her mouth and eyes.

Scientists have studied her smile, and whether it shows she was genuinely happy.

What do you think?

The fact that this debate continues, more than 500 years later, is one of the many special things about the artwork.

Picture: Wikimedia Commons

producing an abstract. But whichever approach you take, be creative and have fun.

Self-portraits are a great way to explore your thoughts and ideas. Children's University Tasmania members can earn stamps in their passports for this portrait challenge at the discretion of their school coordinators.

Perplexing paper cut



But more pain was to come...

HAVE you ever wondered why a paper cut hurts so much?

Paper cuts hurt more than you think they probably should because the nerve cells in certain parts of your body, including the skin of your fingers, are more sensitive.

For good reason, these nerve cells, called nociceptors, are sensitive to sensations such as heat, cold and injury and send strong signals to your brain to raise the alarm.

The other thing about paper is it only cuts the surface of your skin, and doesn't damage the nerve fibres the way a deeper cut does, so the nerves are therefore still fully functional and highly activated to alert the brain that something is wrong.

A member of *The Wonder Weekly* team suffered a paper cut last week, and noticed something unusual.

It hurt at the time, but the pain actually got worse a couple of hours later.

How can that be?

Paper cuts are shallow, so they do not bleed as much and clot as quickly, and the nerves remain exposed to irritants.

This might explain why the cut hurt more, two hours later.

Pictures: iStock/ Ljupco/ atoss

A STRICT follower of COVID-19 safe practices, later the same day our paper cut victim applied some hand sanitiser upon entering a food store.

When the hand sanitiser entered the little paper cut wound - ouch!

Our team member felt a sharp pain, much like a burn.

But why?

The hand sanitiser contains alcohol, and alcohol is a chemical which triggers the nerve cells (nociceptors) in your skin that tell you something is burning hot.

So while the alcohol doesn't actually burn you, for a few seconds it feels like it is.

The nociceptors produce a signal that travels through a chain of nerve fibres via the spinal chord to the brain.

This is a good description of how all our sensory nerves work.

Sensory nerves send signals from our skin (touch), eyes (sight), tongue (taste), nose (smell) and ears (hearing) to our brain, so it knows what is happening in the world around us.

It would be useless otherwise.

The nervous system then works in the other direction, from our brain to all parts of our body.

These are the motor nerves and allow our brain to send signals to tell our muscles to move the way we need them to.

Alcohol is not the only chemical which causes a burning sensation.

There are even examples in the food we eat.

If you have ever had a run in with a chilli pepper, you won't be surprised to hear they contain a chemical called capsaicin which can cause stinging pain to the skin.

And if you have ever been unfortunate enough to touch your eye before washing the capsaicin off your fingers, well, let's just say it is not a mistake you make twice.

Just eating a dish containing chilli can leave your mouth burning, so it is strange to think the "heat" is not real.

But the truth is capsaicin fools us into thinking chillies are hot by setting off our heat sensing nociceptors to tell the brain our mouth is burning.

Scientists believe chilli peppers, which are members of the capsicum family, evolved to be spicy to discourage mammals, particularly rodents, from eating them.

And more recently scientists have discovered that hotter chillies are better protected from a harmful fungus.

But the most clever part is, capsaicin does not worry birds, so birds eat chilli peppers and spread the seed in their droppings.

In fact, something within the digestive systems of birds actually helps germinate the chilli seeds.



How to draw an APATOSAURUS

?????? DID YOU KNOW?
The apatosaurus lived in the late Jurassic Period, or more than 140 million years ago. Also known as the brontosaurus, it was about twenty four metres long and weighed in at around thirty tonnes.

Using a pencil draw a large circle for your apatosaurus's body. Next, draw a long curved line through the circle to define the shape of his neck and tail. Add an oval for his head and four smaller ones for his feet. These will be your guides.

Inside the oval, draw the shape of his head. Add a circle for an eye. Now, using the long, curved line as a centre point, draw his neck and tail. Add his legs by drawing lines from the large circle to the four small ovals.

Finish his eye and add a nostril. Draw a line from the middle of his neck to the middle of his tail to defines his underside. Add some small, curved lines on his legs for knees. Inside each of the four small ovals draw the shape of a foot and give him some toes. Rub out the lines you don't want and ink him in with a pen or fine tipped texta.

Artwork: www.johnpollyfarmer.com.au/