COMMOM CORE CONNECTION: FAMILY TIES

COMMON CORE CONNECTION: Reading English Language Arts and Literary—Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

OVERVIEW
In small groups, students will analyze how each artist chose to portray the idea of “family.” Students will support their analyses by referencing specific details observed in the artwork. Students will then orally compare and contrast the portrayal of “family” in the four images. After class discussion, students will produce written compositions on their personal definition of “family,” including details from the artworks when appropriate.

SUPPLIES
· Set of full-color reproductions of the four artworks for each group (include titles)
· Pencils / pens
· Paper for brainstorming

ACTIVITY
➊ Classroom Discussion. Print the images or project them on a screen. If necessary, define unfamiliar terms for students, such as stele (stēlē, a standing stone tablet used in the ancient world primarily as a grave marker, but also for dedication or commemoration) or Coptic (adjective referring to the Copts, a Christian community originating and centering in Egypt). For more information on these works, visit art.thewalters.org.

➋ Group Activity. Divide your students into small groups. Give the following assignment to each group:

A. Examine these four works of art. Each of the titles includes the word “family” or mentions a specific family relationship, such as mother and daughter. Using the following questions, read the art as you would a written source. How do the artists portray these people to make them seem like families? What visual clues can you identify? Try to be very specific. Ask yourself: if you didn't know the titles to these works, would you still think these were families? Why or why not? Discuss these questions in your group and write down your answers. Make sure you include specific details from the artworks.

B. After you have identified the details in each work of art, take another look at the four artworks. As a group, compare and contrast the portrayals of “family.” How do these families differ? How are they similar? Record your group's observations.

➌ Classroom Discussion. Bring the class back together for discussion. Ask students to volunteer their answers to the activity questions.

➍ Assign the writing prompt below as either an in-class assignment or homework. Length can vary based on student level.

In class, we have discussed how four artists can have four different approaches to portraying families. Prepare a written composition that answers the following: What attributes do you think are most important or least important in defining a family group? How would you portray your own family? Where appropriate, choose details from the four artworks to demonstrate some of your thoughts.
Family Group of Three, artist unknown, Egyptian, ca. 2500-1793 BCE
Funeral Stele with Family Portrait, artist unknown, Coptic (Greek), ca. 2nd-4th century CE
Portrait of Countess Livia da Porto Thiene and her daughter Deidamia, Paolo Veronese (Italian), 1552 CE
Portrait of a Family, artist unknown, Dutch, ca. 1635-1640 CE