



ACKLAND

LOOK
WRITE
DRAW

Look, Write, and Draw!

The more you look, the more you see. As we look closely at works of art, we develop skills and vocabulary to describe our observations, and by using the visual clues in the work and our prior knowledge, we interpret what we see and make meaning. By examining works of art in detail, we gain an appreciation for their visual qualities and see the world differently.

The following close looking, writing, and drawing activities (starting on page 2) will help your student or child learn to observe, interpret, and reflect upon what they see. Each activity can be modified per age or grade level and can be done individually, or with a classmate or family member.

To get started, select an image of any work of art from the Ackland Art Museum or from museum collections around the world.

Suggested works of art from the Ackland Art Museum

- [Sword of Damocles](#)
- [The Banks of the Oise, Near Pontoise](#)
- [Atagoshita and Yabu Lane](#)
- [Half Car at Strip Mall, Washington, D.C., 1967](#)
- [The Offering of the Four Bowls to Buddha](#)

❖ See images of these artworks on pages 6–10.

❖ Find other works of art in the Ackland’s collection using the [Ackland Art Museum Online Collection Search](#).

Suggested resource for works of art from other museum collections

[Google Arts & Culture](#) provides online access to works of art, collections, and stories from over 2,000 cultural institutions from around the world.

- Explore [collections](#) from different museums and archives
- Zoom in on details with [Art Camera](#)
- Search for works of art by [theme](#), [color](#), or keyword, such as “dog”.

For those interested in researching information about artists, art making techniques, art movements, and world cultures, consider exploring [UNC-Chapel Hill’s Ackland Library Guide](#), the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s [Heilbrunn Timeline](#), or the free art history courses through [Khan Academy](#).

Looking for more?

If you are looking for specific works of art, web resources, or ideas to assist in your teaching, please email acklandlearn@unc.edu.

LOOK

Focusing on Art

Look closely and carefully at a work of art of your choice and answer the following questions.

- What is the first thing you notice about this work of art? Why does this stand out to you?
- Describe your reaction to this work of art.
- Give one or two words that describe the mood of this work of art. Why did you choose those words?
- Make up a title for this work of art. Why did you choose that title?

See – Think – Wonder

A fantastic routine to use with any work of art!

1. What do you see? Take time to look closely. I see . . .
2. What do you think is happening in this work of art? I think . . .
3. What do you wonder about this work of art? I wonder . . .

To go even deeper into your exploration, consider researching the artist, the artist's techniques, and finding other works of art created by the artist!

Timed Looking

Set a timer for two minutes. Look closely at a work of art and write down everything that you see in the image.

- What was the first thing that you noticed?
- How did the artist make some parts more noticeable than others?
- What does this tell us about the work of art?

Look at the work of art again.

- Is there anything else to see that you didn't notice in the first two minutes?
- What would the work of art be like without _____? (Try using your thumb to block out this part from view.)
- Based on what you see, what do you think this work of art is about?

Looking for Details

Take a sheet of paper and roll it into a tube or cut a small square out of a heavy piece of paper or cardboard. You now have a "viewfinder" that can help you with looking closely at the details of an object (a shoe, a tree, a car, etc.). What details become more noticeable with your viewfinder? This tool, like a magnifying glass, can be used to see individual parts of a whole object. Go and explore the natural world, the inside of your home, or look closely at images of art!

WRITE

Perspective Writing

Choose a work of art and write from the perspective of a person or object in the image. Consider the following: What are you thinking? What do you see and hear from where you are in this place? What relationship do you have with other things or people near you? What does a normal day look like for you? Share your writing with an adult and ask them to share their perspective of the work of art.

Journaling

When we slow down to look at works of art, our eyes and our brains are able to take in more visual information. Spend ten minutes looking closely at one work of art and complete the following on a blank sheet of paper:

- Create a list of what you see.
- Make a sketch of the work of art.
- Write down questions you have about the work of art.
- Write down what you like about this work of art.
- Write down how this work of art makes you feel.

Wish You Were Here...

Choose an image of a landscape that you wish you could visit. On a large blank index card, imagine that you are there and write a postcard to a friend or relative persuading them to come and visit this location. Describe what you see around you, what you smell, hear, and feel, and what you can do for fun in this place. When you are done, sketch the image on the blank side.

Pictures into Words

Look closely at a landscape or image with people in it and respond to the following. What is happening? How would you describe this to someone who is not here? Make a list of all of the things you see in the work of art.

Using your imagination, write a short story based upon what you see.

DRAW

Words into Pictures

Read or listen to a story and illustrate (draw) what you think is the most important part of the story using colored pencils, crayons, or other drawing materials. Share your drawing with your teacher or family member.

