

ARTFUL THINKING ROUTINES FOR “HOW PEOPLE LIVED” (HPL)

Notes upfront: “What Makes You Say That?,” “Looking: Ten Times Two,” “I Used to Think, Now I Think,” pair share and the use of body position (sitting tall, changing seat location, or striking the subject’s pose)—are techniques and/or routines applicable to any artwork, including subs. In this exercise—which is meant only as a creative template--the six HPL artworks have been divided into pairs with the same routines, for the most part, so that viewers can further develop their artistic sensibilities and, in turn, their sense of wonder.

HYDRIA, ANTIMENES PAINTER, ANCIENT GREECE, 530-500 BCE

1. Claim/Support/Question

(Option: assume the body pose representing the shape of the vase.) With this vase, the artist was trying to tell us that the world is ordered, and harmonic, and beautiful. What do you see (or feel) that supports this claim? What questions remain? What new questions are raised by this claim?

2. Headlines

(Facilitate a discussion of the purpose of the vase, the making of the vase, and the codes and symbols in the decoration.) Invent a headline that captures one important aspect of this vase. (Pair share, then group share.)

3. Step Inside

Imagine that you are the clay of this vase, and that you can think and feel. What are you (as the clay) thinking, when you are being formed or shaped and carved and painted by Antimenes and fired...and maybe bought and sold, and sold again? What can you sense, when you are being used outside to carry water? When you are being filled, what might you know about? What are you saying, with your decoration—i.e., what do you care about or believe? Take a moment and talk to your neighbor (in the first person), as if you were the clay; talk about what you are, where you are, and what you are experiencing.

RAINY EVENING ON HENNEPIN AVENUE, ROBERT KOEHLER, AMERICAN (MPLS). c1902

1. Claim/Support/Question

In this painting—of his wife and son and dog crossing a busy street in Minneapolis—Mr. Koehler was trying to tell us that home and family bring calm and stability to a changing world. What do you see that supports this claim? What questions remain? What new questions are raised by this claim?

2. Headlines

(Facilitate a discussion of the Munich Academy, and how that painting style might have helped Mr. Koehler capture this misty, rainy scene.) Invent a headline that captures one important aspect of this painting.

3. Step Inside

Imagine that you are the boy crossing the street. What might the boy sense and feel? What might he know about or believe? What might he care about? Take on the character of Edwin and improvise a monologue (=make up words he might be saying, to others or to himself). Speaking in the first person, tell us (or your neighbor) what you are experiencing.

DRAGONFLY HELMET, JAPAN, 1600s

1. The Complexity Scale

(After a long look, walking around the object, gather as a group.) What do we know about Samurai armor? (Facilitate. Along the way, point out the distinction between observations, facts and ideas. Pick one observation and continue:) You seem pretty interested in the eyes today (for example). (If necessary, reposition the group for a closer view.) If “1” is Simple and “5” is Complex, where are the eyes on the Complexity Scale? (Pause.) Tell your neighbor, and explain why you want to put it there. (Then, if time allows, group share.)

2. See/Think/Wonder

(Variation: After a long look, gather to answer as a group: What do we know about Samurai armor—or, for younger viewers, what do we know about helmets? Facilitate; then invite the students to spread out around the artwork, and take another long look. Then begin the routine, while they are looking:) What do you see, when you look at this object? (Group share; eyes on artwork; pause, and ask the second question:) What do you *think* about what you see? (Group share; eyes on artwork; pause, and ask the final question:) What do you *wonder* about this object? Transition back to group awareness with an associative question or statement—e.g., so if the artist (or the warrior, or the patron, etc.) was here with us right now, you might... ; then move on to the next artwork.

SANDE SOCIETY MASK, SIERRA LEONE, AFRICA, 1900s

1. The Complexity Scale

(After a long look, walking around the object, gather as a group.) What do we know about masks? (Facilitate, in group share: masks as art, as costume, as dance part, as holder of spiritual power, as symbol of prestige, as mystery, as cover-up, etc. Along the way, distinguish between observations, facts and ideas. Reflecting on the conversation, continue:) This mask was made for a Sande woman, in Sierra Leone, to portray the woman-spirit of “Sande”—particularly to younger members. If “1” is Simple and “5” is Complex, where is the darkness (for example) of this mask, on the Complexity Scale? (Pause.) Tell your neighbor, and explain why you want to put it there. (Then, if time allows, group share.)

