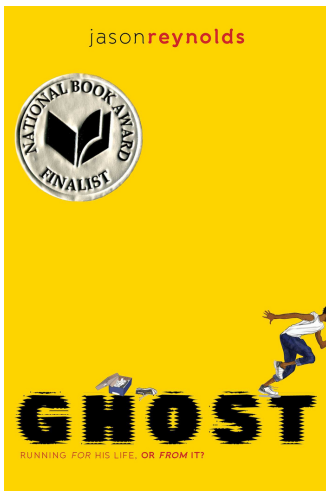


# Art & Lit: Identity Circles



**ARTREACH**  
CREATIVITY. COLLABORATION. CONFIDENCE.



## LITERARY INSPIRATION

Ghost

by Jason Reynolds



## ARTISTIC INSPIRATION

Alma Thomas, who is now recognized as a major American painter of the 20th century, was a Black artist and teacher known for exuberant, colorful abstract paintings

**THEMES** | Courage, Belonging, Discovery, Reflection, Layers, Identity

**ELEMENTS OF ART** | Color, Shape, Space **SUBJECT MATTER** | Repetition, Abstract Art

## Purpose

- Think of the different layers of self - past, present, and future. While we all have a past, it's important to always keep running forward and think: who do we want to be? What dreams are we running towards? While creating this abstract circular piece, symbolic of a runner's track, artists will think about their many different layers, attaching past, present, and future goals for self to each layer with both fingerprints and writing.
- While Castle Crenshaw (Ghost) exhibits anger, rage, and darkness from his past, readers can tell he wants to do the right thing; that he is sensitive, compassionate, loyal, and thoughtful. Running, being on a team, and having a motivational coach all help Ghost face his challenges both on and off the track. The repetitive method of finger prints over and over again paired with journaling and deep breathing, can help participant artists face their own challenges, achieving a sense of calm, relaxation, and even meditation through art. Artists can also be challenged in this step to think of 3 things that they like about themselves to include in the writing circle.
- Being part of the track team, Ghost learns that running is bigger than just for himself. His teammates, his coach, all rely on him as well as each other. The last step to this project is parting with your art by mailing your circles in the envelope so it can be part of larger and collaborative art installation.

## Key Quotes from the Book

- "You can't run away from who you are, but what you can do is run toward who you want to be." (page 155)
- "Don't ever let someone call your life, your dreams, little." (page 92)
- "He tells me I can set a record one day. A real record. Be one of the world's great somethings. Maybe." (page 2)
- "Running ain't nothing I ever had to practice. It's just something I knew how to do." (page 7)
- "Trouble is, you can't run away from yourself." Coach snatched the towel from his shoulder, folded into a perfect square, and set it in the space between us. "Unfortunately," he said, "ain't nobody that fast." (page 51)

## Art Vocabulary

- **ABSTRACT ART:** A style of art that does not look realistic. It is often characterized by the use of geometric line and shapes, bold and bright colors
- **REPETITION:** One object or shape that is repeated, meaning to be exactly the same over and over again
- **RADIATE:** To spread out from a center point, like sun rays
- **WARM COLORS:** A grouping of colors that includes reds, yellows, and oranges
- **COOL COLORS:** A grouping of colors that includes greens, blues, and violets
- **CONCENTRIC CIRCLES:** Circles with a common center, like a target

# Art & Lit: Identity Circles Project Instructions



**ARTREACH**  
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**Objective:** Use shape, repetition, and color to create an abstract art piece representing reflection and identity

*Materials Needed: Cardstock (or heavy, smooth paper), Markers, Scissors, various sized circular objects/lids to trace*  
*Find your **Art Vocabulary Definitions** on the other side of this page.*

1. Find your paper with two 5.5" circles on it. If you don't have the accompanying supply kit, draw two 5.5" circles on your paper. You can find something to trace for your circle, or freehand it.
2. Choose two markers. Think about what those colors represent to you. Are they **warm** or **cool colors**?
3. Lightly trace/freehand 2 to 3 smaller **concentric circles** inside your two 5.5" circle to use as guidelines.
4. Let's start with fingerprints. Use the marker to color the tip of your index finger. Quickly stamp it in the middle of your circle (the bullseye of your target).
5. Now, switch to your second color marker. Color the tip of a different finger, and stamp that finger repeatedly to create a ring around the middle fingerprint. You will need to reapply the marker after every third or so print. Don't worry, it will wash off at the end!
6. Continue to create fingerprint rings in **concentric circles**, alternating between your two colors, starting in the middle and **radiating** out until you reach the outside edge. Enjoy the meditative process of **repetition**, repeating the same task, over and over, to create your **abstract art**.
7. Let's move to the second circle. We will use a similar process, this time with the text from your journal prompts. Start with your first color. Copy your text into the circle, following the curve. Each ring should contain a separate thought. Alternate colors as you work through the **concentric circles**. Notice that the outside rings can hold more text than the tiny space in the center of your circle. How does it feel to write in a circle, moving the paper slowly as you go? Continue writing and alternating colors until the text circle is complete.
8. (If you did not receive pre-cut circles) cut your two circles out. Use a pencil to write Words Alive, your name (first name and last initial), school, and contact (email or a phone number) on the back. Press lightly so your words don't show through the paper.
9. Place your completed circles in the stamped envelope and drop in a mailbox. If you don't have a provided envelope, **please mail to ArtReach at 2210 Columbia Street, San Diego, CA 92101**. Students who submit their final work will be entered to win a raffle item (educational toys, art supply bundles, etc).
10. Just as your fingerprint was only one dot in your larger artwork, your completed circle will be one dot in a \*giant\* circle. Join us for a virtual culminating event to see how your individual Identity Circle is collaboratively installed to create this Community Circle temporary mural! Event details to come.
11. Bonus - Do it again! Teach your family the technique you learned today. How do your fingerprints differ? What else can you make with fingerprint art? What other shapes can you bend your words to fill?