



Artful Looking

A GREENACRES SCHOOL PTA PROGRAM

GRADES K-5

Introduction to Artful Looking/Program Goal

Artful looking is designed to increase students' visual literacy and critical thinking skills through the close examination of different works of art. This program is not meant to be an extensive lesson in Art History or Aesthetics. Rather, this program is meant to develop skills that can be transferred to other subject areas in the classroom and to their everyday lives. Students will increase their listening skills and have the opportunity to engage in a variety of discussion topics with teachers and their classmates.

Through the careful study of different works of art, students can interpret historical information, describe change over time, and learn about other people, places and ideas. When assessing works of art, students can evaluate multiple points of view and diverse perspectives and artistic processes. The goal of *Artful Looking* program is to enhance students' visual literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills in a relaxed environment, while making connections to their everyday lives.

The works of art to be shown have been carefully sequenced into a particular order and have been chosen for their "visual readability and complexity" and relationship to the school curriculum.

Role of the Volunteer/Facilitator

The role of the volunteer is that of a facilitator and guide for the discussion and exploration of the works of art. Your continued support of the students' comments and observations is paramount to building a sense of trust and collaboration between you and the group as well as developing an environment in which students become more accountable for their own learning. Please be patient and listen to students' responses carefully. If their responses are completely off the mark, try to redirect them to the subject matter at hand by referring to the work of art. This does not mean jumping to the next topic or another student but rather means sticking to the same topic and working with the same student. It is important to ask additional questions or build upon questions with a student. (Note: use your judgment in questioning. If the student is shy or uncomfortable with ongoing questioning, by all means, move on.)

Volunteers not only execute the brainstorm and ask the initial questions to engage the students but throughout the session they should continue to:

- Ask follow up questions to deepen the discussion,
- Support students to provide more detailed descriptions of their observations,
- Ask the students to provide the evidence for their interpretations,
- Present additional information, when appropriate, to deepen or clarify understanding,
- Redirect the conversation when it loses focus,
- Summarize the students' comments and observations,
- Assist the students to articulate their conclusions, and
- Provide closure and summary to the discussion.

At various points in the lessons, volunteers are asked to introduce and to oversee additional activities (creating inventory lists, reading poems, distributing detail cards

etc.) that provide the student with other lenses through which to engage with the works of art. These interdisciplinary activities provide other avenues for discovery of an image but also cater to different types of learning styles.

After your class visit, prepare a brief follow up note. Your class parents can distribute via email. The note should include a 1-sentence description of the program along with a bulleted list describing the works of art seen in class and a few key points of note. Include images or links to images and please encourage families to see the works themselves at local museums, if available. Classroom teachers sometimes have specific thoughts on follow ups.

Questioning Technique

Students will be engaged in looking at and discussing works of art through a series of simple, open-ended questions that allow them to make detailed observations, create interpretations, gather visual evidence to support these interpretations, and then draw conclusions based on this visual information with regard to the theme under consideration. The basic questions that are used are:

- Who can tell me what they see?
- What do you see? or What do you notice?
- What is going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that? or How do you know?
- What else can you tell me?
- Does anyone see something different?
- How do we know that?

Please remember that even if the students say something that may not make sense at first, do not dismiss it, rather ask them to further explain what they meant. Sometimes their ideas might be on point, but they do not have the words to adequately express their thoughts concisely and need to make a longer explanation to get their point across. If students arrive at an answer that is different from what you expected during the first round of questioning, please be patient and continue to ask questions and probe upon their responses. Ask follow up questions to the same student in order to deepen the discussion. Try not to move on immediately to another student; be sure you get the full idea from the student and probe in order to direct the class discussion.

Try to use as many open-ended questions and the conditional tense as much as possible with this program. ***Try to avoid to questions that lead to only yes or no responses.***

It is better to use conditional words when crafting your questions such as: might, could, would, may, describe, consider, possible. Using conditional words will help students gain trust, and realize that it is important to have an environment where differing observations and interpretations co-exist.

There is a difference between careful observation and making sense of a work of art. What we see (careful observation) is like using factual language. Factual language

presents only the facts (what we see) and is rooted in concrete observations of what happened, what is true, what is present. Judgmental language goes beyond the facts to present a person's interpretation of and feelings about a work of art, or In other words making sense of what we see. The students will probably use both factual and judgmental language but it is important that you have them follow up with evidence that is visible in the work of art. Keep on returning the focus to the work of art.

