

Sample Questions for Art Appreciation

Ask questions whose answers can be found in the work of art itself. These are some examples of questions you may want to use.

- What is the first thing you notice?
- Is there a recognizable subject?
- What is the subject of the painting?
- What aspect of the story has the artist emphasized?
- Is there any movement or activity? What kind?
- What might have happened just before this scene?
- What might happen next?
- Are there any people portrayed? Who are they?
- Are the people individuals or types?
- Are they posed or unposed?
- When would they have lived?
- How would you describe the location or setting?
- What season is it? What time of day? What kind of weather?
- What sounds might you hear?
- What smells might you smell?
- From what point of view do we, as viewers, see the scene?
- How would you describe the mood or feeling of the piece?
- What did the artist do to convey this mood?
- How would you describe the composition, or arrangement of elements in the piece? Is it simple or complex? Flat or three-dimensional?
- What kinds of shapes did the artist use?
- What patterns did the artist create?
- Do the patterns produce a rhythm? How would you describe it?
- What kinds of colors did the artist use? Bright or dull? Dark or light? Contrasting, harmonizing, soft, or harsh?
- How do the colors add to the feeling or mood of the piece?
- If the artist had chosen different colors, how would it have changed the painting?
- How would you describe the lines in the painting? Thick or thin? Careful? Fuzzy? Strong? Curved or straight?
- What kind of brush or other instrument do you think the artist used?
- How would you describe the different textures in the painting?
- What is the source of light? Is it shown or implied?
- How the artist contrast lights and darks?
- How does the artist use proportion? distortion?
- What material did the artist use?