

ART CENTER LESSON PLANS

IDEAS + ACTIVITIES

Inspire learning through a step-by-step exploration of art at the Des Moines Art Center. Bring the galleries into your classroom, igniting your students' imaginations and creativity. All open ended, adaptable, and designed around one work of art and an accompanying theme. Use this program to help your students build critical thinking, cultural awareness, empathy, and a connection to the shared human experience through artwork. Discover how, through art, students find a space to express themselves and see the world in new and meaningful ways.

Below is a breakdown and guide for the Art Center six part lesson plans.

Once your students have completed the VIEW process, all other lessons are optional and can be done as your class time allows.

VIEW

Guided slow looking: Included in the program is an image of a work in our collection. You may **disperse this image** to all of your students, this can be done in a Zoom shared screen, sent in a message, printed and delivered, or displayed via projection. Once all students can see this work and you have introduced the program, you will **set a timer for one minute**. This will be a **silent prolonged looking exercise**. If needed, students may be discouraged from asking questions or dialogue at this moment. The self-control and excitement in wanting to share is a great tool to foster engagement, it feels like a challenge. During this one minute, there is text under the VIEW section on the lesson plan document that **you may read aloud** to help students navigate this slow looking process.

DIG

Slow looking strategies & language: This is a chance to revisit the artwork to look even deeper and see what we can discover with a new perspective or prompt. Each student will be **given a DIG worksheet** that they will **complete while looking at the work** again. These activities will encourage students to spend more time actively looking, relate their thinking to language arts, clearly identify what they see, elaborate, infer, and really flex those critical thinking skills. These worksheets may be completed and shared however you wish - individually, paired, or as a group.

DISCUSS

Guided questions to stimulate observation & interpretation: The DISCUSS page offers questions to help your students articulate and understand thoughts they have about the work of art. **How you foster this discussion is up to you!** You may want students to answer the questions by themselves in order to practice writing and reading skills. You can also pair students to create one-on-one experiences that offer a chance to practice active listening and a guarantee that they'll share their thoughts. These questions may also be shared in a larger class setting so students can hear each other's ideas. Feel free to extend this activity by trying multiple formations.

CREATE

Hands on projects: This prompt gives your students a chance to express their inspiration! Each program will include two optional **hands-on activities** related to the artwork and/or the lesson's theme. Feel free to offer both to your students so they are given a choice or in case they do not have art supplies on hand (though possible substitutions will be listed as well). Activities include making art, movement, creative writing, and prompts to stimulate imagination. When the work is complete consider creating a photo/video gallery for them to share their visual arts creations.

RELATE

Additional artworks & cultural connection: The RELATE portion of the program will give you **links to resources to share** with your students to broaden the topic, and **questions to spur deeper thinking** to help facilitate this extension. This will give students a chance to see the artwork within the larger context of the artist's body of work, similar artworks, how the work speaks to culture and how the artwork can reference our own experiences. This activity encourages research and independent learning guided by curiosity!

WONDER

Create & share questions: The exploration of artwork is open ended. With "no right answers" students can dream, imagine, and question what they see endlessly. This is a rich opportunity to foster inquiry. To encourage this spirit of openness the Art Center lesson plans end, not with answers, but with students asking their own questions. **You will be given a "list of question starters"** that you may assign or let students select. **Have them create three questions** that they still wonder about this work and/or the artist who created it and **share their questions with the group.**