2. See/Think/Wonder

This mask was made for a Sande woman, in Sierra Leone, to portray the woman-spirit of “Sande..—particularly to younger members. (Invite the students to spread out around the artwork and take a

long look. Then begin the routine, while they are looking:) What do you see, when you look at this object? (Group share; eyes on artwork; pause, and ask the second question:) What do you *think* about what you see? (Group share; eyes on artwork; pause, and ask the final question:) What do you *wonder* about this object? Transition back to group awareness with a summary question or statement—e.g., so today we have some questions for the dancer (or the artist, or the landscape, or the viewer, etc.); then move on to the next artwork.

THE FALCONERS TAPESTRY, FRANCE, c.1445-55

1. Colors/ Shapes/Lines

To be used in conjunction with the Coustard portrait, to open up interesting possibilities for compare/contrast and wonder:

(As prescribed:) Look at the artwork or object for a moment. What **colors** do you see? (Pause; pair share, then group share.) What **shapes** do you see? (Pause; pair share, then group share.) What **lines** do you see? (Pause; pair share, then group share.)

(After the same exercise is done with the Coustard portrait, compare and contrast...and brainstorm as a group a list of wonder questions as to why the differences in color, shape and line might exist. Facilitate according to their age and knowledge level.)

2. The Elaboration Game

(As prescribed, to train eyes and adjust to looking at the medieval tapestry medium:) As a group, you'll observe and describe several different sections of an artwork. 1. One person identifies a specific section of the artwork and describes what he or she sees. Another person **elaborates** on the first person's observations by adding more detail about the section. A third person **elaborates** further by adding yet more detail, and a fourth person adds yet more. *Observers: Only describe what you see. Hold off giving your ideas about the art until the last step of the routine.* 2. After four people have described a section in detail, another person identifies a new section of the artwork and the process starts over.

PORTRAIT OF CATHERINE COUSTARD w/LEONOR, FRANCE, c.1700

1. Colors/Shapes/Lines

To be used in conjunction with the Falconers tapestry, to open up interesting possibilities for compare/contrast and wonder:

(As prescribed:) Look at the artwork or object for a moment. What **colors** do you see? (Pause; pair share, then group share.) What **shapes** do you see? (Pause; pair share, then group share.) What **lines** do you see? (Pause; pair share, then group share.)

(After the same exercise is done with the Falconers tapestry, compare and contrast...and brainstorm as a group a list of wonder questions as to why the differences in color, shape and line might exist. Facilitate according to their age and knowledge level.)

2. Think/Puzzle/Explore

(Start with a long look, then gather as a group. Your job will be to offer one or two rich facts about the artwork, which might prompt them to wonder.) In paying for this portrait, Madame Coustard wanted her family to “fit in” and look or feel important. (Explore; facilitate, weaving in art historical facts as appropriate—e.g., about the painter, art materials, composition, size, technique and execution, etc. Then let them return to the painting for another long look:) What do you **think** you know about this artwork or topic? (Pause; then pair share.) What questions or **puzzles** do you have? (Pause; then pair share.) What does the artwork or topic make you want to **explore**? (Pause; pair share, then group share.)

KWC
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SUMMARY OF ROUTINES

For Comparing and Connecting:

“Headlines”-- Hydria and Rainy Evening

“I Used to Think, Now I Think” -- any artwork, including subs

For Exploring Viewpoints:

“Step Inside” – Hydria and Rainy Evening

For Finding Complexity:

“The Complexity Scale” – Dragonfly Helmet and Sande Mask

For Observing and Describing:

“The Elaboration Game” – Falconers

“Colors/Shapes/Lines” – Falconers and Coustard

“Looking: Ten Times Two” – any artwork, including subs

For Questioning and Investigating:

“See/Think/Wonder” -- Dragonfly Helmet and Sande Mask

“Think/Puzzle/Explore” -- Coustard

For Reasoning:

“What Makes You Say That?” – any artwork, including subs

“Claim/Support/Question” – for Hydria and Rainy Evening