Some BIG QUESTIONS in Art

• Where do artists get their ideas? What can I make art about?

• When is it okay to copy?

• Do you have to be able to draw well to be a good artist?

• What makes some works of art better than others? How can you tell good art from bad art? Is there really such a thing?

• What work of art do I hate/love the most and why?

• Why do artists do what they do?

• How does an artist know when a work or art is finished?

• What is art? What isn’t art? What is art for?

• Can anyone make art? Can animals make art?

• Should art be pleasing to the eye? Can art be ugly? Why would an artist make an ugly work of art?

• Should art make people happy?

• Should art tell a story?

• Should artists imitate what they see? In what ways does art represent the world?

• Does something have to be original to be art? Can a forgery or copy be art?

• What’s the difference between art and craft?

• What is an artist? Are artists the same in every culture?

• What are some different ways to approach art? What can we learn from studying a work of art?
Why do people make Art?

People around the world make art to:

• seek personal enjoyment and satisfaction.
• express personal thoughts and feelings
• communicate with others.
• create a more favorable environment.
• make others see more clearly.
• provide us with new visual experiences.
• record a time, place, person, or object.
• commemorate important people or events.
• reinforce cultural ties and traditions.
• seek to affect social change.
• tell stories.
• heal the sick.
• adorn themselves.
• explain the unknown.
• worship.
• create an illusion or magic.
• predict the future or remember the past.
• earn a livelihood.
• do something no one else can (or has yet done).
• amuse themselves (or make us laugh).
• make the ordinary extraordinary.
• increase our global understanding.

Try This: Display examples of art from various cultures and time periods in the classroom. Ask students to speculate on the possible reasons why the art was made.
Why do artists do that?

The following list of purposes for which a work of art might have been created may prove helpful in sorting through the variety of art forms we see today. A single work of art can serve more than one purpose.

Artists create to:

• record images inspired by observations of daily life; connect us with everyday experience, people or events.
• demonstrate technical virtuosity; do something no one else can.
• celebrate the aesthetic qualities of common objects; transform the mundane into an object of art; make the familiar strange, the ordinary extraordinary.
• celebrate beauty as found in the aesthetic qualities of nature; record a time or place.
• explore art that speaks about the basic elements of art; celebrate the aesthetic qualities of line, shape, color, and so on.
• convey dynamics of movement; explore relationships between time and space.
• stimulate public discourse; provide social commentary; make people think.
• emphasize the experience of looking at a work of art.
• convey a feeling of human emotion; show human experience.
• explore narrow and personal visions.
• innovate; give up the old, break the rules; explore new approaches; provide us with new visual experiences.
• explore new materials and technologies to create new forms of art.
• express private, personal musings; explore the unconscious.
• subvert, create irony; break established notions of how things should be; change people's minds.
• emphasize the importance of the idea rather than the object/product as the work of art.
• create optical effects; optics created by shadows and reflection of light.
• raise questions about art traditions such as, "What is art?" “What is a painting?”
• commemorate important people or events; reinforce cultural ties and traditions; tell stories.
• other.

Try This: Display examples of art by various contemporary artists. Ask students to speculate on the possible reasons why the art was made.

To be an artist today is to be continually engaged in questioning what art is and what it could be; it is to be constantly reinventing art.

• George Szekely
PRESS RELEASE: CHRISTO AND JEANNE-CLAUDE: RUNNING FENCE, SONOMA AND MARIN COUNTIES, 1972-76.

Running Fence, 5.5 meters (eighteen feet) high, 40 kilometers (twenty-four and half miles) long, extending East-West near Freeway 101, north of San Francisco, on the private properties of fifty-nine ranchers, following rolling hills and dropping down to the Pacific Ocean at Bodega Bay, was completed on September 10, 1976.

The art project consisted of: forty-two months of collaborative efforts, the ranchers' participation, eighteen public hearings, three sessions at the Superior Courts of California, the drafting of a four-hundred and fifty page Environmental Impact Report and the temporary use of hills, the sky and the Ocean.

All expenses for the temporary work of art were paid by Christo and Jeanne-Claude through the sale of studies, preparatory drawings and collages, scale models and original lithographs.

Running Fence was made of 200,000 square meters (2,222,222 square feet) of heavy woven white nylon fabric, hung from a steel cable strung between 2,050 steel poles (each: 6.4 meters / 21 feet long, 9 centimeters / 3 1/2 inches in diameter) embedded 1 meter (3 feet) into the ground, using no concrete and braced laterally with guy wires (145 kilometers (90 miles) of steel cable) and 14,000 earth anchors. The top and bottom edges of the 2050 fabric panels were secured to the upper and lower cables by 350,000 hooks. All parts of Running Fence's structure were designed for complete removal and no visible evidence of Running Fence remains on the hills of Sonoma and Marin Counties. As it had been agreed with the ranchers and with the County, State and Federal Agencies, the removal of Running Fence started fourteen days after its completion and all materials were given to the ranchers. Running Fence crossed fourteen roads and the town of Valley Ford, leaving passage for cars, cattle and wildlife, and was designed to be viewed by following 65 kilometers (forty miles) of public roads, in Sonoma and Marin Counties.

Questions to consider: (1) Should art be permanent? (2) Must art be made by the artist? (3) Where should art by displayed? (4) How big can art get? (5) What can art be made of? (6) Is Running Fence Art?
An Overview of Bloom's Taxonomy of Education Objectives: Cognitive Domain

One of the more popular models used to promote thinking skill instruction in schools was developed by Benjamin Bloom (1956). It categorizes thinking skills from the concrete to the abstract and in six categories—knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation. The last three are considered by many educators as involving *higher-order thinking* skills.

