

Getty Museum Webinar

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Webinar Title: I Don't Know, Let's Find Out! Guiding Students to Research Art (Grades 3-5)

Key points: There are multiple lenses for researching a work of art. Students should be guided to view art through the following: the Artist's Point of View, Cultural/Historical Context, The Making Process, and Documentary Lens.

Each lens offers students a comprehensive approach to understanding each piece of art. For example, viewing the art from the artist's point of view gives students insight into their intentions and what experiences may have shaped their perspective. Researching the artist's point of view can also help students understand the creative process behind the artwork. This can provide awareness of the artist's techniques, materials, and style, allowing students to appreciate the artwork better.

In addition, researching the historical/cultural context of the artist assists the student's understanding of the piece. Historical events and cultural movements can profoundly impact the creation and reception of an artwork. By understanding the historical context in which the artwork was created, students can better understand its impact on the art world and society. Likewise, by understanding the historical events, social issues, and cultural movements that influenced the artist, they can better understand the message and meaning behind the artwork through deeper viewing.

Takeaways: I enjoyed viewing the webinar's resources like Google Arts and Culture. It provides high-quality images of artwork and cultural artifacts worldwide that my students would find engaging. This site can help my students appreciate artwork details and develop their observation skills. It also offers interactive experiences such as virtual tours of museums and cultural sites, making it very user-friendly for my young students.

Inspiring: The webinar mentions a lesser-known site, Tribalpedia. This explores Native American history from over 400 tribes from the perspective of members. This is critical to hear their point of view and see authentic materials, crafts, and art directly from its members. Unfortunately, my district seems to block the site, but I want to resolve this issue.

1. How can art help us understand different perspectives and cultures?

Art can also challenge preconceived notions and stereotypes about other cultures by exposing students to unfamiliar ideas and perspectives. This can help them broaden their worldview and develop empathy and understanding for people whose experiences may differ from their own. For example, a piece of art from a culture that values collectivism may help someone from an individualistic culture understand the importance of community and social harmony. Correspondingly, a part of literature or film that explores the experiences of immigrants or refugees may help us better understand their struggles and challenges.

2. How does research help us support our interpretations of artworks?

Research can help us support our interpretations of artworks by providing additional context and information about the artwork and the artist. This can include historical, cultural, social, and political factors that may have influenced the creation and reception of the artwork. Moreover, understanding the historical context in which a particular artwork was created can provide essential insights into the artist's intentions and meaning. Knowledge of the artist's biography, influences, and artistic techniques can also inform our interpretations of their work.

3. What is the relationship between interpretation and analysis in understanding visual art?

Both interpretation and analysis to understand visual art are complementary processes that provide a complete understanding of the artwork. By combining both approaches, students can gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the artwork's formal qualities, cultural context, and meaning. In addition, by doing both interpretation and analysis, students can develop various skills, including observation, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and communication. These skills help students understand visual art and are transferable to other study and subject areas.