Engaging the Eye: Building Literacy Via Visual Art
Poll:
How comfortable are you discussing visual art?

A. Very comfortable
B. Depends on the work of art
C. Rather uncomfortable
D. Utterly lost
Meet the Team

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Director of Humanities  
Great Minds

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Grade 8 Teacher  
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Founder and Executive Director  
Great Minds
Poll: What is your current role?

A. Teacher
B. Coach
C. Administrator
D. Other
Poll: What grade level?

A. Elementary School
B. Middle School
C. High School
D. Other
You will learn:

• How to weave visual art into the curriculum to **improve literacy skills**

• Simple **questioning techniques** to be used in the classroom and beyond

• **Practical application** of visual art instruction through writing and speaking tasks

• How to **select fine art** to explore in the classroom
Why art inquiry?
How did we select works of art for *Wit & Wisdom*?

- Fine art, not illustration
- Supports depth of inquiry
- Old, new, here and there
- Wide range of media

Will it reward the act of *looking, looking, and more looking*?
Engages a wide range of readers

• Students approach art without inhibition.
• Students are often more willing to engage in discussion about art than about text.
• Art offers opportunities to express and defend opinions, engage in Socratic dialogue, respond in writing, and inspire art-making.
Engages a wide range of readers

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• Students are often more willing to engage in discussion about art than about text.

• Art offers opportunities to
  • express and defend opinions,
  • engage in Socratic dialogue,
  • respond in writing, and
  • inspire art-making.
Engages striving readers

- Invites **EL students** and **striving readers** to engage with visual content

- Eliminates the hurdle of reading or listening for students with **language-based disabilities**

- Provides repeated exposure to **scaffold new vocabulary** and deepen understanding
Builds cultural capital

Students learn:
- Information about the United States and other parts of the world
- Techniques of art-making
- How people convey meaning visually
- A cultural vocabulary, or a common visual experience to carry throughout their lives as educated citizens
The Great Wave off Kanagawa, Katsushika Hokusai, 1829-32
Washington Crossing the Delaware, Emanuel Leutze, 1851
How might we examine a work of art?
Notice more...
Wonder
Organize
Reveal Composition
Reveal **Color, line, and light**
Nighthawks, Edward Hopper, 1942
Soldiers Playing Cards, Fernand Léger, 1917
Examine art with compelling questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Stage</th>
<th>Content Framing Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wonder</td>
<td>What do I notice and wonder about this text/artwork?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize</td>
<td>What is happening in this text/artwork?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reveal</td>
<td>What does a deeper exploration of [specific element] reveal about this text/artwork?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distill</td>
<td>What is the essential meaning of this text/artwork?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know</td>
<td>How does this text/artwork build my knowledge of [specific topic]?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stop and Jot:
How did this series of guided questions affect your experience with this painting?
Quick Write in response to the question:

How did studying *Nighthawks* build my knowledge of Amy Herman's ideas?
Quick Write in response to the question: How did studying *Nighthawks* build my knowledge of Amy Herman’s ideas?
Visual art plays a legitimate and valuable role in a literacy curriculum.
“Pursuing the study of art in ways that respects the intricacy and power of individual works of art will contribute not only to students’ lifelong engagement with the arts but also to the development of deeper skills demanded by a standards-based education.”

David Coleman

Guiding Principles for the Arts and the Common Core
Examining art reinforces standards:

**Reading:**

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**Writing:**

W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**Speaking and Listening:**

SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
Poll:
How comfortable are you discussing visual art now?

A. Very comfortable
B. Depends on the work of art
C. Rather uncomfortable
D. Utterly lost
Resources

The Art of *Wit & Wisdom* (slideshow)
- *Wit & Wisdom* Visual Art Lessons (K–8)
- *Wit & Wisdom* Visual Art Glossary

*Wit & Wisdom* webinars presented via *EdWeek*:
- *Acing the Test: Strategies for Supporting Student Achievement*
- *Read, Write, Succeed: Models for Advancing Student Writing*

*Wit & Wisdom* Curriculum Overview and Core Text List

*Wit & Wisdom* free monthly newsletter
Questions?
Contact Us

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