

ritismThe Art Criticism Process

The students will use the following structure to help them organize what they learn about selected artwork.

The "reading" process is divided into four steps:

- 1. Description** **2. Analysis** **3. Interpretation and** **4. Judgment**

Step 1 – Description (What do you see?)

- What is the name of the artist who created the artwork?
- What kind of an artwork is it?
- What is the name of the artwork?
- When was this artwork created?
- Name some other major events in history that occurred at the same time this artwork was created.
- List the literal objects in the painting (trees, people, animals, mountains, rivers, etc.).
- Consider the significant Elements and Principles that are present in this artwork and describe them:

Elements of Art

LINE
SHAPE
FORM
SPACE

TEXTURE
COLOR
VALUE

Principles of Design

BALANCE PROPORTION
HARMONY VARIETY
MOVEMENT RHYTHM

EMPHASIS
UNITY

Step 2 – Analysis (Why and How?)

Try to figure out what the artist has done to achieve certain effects. You should refer to your first impressions and try to explain how the artwork achieves that reaction.

- How are the Elements of Art (color, shape, line, texture, space, form, value) and the Principles of Design (balance, contrast, emphasis, movement/rhythm, unity, variety) used in this artwork?
- What do you notice about the artist's choice of materials?
- What grabs your attention in the work?
- At what do you think this artist worked particularly hard at while he/she did this work?
- Do you see any relationship between the things you listed during the description stage?
- What mood or feeling do you have when you look at this work of art?
- What "qualities" do you see in this work?

Step 3 – Interpretation (What does it mean? What feelings do you get?)

Try to figure out what the artwork is about. Your own perspectives, associations and experiences meet with "the evidence" found in the work of art. All art works are about something. Some art works are about color, their subject matter, and social or cultural issues. Some art works are very accessible - that is relatively easy for the viewer to understand what the artist was doing. Other works are highly intellectual, and might not be as easy for us to know what the artist was thinking.

- What is the theme or subject of the work?
- What is the work about; what do you think it means?
- Why do you think the artist created this work?
- What do you think the artist's view of the world is?
- Do you think there are things in the artwork that represent other things - symbols?

Step 4 - Judgment

Do you like or dislike this artwork? Do you think it is a good artwork? Do think it is an important artwork? Would display this artwork in your home? Is this artwork good enough to put in a museum?

Justify your opinion. Explain why you feel the way you do about this artwork based on what you have learned about it.