

LOOKING: NOUNS/ADJECTIVES/VERBS LISTS OF 5

A routine for observing and describing in categories

Directions:

1. Look at a painting/sculpture for a full minute.
2. On your own, list five nouns (people, places, or things) you see in the artwork. Share something from your list with the class or with a partner.
3. Look again and list five adjectives (describing words—sizes, ages, shapes, colors, origins, materials, kinds, feelings); describe some of the nouns already listed or write new describing words together.
4. Look a third time with a partner and list five verbs (action or being words) you see.
5. Share a new observation with the class.

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

The routine helps students slow down and make careful observations about an object and categorize descriptions into parts of speech. It asks students to think about words or phrases to describe the work and encourages students to push beyond first glance or obvious description.

When and where can it be used?

The routine works best with works of art in which nouns and verbs can be identified or projected.

Use *Looking: Nouns/Adjectives/Verbs* after you have taught students about parts of speech. This can be a way to apply their knowledge and is a practical activity for English Language Learners. The routine is also useful before other types of writing activities with descriptive language and observations.

Alternatively, this can be used to engage students in careful looking before using another routine, such as *What makes you say that?* or *Wonder/Connect*, or you can use the routine after an in-depth discussion about an artwork to both push forward and summarize some of the ideas and observations that were made during the conversation.

What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

Give your students time to look, and let students know that you will be the timekeeper. Quiet, uninterrupted thinking and looking is essential to this activity.

Students can work as a class or in small groups. You can also vary the way students work. For example, students might generate the first list of words alone, writing their ideas down on sticky notes so that they can be posted to a class list of observations. Then, do the second look in groups with the teacher recording students' observations on chart paper, and finally, a third look in pairs. Make sure that the descriptive words and phrases generated are made visible for the whole group at some point in the discussion. Add to the list as necessary during any follow-up conversations.

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