Artful Thinking: Ten Times Two

The Artful Thinking approach encourages active looking and learning through the practice of short, simple thinking routines. These routines help students focus on specific aspects of an artwork and organize their observations and ideas. The repetition of thinking routines across subjects and disciplines supports students in developing not only the skills for inquiry, but also the habits of an inquiring mind.

Ten Times Two is a routine that helps students slow down and extend their observations beyond the first, most obvious impressions. It can be used to build attention and stamina in any subject area. Ten Times Two is also a great way to generate descriptive language for a writing assignment, or to prepare students to think more critically about a work of art or literature.

Grade Level
Adaptable for all grades

Common Core Academic State Standards
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

National Visual Arts Standards
- Responding: understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning
- Connecting: relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context

Suggested Art Images
Click on the titles below to view high-resolution photographs on the museum’s website:
- Composition, 1949, by Lee Krasner
- Grand Canyon of the Colorado River, 1892 and 1908, by Thomas Moran
- Horse, Pipe, and Red Flower, 1920, by Joan Miró
- Male and Female, 1942-43, by Jackson Pollock
- Sunflowers, 1889, by Vincent van Gogh
- The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, October 16, 1834, 1834-35, by Joseph Mallord William Turner
- The City, 1919, by Fernand Léger
- Trying to find our spot off in that light, light off in that spot, 2014, by Jayson Musson
Lesson Objectives
Students will be able to:
• Notice and describe many aspects of a work of art.
• Use a variety of descriptive vocabulary to talk about a work of art.
• Build stamina for sustained looking and attention to detail.

Materials Needed
• Screen for projecting Suggested Art Images
• Ten Times Two worksheets
• Whiteboard or chart paper for a class Ten Times Two chart

Lesson Process
1. Before teaching this lesson, choose one of the Suggested Art Images that will be engaging and accessible for your students. If you plan to use Ten Times Two as a warm-up for reading, writing, math, or science, select the artwork that will best prepare students for the kind of thinking you want them to do (descriptive, abstract, analytical). You will be able to download and project some of the artworks directly from their object pages, as indicated by an arrow in the upper right corner of the image. The others are reproduced at the end of this lesson.

2. Project your selected artwork for students to see. Ask them how many different things, or kinds of things, they think they can notice about the artwork. Using the word “notice,” instead of “see” or “observe,” opens a possibility space that is broader than vision. Students may notice a way the artwork feels or sounds—aspects they experience without technically seeing them.

3. If your students are independent writers, hand out the Ten Times Two worksheets. You might tell them to fold the worksheet in half, so they can focus on one side of the chart at a time. This routine can also be done verbally, while you write student responses on a class chart.

4. Tell students they will have a short amount of time to look quietly at the projected image. They will make a list, in words or short phrases, of ten things they notice about any aspect of the artwork. This part of the exercise is very flexible. You can give students thirty seconds or one minute, or decrease the number of words to five or eight, depending on your students’ needs and abilities.

5. Set a timer. Encourage students to look and notice without speaking for the specified length of time.

6. When time is up, ask volunteers to share. Even if students have written lists on their own worksheets, write their words and phrases on a class chart to make thinking visible to all.

7. Now challenge students to make a second list of ten new words and phrases. If students are using their own worksheets, have them turn over the paper to the other half of the chart. Repeat Steps 5 and 6.

8. Whether in pairs looking at their own worksheets, or as a class looking at the class chart, ask students to compare the first and second lists of ten words and phrases. Do the first ten descriptions have anything in common? How does the second list differ? Which list of words do they like better, and why?

9. Give students a minute to compare the two lists. They may notice that their first lists describe basic, obvious elements of the artwork, while their second lists contain more detail and specificity. They may also notice that their first lists describe visual aspects of the artwork, while their second lists describe emotional experience or interpretation. If students have a hard time articulating these differences, you can prompt them by pointing out a difference you notice, or ask them to compare a specific item on the first list to a specific item on the second list.
10. Wrap up the routine by asking students to reflect on the experience. How did their looking and noticing change from the first round to the second round? Was the second round more challenging? If so, why? What might be the value of looking deeper, past first impressions? In what other contexts would this exercise be useful (for example, analyzing a math problem or close reading of a text)?

Extensions

• Create a collaborative list poem. Ask students to look back at their worksheets and circle the one word or phrase that they think best represents the selected artwork. As students take turns reading out their words and phrases, write them down in list form. Read the list back to students, and ask them what they notice. Were any words or phrases repeated? What were the common themes among the words and phrases the class chose? Does hearing the list poem help students see anything new or different in the artwork?

• You can create a variation of the collaborative list poem with younger students by choosing words together from the list you generated as a class. Have students experiment with arranging the words in different orders or reading specific words with greater emphasis. They could even play with the placement of words to make a shape poem. How do these variations change the sound or meaning of the poem?

• Students who are familiar with the Ten Times Two routine can experiment with using it in different contexts. They might use Ten Times Two as a way to approach a new book or primary source document, as a strategy for analyzing a math problem, or when interpreting a diagram in a science text. Practicing close looking in different contexts supports students’ developing stamina and attention to detail across all disciplines.
Ten Times Two

Take a few minutes to look closely at an object or work of art.

- List ten words or phrases about any aspect of the artwork.
- Look at the image a second time, and try to add ten new words or phrases to your list. What do you notice?

| 1.             | 1.             |
| 2.             | 2.             |
| 3.             | 3.             |
| 4.             | 4.             |
| 5.             | 5.             |
| 6.             | 6.             |
| 7.             | 7.             |
| 8.             | 8.             |
| 9.             | 9.             |
| 10.            | 10.            |
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Male and Female, 1942–43, by Jackson Pollock (Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Mr. and Mrs. H. Gates Lloyd, 1974-232-1) © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York