

# BEGINNING/MIDDLE/END

## *A routine for observing and imagining*

### **Directions:**

Select a work of art, and choose one of the following questions for students to respond to using their imagination:

1. If this work of art is the beginning of a story, what might the beginning of the story be? What might happen next?
2. If it this work of art is the middle of a story, what might have happened before? What might be about to happen?
3. If this work of art is the end of a story, what might the story be?

### **What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?**

This routine is a springboard for imaginative exploration. It uses the power of narrative to help students make observations and use their imagination to elaborate on and extend their ideas. Its emphasis on storytelling also encourages students to look for connections, patterns, and meanings.

### **When and where can it be used?**

The routine works with any kind of visual work of art that stays still in time – such as painting or sculpture.

Use *Beginning/Middle/End* when you want students to develop their writing or storytelling skills. You can use the questions in the routine in the open-ended way they are written. Or, if you are connecting the work of art to a topic in the curriculum, you can link the questions to the topic.

The routine is especially useful as a writing activity. To really deepen students' writing, you can use the *Looking: Ten Times Two* or *What Makes You Say That?* routines with the same artwork prior to using this routine as a way of helping students generate descriptive language to use in their stories.

### **What are some *tips* for starting and using this routine?**

Give your students quiet time to look *before* they begin writing or speaking. If you like, take a few minutes to ask the class as a whole to name several things they see in the work of art, before they begin thinking individually about a story.

If students are writing, they can talk over their ideas with a partner before they begin to write individually. They can also write in pairs. If students are doing the routine verbally, they can tell stories individually, or work in pairs or small groups to imagine a story together. You can also imagine a story as a whole class by asking someone to begin a story and having others elaborate on it.