

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS (Description, Interpretation, and Association)

Object 1: Italy, Standing Deity Holding Horn and Bucket

Description:

- What's going on in this picture?
- What is this person wearing? Describe (what kind of) [the] individual you see in this work of art.
- (How is a fresco different from a painting?) – [requires prior knowledge; a fresco is “a painting”]

Interpretation:

- What [do you think] this person is doing? Why do you think he is holding these objects?
- Do you think this is a male or female? (Why do you say that?) [What do you see that makes you say that?]
- What challenge may an artist face working with fresco versus oil? [After you have described the fresco process.]
- What [do you think] was the artist's purpose in depicting this scene?
- [Followup: Based on how you described the Lars' clothing, in what kind of environment do you think he lives?]

Association:

- Where would you wear an outfit like this today?
- If you had this piece in your home, where might you hang it up? Why would you put it there?
- Where else might you have seen frescoes? [Could be difficult; depends on your discussion]
- What kind of sacred spots or objects do people have in their homes for devotional purposes?

Object 2: Greece/Rome, Doryphoros

Description:

- What do you see? Tell me what you see.
- What do you think he is doing?
- Why is the block attaching his wrist and hip? [Notice how the wrist and hip are attached. Why do you think the artist attached them? Although there is a “correct” answer.]
- If you could touch this sculpture, how do you think it would feel (like)? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Describe the [type of] material you think this is made of.

Interpretation:

- Why do you think the artist made this sculpture?
- [Based on how the Doryphoros is portrayed,] what do you think this culture valued in a man?
- Why do you think the artist carved this figure without clothes/nude?
- Look at the hair—why do you think the artist decided to give him curly hair? [Do you mean this to be subjective or are you looking for something?]

Association:

- Do you know anyone who looks like this? (yes/no question) [Where might you see someone today who looks like this?]
- Is this an ideal body of the 21st century? (yes/no) [What do we consider an ideal body today?]
- What would you have to do to have a body like this?
- Try and stand in this same pose. [Let's give this pose a try – give them some direction.]
- What Olympic sports do you think this guy might participate in?

Object 3: Egypt, Mummy and Cartonnage of Lady Tashat

Description:

- Describe what types of figures/images you see.
- (How do you think it was made?) – [requires prior knowledge]
- Describe the images you see on the outside of the case of the mummy.
- Compare the details on the outer case to the inner case. [How are the details on the outer case similar to those on the inner case? How are they different?]

Interpretation:

- What do you think it was used for? [This question encourages guessing and right or wrong answers.]
- Why do you think they [the artist? the culture?] picked these images?
- What do you think this burial method tells us about Egyptian culture and attitudes about death?
- What do you think the images might be telling us about this person's life?

Association:

- Which image captured your attention and why?
- Adults: How is this different from what you may have seen at a funeral you attended?
- How is this different from how we celebrate (/compare?) people's lives today in our culture?
- What symbols would you choose to have on someone's [your] coffin?

Object 4: Chou/Zhou dynasty jades case

Description:

- What shapes do you see?
- How would it feel to hold one of these?
- Describe what you see in the case. [Describe what's in front of you in the case.]
- What different shapes do you see? What kind of differences do you see?

Interpretation:

- Why do some have holes—they didn't have drills. How did they make the holes—why? [too hard – encourages guessing]
- What do you think these objects were used for? [too hard – encourages guessing]
- Why do you think some pieces were detailed and decorative? [Jade, which is a very hard substance, could not be carved. It had to be abraded. What does the level of intricate detail say about these objects?]

Association:

- Does this remind you of anything [you have] at home (that reminds you of one of those)?
- Children: In China animals have personality or characteristics. (What do you think the personality of a rabbit is?) [What are some characteristics of a rabbit?] Adults: birth year/zodiac.
- If you could wear one of these pieces, which one would you choose and why?
- Is there anything you have in your life like this that is special to you? [Many of these jade objects were meant to be worn. What do you wear that is special to you?]

Object 5: SE Asia, Lopburi-Pa Sak ceremonial vessels

Description:

- Describe the different shapes you see on these vessels.
- How do you think it would feel if you could touch them?
- Describe the patterns and shapes you see on the ceremonial vessels. [What elements in nature do they look like to you?]
- Describe the animal you see.

Interpretation:

- What do you think these vessels were used for? [encourages guessing]
- What do you think they are made of? [encourages guessing]
- What can you perhaps tell about the people's lives who used these objects?
- [We talked about the vessel that looks like a water buffalo. What do you think it says about the role of the buffalo when someone makes an image of it?]

Association:

- [In] what room in your home might you have one of these items?
- What would you put in these containers if you owned them?
- These are ceremonial objects. Are there any objects in your home that have special meaning? (yes/no) [What objects in your home have special meaning?]
- These are ceremonial objects. What objects do you use for celebrating?

Object 6: Egypt, False Door

Description:

- Describe what you see.
- What shapes/objects do you see?
- If you could touch this object, how would it feel?
- Describe the images you see on the object.
- [Point out an image of Iry en-akhet and his name. Where do you see more images of Iry and his name?]

Interpretation:

- How do you think the shapes relate to the four men below? [too hard]
- Why do you think the men on the outside are taller/bigger than the men on the inside? [What are you looking for with this question?]
- Everybody stand like the man on the left. How does it feel?
- Why do you think the artist has the figures facing each other?
- Why do you think they have all these marks around the larger figures? [perhaps too hard and requires prior knowledge]
- [We discussed how the ka (spirit) needs to be able to find the body. Why do you think the artist included so many pictures of Iry?]
- [Based on what you can see, why do you think this is called a "false door"?

Association:

- What kinds of things have you seen at a funeral or cemetery? [similar or different]
- How do we think about [remember] people after they die?
- Is this like any door you have in your house? [How is this door different from the doors in your house?]

- If you were going to draw a person, how would it be different? [How would you draw a person to remember him/her?]

Object 7: Greece, Black-figured Hydria

Description:

- What's going on, on the front of this vessel?
- Why are some figures larger than others? [Why do you think . . .]
- What animals do you see?
- What do you see?
- What colors do you see?

Interpretation:

- Why do you think the middle register is bigger? [not sure what you're aiming for]
- Why do you think the skin tone is white on some versus others? [encourages guessing]
- Describe what you think this was used for. [encourages guessing and there's a "right" answer]
- What story do you think the artist is trying to share? [too hard; requires prior knowledge]
- [The Greeks depicted stories of gods and goddesses on their pottery. What does this suggest about the use or purpose of these stories?]
- Why do you think there are animals on the vase?

Association:

- Where do you want to be standing in this scene?
- (What do you think this was used for?)
- What would you use this jar for in your home?
- If you were painting a pot, how would you decorate it? [What story would you put a pot you were making?]
- What do you use to carry water? [How do we carry or store water today?]

Object 8: China, Longshan Stem Cups

Description:

- Describe how these would feel to hold in your hand.
- What do you think these are made of? [If you use this question, you must be affirming of every answer: Yes, they look like metal; but they are made of clay!]
- If you could touch these, how would they feel?

Interpretation:

- What would you use the objects for? [Association question]
- How do you think these were made? [too hard – encourages guessing]
- What do you think these were used for? [too hard – encourages guessing]
- Why do you think there are patterns on these?
- [These cups belonged to someone of high status. What about them makes them seem special or makes them stand out from other cups?]

Association:

- How are these cups different from other cups you've seen/used?
- When would you use these cups?
- How are these alike or different from your cups?
- Which one would you like to drink from?