



Lesson 4

THE

COMMISSION

PROCESS

Lesson 4: The Commission Process

GRADE LEVEL: HIGH SCHOOL

DURATION: 90 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE:

Students will learn how to professionally interact with clients, set expectations, and manage the commission process, including contracts, pricing, and deadlines.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Sample commission contracts (simplified versions)
- Art pricing guides or worksheets for setting rates
- Role-play scenarios (prepared scripts or prompts)
- Whiteboard/chart paper and markers for brainstorming
- Digital devices (optional) for researching pricing or creating contracts
- Blank paper or templates for creating contracts

WARM-UP:

WHAT DO CLIENTS EXPECT? (10 MINUTES)

Goal: Brainstorm what a client expects from an artist during a commission.

Instructions:

- Ask students: "If you were paying for a custom artwork, what would you expect from the artist?"
- Write responses on the board (e.g., clarity on price, communication, deadlines, quality work).
- Highlight key points: professionalism, communication, pricing transparency, and reliability.

ACTIVITY 1:

ROLE-PLAY CLIENT INTERACTIONS (30 MINUTES)

Goal: Practice professional communication and setting expectations with clients.

Instructions:

- Divide students into pairs. One will act as the artist, and the other as the client.
- Provide role-play prompts for various scenarios, such as:
 - A client wants a detailed family portrait and has a tight budget.
 - A client requests a commissioned pet portrait but has vague ideas.
 - A client wants the artwork finished in two weeks, but the artist's schedule is full.
- Artists must:
 - Ask clear questions to understand the client's needs (size, subject, style, deadlines, budget).
 - Explain what they can realistically deliver and set expectations.
 - Rotate roles and allow students to practice both perspectives.
- Debrief: Discuss as a class:
 - "What was challenging about communicating with a client?"
 - "What strategies helped set clear expectations?"



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ACTIVITY 2:

DISCUSS CONTRACTS, PRICING, AND DEADLINES (25 MINUTES)

Goal: Understand the importance of contracts and practical aspects of commissioned work

Instructions:

- **Contracts:**
 - Explain the purpose of a contract: It protects both the artist and the client by setting clear terms.
 - Show a sample simplified contract and discuss key components:
 - Client information
 - Artwork description (size, medium, subject, style)
 - Timeline (start date, deadlines, delivery method)
 - Pricing and payment terms (deposit, final payment, refunds)
 - Additional terms (revisions, usage rights)
- **Pricing:**
 - Discuss pricing strategies: hourly rates, cost of materials, and value of artistic skill.
 - Provide a simple pricing formula example:
 - $\text{Cost of materials} + \text{Time (hours} \times \text{hourly rate)} + \text{Profit margin} = \text{Total Price}$
- **Deadlines:**
 - Talk about realistic timelines and managing client expectations around deadlines.

ACTIVITY 3:

CREATE A CONTRACT FOR A COMMISSIONED PORTRAIT (20 MINUTES)

Goal: Apply knowledge by drafting a commission contract.

Instructions:

- Provide students with a blank template or let them create their own contract from scratch.
- Scenario: A client has asked for a portrait of their child or pet (students can choose).
- Students must fill out the following:
 - Client details
 - Portrait description (medium, size, subject, and style)
 - Timeline: when they'll start, key milestones, and completion date
 - Pricing: including deposit amount, total cost, and payment schedule
 - Terms for revisions and delivery
- Encourage students to think about their own abilities and time constraints when setting terms.

CLOSING REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION: (5 MINUTES)

Goal: Reinforce the importance of professionalism and clear communication in commissions.

Instructions:

- Ask students to share one takeaway from the lesson, such as:
 - "What did you learn about setting clear terms with a client?"
 - "Why is having a contract important for artists?"

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MODIFICATIONS FOR STUDENT NEEDS

FOR STUDENTS NEEDING SUPPORT:

- Provide a fill-in-the-blank template for contracts.
- Use a simplified pricing worksheet with pre-determined values for time and materials.
- Pair them with a peer during role-play to practice communication skills.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS:

- Challenge students to create a detailed contract for a more complex commission scenario (e.g., large-scale mural or multi-subject painting).
- Discuss real-world challenges like managing difficult clients or negotiating prices.

FOR TIME CONSTRAINTS:

- Limit role-play scenarios to one round per student pair.
- Simplify the contract activity to focus on key components like pricing, deadlines, and description.

ENRICHMENT ADD-ONS

GUEST SPEAKER:

- Invite a local artist to talk about their commission experiences and share tips for client interactions.

CLIENT MEETING SIMULATION:

- Host a mock "client day" where students role-play as artists and clients rotating through quick commission consultations.

DIGITAL TOOLS:

- Introduce online tools like HoneyBook or Trello for managing art commissions and timelines.

CONTRACT REFINEMENT:

- Have students trade contracts with a peer to review and provide feedback on clarity and professionalism.