

Students participating in the Looking at Art tour utilize Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which encourage viewers to look carefully at works of art and thoughtfully articulate what they think a piece is about, based on their own personal observations. In sharing their ideas, students learn to debate with one another and accept multiple points of view while refining their critical thinking skills. Use the suggestions below either before or after your museum visit to encourage further inquiry in the classroom.

ACTIVITIES:

- Ask students to visit the Walters' website (www.thewalters.org), select a work of art, and write a response to it as an art critic for a magazine. What is the first thing they noticed about it? What words can they use to describe the piece? Does it look like anything they have seen before? Do they know where it's from or who created it? How was it made? Questions like these will remind students to slow down and describe the work in detail before offering a definitive opinion of it.
- Familiarize yourself with Visual Thinking Strategies before your visit! This open-ended questioning technique encourages students to look carefully and thoughtfully formulate ideas about what's going on in a work of art. Begin by using an image from the WAM website, or any other image or object you might be teaching with in class. Conduct a discussion using three basic questions:

What's going on in this picture?
What do you see that makes you say that?
What more can you find?

Remember to give students enough time to look carefully before answering, and the conversation will develop over time. If you would like to have a more directed conversation, you can ask specifically about what story is happening in the picture, or ask about how something was made – what materials and techniques were utilized. Use the resources below to learn more about VTS techniques and how to use them in the classroom or the museum.

- Make postcards depicting the most memorable work of art your class saw at the museum. Remind students to include as many details as they can in their drawings. On the reverse, they can write letters explaining what it was about that particular work of art that was so interesting to them.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<http://www.vue.org/whatisvts.html>
<http://www.vtskids.org/>

