

## Images of Teachers, Teaching and Public Service Careers

*Media images impact how students think about possible career choices, including teaching and other public service roles and jobs. Activities ask you to design an interactive image of a teacher in a 21st century school, evaluate images of teachers taken from different media sources over the past 100 years, and develop a social media campaign to encourage young people to a career teaching or another public service field.*

What images come to mind when you think of the word "teacher?"

What image or picture would you create if asked to "**Draw a Teacher Teaching?**"



[Watch on YouTube](#)

When asked to **draw a scientist**, nearly every youngster in the 1960s and 1970s, regardless of gender identity, drew a male figure ([Edutopia](#), May 22, 2019). Today, following progress toward greater gender equity in many occupational fields, 58% of students at the high school level who identify as female are more likely to draw a woman scientist.

Nevertheless, across all students and genders, drawings of male scientists still outnumber drawings of female scientists 4 to 1. Longstanding educational and career stereotypes about women in science remain entrenched.

Longstanding media images of teachers and what they do when teaching in a classroom similarly seem highly resistant to change. In a study comparing the drawings of teachers by college undergraduates, student teaching interns, and practicing teachers, the undergraduates tended to display a teacher at the front of the classroom with students sitting in rows passively listening, while student teaching interns drew students rather than adults at the center of the learning process, and practicing teachers drew more teacher-centered scenes that showed frustration and unhappiness on the part of the adults ([Sinclair et.al., 2013](#)).

What might explain different visions of teaching and teachers among novice and veteran educators? In the following activities, you will design your own image of a teacher, then critically evaluate media images of teachers, before considering ways to use images to inspire young people to go into teaching.

## Activity 1: Design an Interactive Image of a 21st Century Teacher

1. Start a new [Google Drawings canvas](#).
2. Sketch an image of a 21st century teacher teaching.
3. Add text boxes with more information and/or hyperlinks to external sources (e.g., information about 21st century teachers).
4. Go to Insert --> Image --> Search the Web and find Creative Commons/Public Domain images to enrich your drawing. Hyperlink the images to go to external sources (e.g., a YouTube video, article, information about the image).
5. Next, complete Activity 2 (below).
6. Then, return to your drawing and determine whether you want to revise it based on what you learned during Activity 2.

## Activity 2: Evaluate Images of American Teachers

- Curate a digital collection or a [digital timeline](#) of images of teachers and teaching. Include at least one image created during each decade from the 1920s to today. Here are some images you might add to your collection:
  - [1910 imagines what 2020 will look like](#)
  - [Image of teaching, 1920s](#)
  - [1957 stamp from the National Education Association](#)
  - [The American teacher, 2020-2021](#) by Art of Al Abbazia
  - [Remote Teaching is Hard](#)
  - [Super Teacher](#)
- Use the [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Images](#) to critically examine the production, design, and message of these images.
- Based on what you learned from your critical visual analysis of the images:
  1. Return to Activity 1 and consider whether you want to revise your drawing.
  2. Design a TikTok or Snapchat video to inform others about the role of teachers and teaching in present-day society and discuss how media can influence and distort people's perspective of teachers/teaching.

## Activity 3: Develop a Social Media Campaign to Promote Teaching as a Public Service Career

Connected to images of teachers are people's perceptions about the value of **teaching as a career for young people**. Asked whether they would urge a secondary school or college student to become a teacher, fewer than one in five (18%) adults said they would likely encourage their child to pursue a teaching career. More than half of those surveyed emphasized that the pay is too low and the workload is too high. Those who were White and well-off financially were the least likely to support teaching as a child's career choice ([NORC at the University of Chicago, 2022](#)).

How would you go about encouraging young people to become a teacher?

- Research career choice campaigns in the media and their different recruiting slogans: "Be All That You Can Be" for the U.S. Army or "Caring for Others, It's in our Nature" for nursing.
- Come up with a slogan to inspire young people to become teachers.
- Then, design a series of images that elevate the teaching profession.
  - Consider how your images could counteract negative perceptions about teaching as hard work, low pay, high stress, and little respect?
- Develop a social media campaign that includes the images you created, the slogan you came up with, as well as 1-2 other media products (e.g., a TikTok-style video) and text for the social media posts.

### Designing for Learning: Student-Created Activity Example

[Develop a Social Media Campaign to Promote a Public Service Career](#) by Abigail Hamill

### Connecting to the Building Democracy for All eBook

[Building Democracy for All: Is Teaching a Career for You?](#)

## Connecting to the Standards

- [Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards](#)
  - *Explain the importance of public service and identify career and other opportunities in public service at the local, state and national levels.* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) **[8.T4.9]**
- [ISTE Standards](#)
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
- [DLCS Standards](#)
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)
- [English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards](#)
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7



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