

Discussion Questions for Viewing Art Works & Images

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Introductory questions

What do you see?

What specific details give you information?

What do you see that other people might miss?

How many _____ are there?

What do you think the artist was trying to achieve?

Nickname the work: What title would you give to this piece?

Does knowing the real title help you understand the work?

List 5 words that describe the work.

Questions pertaining to art history:

Why is it important or representative?

Where did it come from?

How do you know _____

What was the purpose of the work?

Who or what influenced this?

How can you classify this work?

How are the art elements used?

How was it made?

How are feelings expressed---how is mood communicated?

How is it composed? –Use of balance, movement, repetition

Analyze the work:

Why is it typical?

How is it innovative?

Exactly where do you see that? (Provide specific evidence)

Attribute the work to (artist, group, region) why do you think that?

Compare the work:

How is this different from _____?

Which work came first? How do you know?

Imagining:

What might be happening?

What just happened?

What will happen next?

What is happening outside the frame?

Predict what each character wants...

What does it remind you of?

Do you see anything familiar?

What are the people doing? How are they interacting with their environment?

What is that person like?

What scents would you smell? What sounds would you hear?

What kind of movie would this inspire? Who would play the lead roles?

Who controls the action?

What would they be saying?

What music would be a soundtrack to this?

What are things you don't know about this work?
What other artists would this artist get along with? Not get along with?
Would you hang the work in your museum?
Which other artwork would you place this next to?

Examining POV--

What would _____ say about this piece?
What role are you cast in as the viewer?
What types of people experienced the work in its time?
What is the artist's attitude towards the subject?
How do background details add to the picture?

Predict what the artist would do next

Theorize; propose an alternative to this view (what would the opposite be?)
Predict how a person of the time might criticize this work. Defend the work.

Follow up:

Methods of student engagement:

1. Comparisons: partners rotate and compare
2. Rotation—sketch or write about the work-pass the paper forward every minute.
3. What's going on outside the frame?
4. Write a poem about the work.

Convergent questions for attributions:

What period is it from? Who made the work?

How you know? (Provide Evidence)

Exactly where do you see that in the work? (Provide specific visual evidence)

What Art History students should do?

Differentiate the components of form, function, content, and/or context of a work of art.

Explain how artistic decisions about art making shape a work of art.

Describe how context influences artistic decisions about creating a work of art.

Analyze form, function, content, and context to infer the intent for creating a specific work of art.

Describe features of artistic convention and/or innovation in a single work of art or in a group of related works.

Explain how and why specific artistic convention(s) and/or innovation(s) are demonstrated in a single work or group of related works at a particular time and place.

Analyze the influence of an artistic innovation in a single work of art or group of related works upon subsequent artistic production.

Identify a work of art.

Analyze how formal qualities of a work of art and/or content of a work of art elicit a response.

Analyze how contextual variables lead to different interpretations of a work of art.

Justify attribution of an unknown work of art.

Analyze relationships between two works of art from the image set based on their similarities and differences.

Interpret works of art.