

## Artful Thinking: Step Inside and Ten Times Two

The Artful Thinking approach, designed by Project Zero at Harvard University, teaches students how to think critically through the use of simple routines for observing and analyzing art. In doing so, the visual arts becomes a force for developing thinking skills and dispositions that students can apply across the curriculum. You can find out more about Project Zero and Artful Thinking Strategies [here](#).

Additional Artful Thinking strategies can be found within our list of lesson plans. In this lesson, students will practice two strategies that highlight critical thinking skills: Step Inside (Perceive, Know, Care About) and Ten Times Two.

### Grade Level

Adaptable for all grade levels

### Common Core Academic State Standards

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9](#)

### Pennsylvania Academic Standards

- 9.4.3.B: Know how to communicate an informed individual opinion about the meaning of works in the arts
- 9.4.8.B: Compare and contrast informed individual opinions about the meaning of works in the arts to others

### National Core Arts Anchor Standards

- **Anchor Standard #7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work



*Sunflowers*, 1888 or 1889  
Vincent van Gogh (Dutch)  
Oil on canvas  
36 3/8 x 28 inches (92.4 x 71.1 cm)  
The Mr. and Mrs. Carroll S. Tyson, Jr., Collection, 1963  
1963-116-19

### Part 1 — Step Inside (Perceive, Know, Care About)

1. Select a work of art to model the thinking routine. Works of art that depict one or more figures tend to work best for this exercise. Ask a volunteer to select a person, animal, or thing in the image and ask the group to imagine themselves inside that point of view. Whether an animal or a person, the student's selection becomes his or her character.
  - a. Start by asking, "What can the character perceive?" You may want to define perceive by telling students that it covers everything one might be aware of through the senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. For example, students could note what direction their character is facing and what that character might be seeing; or think about the character's immediate environment and imagine what might be heard.
  - b. As a group, have them consider what their character might know or believe. This challenges students to interpret context clues and develop a more complete story. They should use visual clues such as expression, body language, props, and setting to support their ideas. To reinforce this valuable skill, ask frequently, "Why do you say that?" or "What do you see that leads to that conclusion?"
  - c. Finally, ask the group, "What might your character care about?" This asks them to empathize with the character and consider the emotional impact of the scene and the relationships between different people, animals, or objects. As before, ask student's to explain the basis of their interpretations.
2. Once you have modeled this strategy, divide students into pairs and distribute the Step Inside handout (attached). Continuing with the same work of art, have students choose another person or thing to focus on and complete the handout. Have students share their ideas with the class once complete.

### Assessment: Monologues

Each student should take a moment to add to his/her information about the chosen character. Then, students should write monologues from the point of view of their chosen character. Monologues should include not only what the character perceives, but also what the character cares about, all within the context of the scene. Monologues should be written in first person. These may be collected and evaluated, but at some point select students to read their monologues aloud for the class to see if other students can guess who is "speaking."

### Part 2 — Ten Times Two

The Ten Times Two routine helps students slow down and make careful, detailed observations by encouraging them to push beyond first impressions and obvious features. The creation of the Condensed Poem works well at the end of a discussion or activity to help students clarify their thinking and hone their descriptive language.

Possible artworks to use for this exercise:

- *The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, October 16, 1834*, 1834–35, by Joseph Mallord William Turner  
Artstor search: PMA Mallord lords and commons
- *Sunflowers*, 1888 or 1889, by Vincent van Gogh  
Artstor search: PMA van Gogh sunflowers

- *Male and Female*, 1942–43, by Jackson Pollock  
Artstor search: PMA Pollock male and female
1. Select a new work of art for this looking exercise. Theoretically, any artwork would work. However, read through the process below and select an artwork to which your class will be able to respond effectively, or choose one from the three linked above.
  2. Encourage your students to look closely at the work of art for at least 30 seconds. To maintain focus, students should compile a list of 10 words or phrases about any aspect of the image.
  3. Have students share one word from their list. Discuss: how many students ran out of things to list? What was their reaction to looking at one painting for so long? Have students take a moment to look over the list of a partner.
  4. Now students should look at the same work of art for another 30 seconds and list 10 additional words that come to mind as they explore it more deeply.
  5. Invite students to share new words/insights from their second observation time. Discuss: were they able to find 10 more words easily? Could they have listed more if asked? Did the second round seem shorter than the first (a common perception)? Which of their lists of words do they like better, the first or the second, and why?

### Assessment: Condensed Poems

1. Starting with their list of 20 descriptive words and phrases, ask student to look at their list and cross out 10 words, leaving the 10 they like best.
2. Next, ask students to cross out another 5 words; leaving the 5 best words on their list to create their poem.
3. Tell students to take the 5 words and order them so that they like the way they sound (and the story they begin to tell) as they are read one after the other.
4. Have students share their five word poems.

### Example

Based on Turner's *The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, October 16, 1834*:

Bright  
Flames  
Shining  
Night  
Sky

### Extension

The poems can be left in this form or can be extended into 5 lines by further developing the ideas from the selected words. Example:

Bright burning buildings  
Flames licking the air  
Shining (like a beacon)  
lighting the Night  
setting the Sky on fire