

Activity: Zoom In

Imagine you are a photographer. What makes a “good” photograph? Sometimes we like to capture an expansive scene like the Grand Canyon, and other times it’s interesting to “zoom in” on individuals or objects. Photographers and writers both take snapshots of life. Let’s practice using our zoom lens.

Activity:

1. Observe the painting closely
2. Write one line on your paper to describe the large view (ex. A table sits in the middle of the room)
3. Now turn that imaginary zoom lens one notch and describe one object. Notice textures like bumpy, smooth, slippery. Notice light, color, shape.
4. Zoom in one more time to describe a small part of that object. Push yourself to get as close as you can.
5. Read your writing to a partner. What details made this seem real?

Object:

Vanitas (Still Life), by Willem Claesz Heda

Location: European Art 1650-1830 Gallery (First Floor)



Activity: Word Mix-Up

Art is a fun time. Fun is art time. Is time art? In this activity, you can play with art and words, rearranging them to form as many combinations as you can.

Activity:

1. Choose one sentence or phrase in your selected work of art. The phrase should be about 5-7 words long. Write each word on a separate post-it note.
2. Arrange the post-it notes on the floor to make a new phrase. Write it down on a separate piece of paper.
3. Re-arrange the post-it notes to form a new phrase. Write down that phrase underneath the first one. You can leave out a word if necessary.
4. Keep going! See how many different versions you can make.

Object:

Musa, by Grace Hartigan

Location: Taubman Gallery (Second Floor)



Activity: Create a Conversation

Sometimes overhearing part of a conversation can make you wonder. What is their relationship like? How was their morning?

Study this ceramic dollhouse and imagine who might live here. Create a conversation between two inhabitants. Are they family members? Friends? What could they have in common?

Enemies? What could they fight about?

What do they wonder? What kinds of words would they use if they could talk?

Write down your imagined conversation on your piece of paper. Remember to practice using punctuation and quotation marks.

Object: Dollhouse, by Yinka Shonibare
Location: Modern & Contemporary Art (Mezzanine)



Optional Activity: Six-Room Poem

Have extra time?

Imagine a place that you love. Sometimes a good book can transport you to a place that seems real in your mind. As writers, we dream of being able to do that. The writer probably used a lot of sensory details to make that place (setting) come alive. Let's practice creating a mind picture for our readers by tapping into our senses.

Choose any landscape, a painting of land or sea. Or imagine that special place you remembered.

Activity:

1. Divide your paper into six squares or "rooms." Number them 1-6.
2. In the first room, describe what you see in the painting.
3. In Room 2, look at the same place but just focus on the light. For example, is the sun blinding? Is it misty?
4. In Room 3, focus on sound. Are there voices? Rustling leaves? If it's silence, how would you describe it?
5. In Room 4, write down any questions you have. What are you wondering?
6. In Room 5, write down any feelings you have about this image.
7. Finally, in Room 6, look over the other five rooms. Select one word or phrase and repeat it three times.
8. Read your poem draft aloud