

Describe

Make a list of the visual qualities of the work that are obvious and immediately perceived. This should be done in a neutral manner avoiding words such as beautiful, funny, etc. and should not include any opinions. Some helpful questions to ask your students include:

1. What is the Artist's Name?
2. What is the Title of the Artwork?
3. What Date/Year was the Artwork Created?
4. What Medium or Materials were used?
5. What do you see in the picture? (Only describe what you see, ex: trees, sky, animals, etc. Do not interpret anything)
6. What kind of subject matter is in the picture (Ex: Rural farm scene, landscape, and industrial imagery. Do not interpret or judge anything in this stage).
7. Is the canvas portrait or landscape?

Analyze

Write about the Elements of Art (Line, Shape, Color, Texture, Value, Form & Space), Principles of Design (Balance, Unity, Variety, Emphasis, Movement, Pattern, Proportion) and the relationships between the subjects that you mentioned in the description. Some helpful questions to ask your students include:

1. What is in the foreground, mid-ground, and background?
2. How has the picture been arranged?
3. What colors are used and how have they been arranged?
4. What shapes are there and how have they been arranged?
5. Are there any leading lines and if so, where is your eye lead?
6. Is there any use of contrast, if so where?
7. Is there any use of pattern, if so where?
8. Is there a sense of space or perspective?
9. Are there any special techniques employed by the artist?

Interpret

Interpretation attempts to get at the meaning of the artwork. Use the information learned from the first two steps in order to try and interpret what the artist was attempting to achieve with this artwork. Some helpful questions to ask your students include:

1. How is the title of the artwork related to the content of the artwork?
2. What areas did you notice first? What areas did you notice after observing the painting for a few moments? Do you think there is a relationship between what you first noticed and what you noticed later?
3. What story is the artist trying to tell us through this artwork?
4. How does this artwork make you feel when you look at it?

Judgment

Judgment, the final step, is when an opinion is expressed about an artwork after it has really been examined. It is often human nature to pass judgment on an artwork as the first step during the critique process, however, it is important to critically assess a work of art prior to formulating an opinion. Some helpful questions to ask you students include:

1. What did you like or dislike about this artwork? Explain why you like or dislike this artwork.
2. How successful do you think the artist was?