

A CLOSE READING OF A WORK OF ART

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Grade Level: Elementary MS HS

Background Information:

The Common Core Standards include works of art as text. Studying works of art with close observation engages students and gets them interested in writing about their observations. With this in mind, have students “read” a piece of art and answer text dependent questions such as: What’s going on in the artwork? What do you see that makes you say that? What do you see? What do you think about that? What does it make you wonder?

When we do this we are asking students to respond to text and support their answers with evidence from the text. They apply the same critical thinking and analysis skills to reading the visual image as they would with print. Then ask them to write about it.

Common Core Standards:

Reading:

Key Ideas and Details – ask and answer questions about the text, central message, describe characters

Craft and Structure – meaning of words and phrases; point of view

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas – mood, character, setting, compare and contrast

Writing: opinion pieces; informative writing; short research projects to build knowledge

Speaking and Listening - collaborative discussions; report on a topic

Content Standards:

1.0 Artistic Perception – Processing, analyzing and responding to sensory information through the language of art.

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing – Responding to, analyzing and making judgments about works of art.

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to formulate and support a position regarding the aesthetic value of a work of art and change or defend that position after considering the views of others.

Materials:

Art print/s

Writing paper and pen/pencil

Informative text about the artist and selected work of art

Procedure:

Pass out notebook paper and have students draw a line vertically down the middle of paper.

Display a work of art and ask students to study it. Ask students to do a quick write on the left side of the paper about what they think the artist is trying to say (mood, feelings, message)? Students share in large or small group.

Pass out text about the artist. Students read and mark text for important facts and information.

On the right side of the paper students use the text to support or change their opinion about the piece.

Students share again what they learned. Did their opinion change?

Students write about their point of view of the aesthetic value of the work of art.

Note: If students are familiar with Socratic Seminar follow that protocol.