

CLOSE LOOKING WORKBOOK

Painting Analysis Worksheet

Move from first observation to a defensible interpretation. Complete the visual evidence sections before consulting outside research.

ARTWORK TITLE

ARTIST

DATE

MUSEUM OR COLLECTION

01 First encounter

What attracts your attention first? Record your response before researching the artwork.

02 Visible inventory

List figures, objects, setting, gestures and actions. Describe only what can be seen before assigning meaning.

03 Composition

Trace focal points, axes, diagonals, repetition, balance and movement. Explain how the arrangement directs attention.

FORMAL ANALYSIS

How the image works

Use specific locations and relationships in the painting. Replace general reactions with visible evidence.

04

Color, light and value

Identify dominant colors, temperature, contrast, shadows and illuminated areas. What receives emphasis?

05

Space and scale

How are depth, distance, viewpoint and relative size constructed? Where does the viewer seem to stand?

06

Material and surface

What do medium, support, texture, brushwork and technique contribute to the effect?

07

Reliable context

Record only facts that change, clarify or test the visual reading. Note the source of each fact.

INTERPRETATION

Evidence before conclusion

Build the argument from multiple details, acknowledge uncertainty and end with a concise evidence-led thesis.

08 Interpretation

What larger meaning or effect is supported by at least three visible details?

09 Limits and alternatives

Which claims remain debated, incomplete or open to another interpretation?

10 Evidence-led thesis

Write one sentence connecting a visual strategy to a larger effect, meaning or argument.

STRATEGY + EVIDENCE + EFFECT

SOURCES AND OBJECT RECORD

MUSEUM OBJECT PAGE

SOURCE 2

SOURCE 3
