

Terra Teacher Lab

In the American Galleries at the Art Institute of Chicago

1. **Stand in the middle of a gallery and from a distance choose a painting that attracts you.** What kind of painting is it (e.g., a portrait, landscape, narrative, abstraction, or something else)? Please describe:

2. **Explain what drew your attention or attracted you to the painting** (e.g., the subject, colors, shapes, etc.). Please be specific:

3. **Move closer to the painting. What do you see now that you didn't notice before?**

4. **Has looking up close changed your first impression of what the painting is about or what kind of image it is?** _____

Please explain:

5. **Now read the wall label.** Notice the title and date especially. Write down the basic “tombstone” information requested below:

Artist name: _____

Artist life dates: _____

Artwork title: _____

Artwork date: _____

Medium: _____

Accession number: _____

Does the label includes interpretive or background information, in addition to the “tombstone” information? _____

Does the label tell you anything that changes your first idea of what the painting is about? For example, does the title or date make you think or feel differently about the artwork? _____

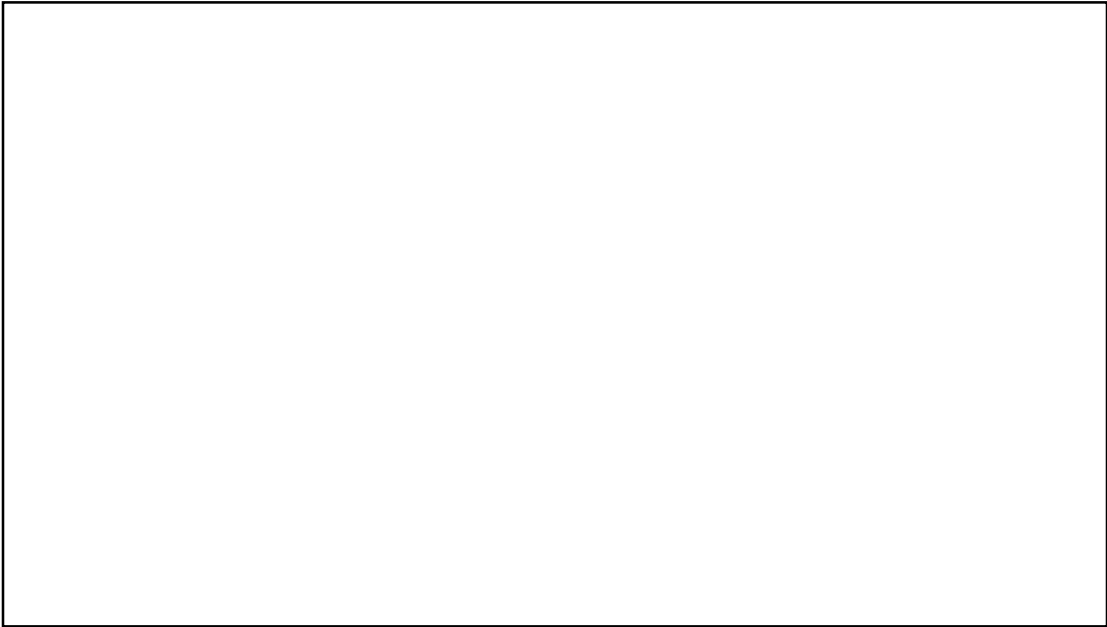
Please explain:

6. **Think about the title.** Works of art aren’t always titled by the artists who created them. Sometimes titles are assigned by scholars, collectors, and museum curators. What title would *you* give this artwork?

7. **Choose one aspect of the painting that you can now see (that you couldn’t see or didn’t notice before) and study it closely.** It can be a small figure in the distance, the way the artist has applied the paint, a particular color that affects colors around it, or a person’s facial expression. What is it?

How does your understanding of, or feeling about the painting change now that you are aware of this aspect?

8. **Please make a quick sketch of the painting**, or of a detail in it that you find most interesting:



9. **Summarize what you have learned about the process of looking at an artwork, such as:** how long does it take to really look at a painting? What different values are there to looking from a distance or up close and to seeing the painting with and without "outside" information such as a title?

10. What would you advise another person about how to look at a painting?

11. Did you see and enjoy the painting more by going through these steps than you might otherwise by simply strolling past it? _____

Other comments or ideas?