For a more in-depth experience, choose a Greek/Roman myth, Japanese or Chinese folktale, or religious story to illustrate and look for ways artists across time and place chose to illustrate the stories in paintings, drawings, and sculptures. To help get you started, read or listen to the short story [*The Sword of Damocles*](#) originally written by Cicero (Roman, 106 – 43 BCE), create your own illustration, and then compare with the Ackland's [*Sword of Damocles*](#) (1812) by the British painter, Richard Westall.

Imagination Sketches

Find a work of art that shows a person in it and complete the following...

- Draw what this person's home might look like.
- Draw a vehicle this person might drive.
- Draw a piece of furniture this person might own.

Remember to look closely and carefully at the artwork for visual clues, such as their clothing or their surroundings, to help you draw.

Drawing the Line

Take a piece of paper and fold it in half widthwise and then fold it again lengthwise. When open, your paper should have 4 visible square quadrants.

Place a three-dimensional object (i.e. shoe, stuffed animal, etc.) on a higher surface, such as a table or countertop, so that you are either looking at it from the side or looking down at the top of the object. Using the drawing exercises below, try drawing the object four different ways, one drawing in each square. Once you have completed this exercise, try drawing another object. Good luck!

1. Top left quadrant– Sketch a detail of your object.
2. Top right quadrant– Draw the same detail on the paper WITHOUT lifting your pencil.
3. Bottom left quadrant – Draw the same detail looking only at the object and not at the paper (without lifting your pencil). This is called a BLIND contour drawing.
4. Bottom right quadrant – CLOSE YOUR EYES and draw the same detail.

Exploring Cultures through Art

Now it's your turn to put all of your experiences of looking closely, writing, and sketching together!

Select a 3D object from the [Ackland Art Museum's 3D Sketchfab models](#) or choose an object from another collection, such as [The Research Laboratories of Archaeology at UNC-Chapel Hill](#) or [The British Museum](#). Explore the three-dimensional digital object by using your mouse or touch screen to rotate and zoom in.

Imagine you are an archaeologist, a person who studies human history through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains. You are looking for materials of past human life and activities (such as tools, pottery, jewelry, art, etc.) and have discovered this object. Using the following questions, record and interpret the visual clues of the object to learn about a different culture.

1. **Visual characteristics:** Look closely at all sides of the object (front, back, left, right, top and bottom). Describe the color, shape, and texture.
2. **Material:** What material is the object made from? Describe what clues you see.
3. **Function:** What might this object have been used for? Who might have used it? Where might it have been used?
4. **Sketch the object:** Sketch the object from three different angles.
5. **Draw conclusions:** What does the object tell us about the culture it came from? Consider what clues it tells you about the people, their customs, technology, belief systems, and daily life.



Richard Westall, British, 1765–1836, *The Sword of Damocles*, 1812, oil on canvas, 51 3/16 x 40 9/16 x 3 1/4 in. (130 x 103 x 8.3 cm). Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ackland Fund, 79.10.1.

For more information on this work of art, view the About the Art guide for [Gallery 15: Art from the Ancient Mediterranean and Europe before 1850](#).



Camille Pissarro, French, 1830 – 1903, *The Banks of the Oise, Near Pontoise*, 1876, oil on canvas, 14 15/16 x 21 7/8 in. (38 x 55.5 cm). Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ackland Fund, 65.28.1.

For more information on this work of art, view the About the Art guide for [Gallery 14: Art from Europe and America, 1850–1950](#).



Ando Hiroshige (Utagawa Hiroshige I), Japanese, 1797 – 1858, *Atagoshita and Yabu Lane*, from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, 1857, polychrome woodblock print (*nishiki-e*), 8 9/16 x 13 3/16 in. (21.8 x 33.5 cm). Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Gift of W. A. Whitaker, 60.14.12.



Burk Uzzle, American, born 1938, *Half Car at Strip Mall, Washington, D.C.*, 1967, 1967, gelatin silver print, 17 7/8 x 11 15/16 in. (45.4 x 30.3 cm). Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Gift of Charles Weinraub and Emily Kass, 2008.3.40.



Unidentified artist, Indian, Gandhara region, Kushan period (100 BCE – 300 CE), *The Offering of Four Bowls to Buddha*, 2nd century CE, gray schist, 16 3/4 x 18 7/16 x 3 5/8 in. (42.5 x 46.8 x 9.2 cm). Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Gift of Clara T. and Gilbert J. Yager and Ackland Fund, 90.35.

For more information on this work of art, view the About the Art guide for [Gallery 2: Sculpture from Asia](#).