Teacher Tip – Before You Begin

It is very important to not share the title or the name of the artist (label information) in the very beginning of the lesson with the students. The reason why this label information is not shared immediately with students is that it often affects their "looking" and interpretation skills. Remind the students that they will be looking closely at works of art and discussing what they see. Specifically, they will be thinking about how artists use their works of art to tell people about certain ideas they have or things or places they want to share. Just like a writer uses nouns, verbs, adverbs, and different punctuation to keep a written work interesting, an artist uses the elements of art (color, line, shape, texture, and volumetric form) to attract a viewer. Please consult the Elements of Art Handout for more detail on these terms. All these parts "tell a story" to make the whole more interesting and compelling for the viewer. Remember to look, listen, question, and respond!

Classroom Introduction, Creating an Inventory

After you introduce yourself to the class, explain that this year once again you will be looking at different works of art as a group and discussing all the things that you see together. **Specifically, they will be thinking about how artists use their works of art to tell "stories" about other people, places, things, and ideas.** Let the students know you are interested in what they have to say but that you expect them to be good listeners both to you and to their classmates and to participate in the discussion. Reassure the students that everyone's participation in the discussion makes the experience and the conversation much better.

When you create your inventory or list, you work to capture observations (facts) the students notice. You can write these observations on a giant Post-it paper so the students can refer to what has already been observed. With younger children, they will not be able to read the inventory but you can use it to keep yourself on track and repeat the observations back to the students.

Repeat and summarize responses as this builds trust with the group and also shows that you value each of their observations and opinions. Be patient and listen carefully. Sometimes their ideas might be on point but they do not have the words that they need to say it concisely and need to make a longer explanation to get their point across.

When you first show a work of art, please remember not to share the title or the artist with the students. There will be an appropriate time in each lesson to provide this information. Begin by projecting the first work onto the SMARTboard. Have the

students take a few minutes and just sit and look at the work of art. Slowly begin the process of:

- looking closely
- describing what they see
- discussing and explaining their observations
- making interpretations and drawing and supporting conclusions

Props

Many lessons include props. Some of the props include artist's tools (palette knife), books (Tar Beach), detail cards, etc. Please be sure to collect these items from the PTA supply closet in the basement of Greenacres School. Build time into your class visits to return the items to the supply closet afterwards.

The props and related activities will help engage students with different learning styles.

Technology

You will be using the SMARTboard in all class visits. Please let the teacher know you will need both the SMARTboard and Internet access ahead of time.

Be sure to arrive fifteen minutes before start time to ensure the technology is enabled and you can start the PowerPoint presentation promptly.

Elements of Art

The elements of art are the building blocks used by artists to create a work of art.



Line is a mark with greater length than width. Lines can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal; straight or curved; thick or thin.



Shape is a closed line. Shapes can be geometric, like squares and circles; or organic, like free-form or natural shapes. Shapes are flat and can express length and width.



Forms are three-dimensional shapes expressing length, width, and depth. Balls, cylinders, boxes, and pyramids are forms.



Space is the area between and around objects. The space around objects is often called negative space; negative space has shape. Space can also refer to the feeling of depth. Real space is three-dimensional; in visual art, when we create the feeling or illusion of depth, we call it space.



Color is light reflected off of objects. Color has three main characteristics: *hue* (the name of the color, such as red, green, blue, etc.), *value* (how light or dark it is), and *intensity* (how bright or dull it is).

- White is pure light; black is the absence of light.
- Primary colors are the only true colors (red, blue, and yellow). All other colors are mixes of primary colors.
- Secondary colors are two primary colors mixed together (green, orange, violet).
- Intermediate colors, sometimes called tertiary colors, are made by mixing a primary and secondary color together. Some examples of intermediate colors are yellow green, blue green, and blue violet.
- Complementary colors are located directly across from each other on the *color wheel* (an arrangement of colors along a circular diagram to show how they are related to one another). Complementary pairs contrast because they share no common colors. For example, red and green are complements, because green is made of blue and yellow. When complementary colors are mixed together, they neutralize each other to make brown.



Texture is the surface quality that can be seen and felt. Textures can be rough or smooth, soft or hard. Textures do not always feel the way they look; for example, a drawing of a porcupine may look prickly, but if you touch the drawing, the paper is still smooth.