

Five Senses



While looking at a work of art, imagine what you could hear, touch, taste, smell, and see if it came to life. Share with the group, using specific examples from the works of art that shape your experience.

A to Z Game (K–2)

A	N
B	.....	O	.....
C	.....	P	.....
D	.....	Q	.....
E	.....	R	.....
F	.....	S	.....
G	.....	T	.....
H	.....	U	.....
I	.....	V	.....
J	.....	W	.....
K	.....	X	.....
L	.....	Y	.....
M	.....	Z	.....

Want to learn more? Visit mfah.org/ita.

Cover, top to bottom, left to right:

Pablo Picasso, **Woman with a Large Hat** (detail), 1962, oil on canvas, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, bequest of Caroline Wiess Law, 2004.51.

Stuart Davis, **Gloucester Harbor** (detail), oil on canvas, mounted on panel, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Agnes Cullen Arnold Endowment Fund, 77.330.

Teotihuacan, **Incense Burner (incensario) Lid** (detail), 150–650 AD, earthenware with slip and traces of polychrome pigment, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by Brown Foundation Accessions Endowment Fund, 97.113 A,B.

Cai Guo-Qiang, **Odyssey** (detail), October 6, 2010, gunpowder and pigment on paper, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum commission funded by the Caroline Wiess Law Accessions Endowment Fund, and the Chao Family in honor of Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao, with additional funds from Friends of Asian Art 2010, 2010.1660.1–.42.

Robert Motherwell, **Black on White** (detail), 1961, oil on canvas, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase, 62.7

Georgia O’Keeffe, **Red Hill and White Shell** (detail), 1938, oil on canvas, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of Isabel B. Wilson in memory of her mother, Alice Pratt Brown, 91.2027.



MFAH The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Imagination Formations

LOOKING ACTIVITIES for self-guided school groups

This guide can be used as a framework for your visit, in any gallery with any work of art.

Designed to encourage close looking and dialogue, these activities encourage critical thinking skills by prompting students to ask questions and think about what they see. Pay attention to what students are noticing when you walk into the gallery and let that guide your experience.

Most of these activities can be scaled for a variety of grade levels unless otherwise indicated.

The Art Resource Tour for Schools Program is generously underwritten by the Jerold B. Katz Foundation.

Learning and Interpretation programs receive generous funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services; Jerold B. Katz Foundation; MD Anderson Cancer Center; Sharon G. Dies; Sterling-Turner Foundation; Houston Junior Woman’s Club; Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo; Samuel H. Kress Foundation; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; Susan Vaughan Foundation; and additional generous donors.

Describe and Draw

Find a partner and sit back-to-back. One person (the describer) looks at the work of art and describes it to the other person who cannot see it. While listening to the describer, the listener draws what they imagine the image to look like. The describer cannot look at the listener's drawing until it is completed.

Afterward, discuss the experience. What words were the most helpful? What was challenging? Switch roles and repeat the exercise with a different work of art.



Literary Connections

Think of a book, a poem, or a story you've read and connect it to a work of art in the gallery. Describe the connection to your group in detail giving specific examples.



Find a work of art that makes you wonder about the story it is telling. Stretch your imagination to think beyond the frame. Using evidence from the work of art, imagine the story. Who are the characters, where is the setting? What happened before, what's happening now, and how will it end? Share with your classmates.

See Yourself in the Art

Explore a gallery and choose one work of art that reflects your personality. Why do you feel connected to this work of art? Share with a partner.

Uncover More Details: the 30-second Look



- 1 Designate a timekeeper. Have the group look at a work of art for 30 whole seconds. Silently notice as many details as you can find.
- 2 When time is up, turn away from the work of art, with your back to it. Talk together as a group about all the things you noticed. Did you notice the same things? Was there a detail that only one of you noticed?
- 3 Turn to face the work of art. Talk together about what you noticed. Are there things you missed the first time around?

Elements of Art

Pick a work of art and spend a few minutes looking closely. Where do you see the elements of art listed in the word bank below?

Color
Shape
Texture
Line
Form