**Knowledge** -- the remembering of previously learned material. This may involve the recall of a wide range of material, from specific facts to complete theories, but all that is required is the bringing to mind of the appropriate information. Sample cue words include: acquire, choose, cluster, define, describe (from memory), draw, fill-in, follow directions, identify, indicate, know, label, list, locate, match, memorize, name, outline (format given), pick, point, read, recall, recognize, record, repeat, reproduce, select, state, sort, write.

**Comprehension** -- the ability to grasp the meaning of material. This may be shown by translating material from one form to another (pictures to words), by interpreting material (explaining or summarizing) and by predicting consequences or effects. Sample cue words include: associate, classify, compare/contrast, conclude, describe, discuss, document, expand, explain, express (in other terms), extend, generalize, give examples, give in own words, group, illustrate, infer, interpret, outline, paraphrase, predict, put in order, rearrange, recognize, restate, show, simplify, summarize.

**Application** -- the ability to use learned material in new and concrete situations. This may include the application of such things as rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws, and theories. Requires a higher level of understanding than comprehension. Sample cue words include: apply, change, choose, classify, demonstrate, develop, discover, employ, express (in discussion), illustrate, imitate, interview, investigate, make, manipulate, modify, organize, participate, predict, prepare, present, produce, put to use, relate, restructure, sequence, select, show, use, utilize.

**Analysis** -- the ability to break down material into parts so that its organizational structure may be more easily understood. This may include the identification of the parts, analysis of the relationships between parts and recognition of the organizational principles involved. Requires an understanding of both the content and the structural form of the material. Sample cue words include: analyze, break down, categorize, characterize, compare/contrast, debate, depict, detect, deduce, diagram, discriminate, distinguish, draw conclusions, examine, form generalizations, map, outline, point out, put in (categories), relate to, research, search, sort, survey.

**Synthesis** -- the ability to put material together to form a new whole. This may involve the production of an unique product (painting or theme), a plan of operations (proposal) or a set of abstract relations (scheme for classifying information). Emphasis is on creative behaviors involving the formulation of new patterns or structures. Sample cue words include: adapt, combine, compile, compose, conjecture, construct, create, design, devise, dramatize, generate, imagine, integrate, invent, modify, originate, perform (in public), plan, produce, propose, rearrange, reconstruct, reverse, revise, speculate, suppose, synthesize, transform.

**Evaluation** -- the ability to judge the value of material for a given purpose. Judgements are to be based on definite criteria including internal (organization) or external reasons (relevance to purpose). Involves elements of all of the other categories plus conscious value judgements based on clearly defined criteria. Sample cue words include: appraise, argue, assess, award, choose, compare (pros/cons), consider, convince, decide, defend, determine, discriminate, evaluate, grade, judge, justify, persuade, prioritize, rank, rate, recommend, select, support, test, value, verify.
"Minds-On" Art Activities

1. **Examine** how different cultures use art to commemorate and celebrate persons and events. **Compare** and **contrast** stamps and currency from different cultures. **Create** a work of art that celebrates you!

2. **Design** and **construct** a 3-D form from a 2-D material without wasting anything. **Evaluate** the results according to aesthetic appearance and structural stability.

3. **Design** and **construct** the highest self-supporting structure using a given amount of material (e.g., 2 sheets of newspaper and 2 inches of masking tape). **Evaluate** the results according to height achieved, quantity of material used and aesthetic appearance.

4. **Examine** two paintings of the same subject matter by different artists. **List** in two columns all the similarities and differences observed. **Create** a work of art based on the same subject matter, but in your own style.

5. As a group, **examine** a painting closely for one minute, **memorizing** as much of the painting as you can. Turn your backs to the painting. In a round-robin fashion, **name** (without repeating) any object or relationship in the picture. When no one has anything to add, **re-examine** the picture to see what (if anything) has been left out.

6. **Recall** a tension-provoking moment. **Depict** in lines, dots and other marks your thoughts/memories regarding this situation. **Create** a work of art from this drawing that **illustrates** tension. **Compare** and **contrast** your work with those by other members of the class.

7. **Examine** masks from different cultures, primitive to modern. **Discuss** the universality of masks. **Identify** purposes for various types of masks and **categorize** them by form and function. **Express** how specific masks make you feel, especially masks which transform the personality. **Analyze** how various emotions are conveyed in the masks. **Describe** ways people mask their faces without using real masks (e.g., masking thoughts and feelings by using facial expressions). **Using** materials found around the home, **create** a mask that will give you special powers.

8. **Create** a work of art which passes on to the next generation some bit of knowledge about now which you think is significant. **Categorize** the works made by members of your class according to similarities. **Discuss** what factors were considered to determine significance. **Examine** how art is used in different cultures to transmit myths, folklore, legends, beliefs, and truths.

9. **Use** the element of "visual surprise" as a basis for **creating** a 3-D art object.

10. **List** the ingredients for a nonexistent work of art. Trade "recipes" with another member of your class and then **create** a work of art based on each other's lists.

11. **Identify** the steps to creating a work of art. **Design** a machine or device that would help you to make art.

12. Andy Warhol once said, "In the future, everyone will be famous for 15 minutes." **Decide** what you will be famous for. **Create** a work of art to communicate your contribution.

13. **Generate** a list of "causes of the year." **Select** what you consider the most important cause and **create** a work of art to increase public awareness. **Examine** works of art designed to heighten social awareness.

14. **Determine** factors which influence your thinking. **Design** and **create** a prototype for a thinking cap that will help you to think better.

15. **Imagine** yourself as an animal, an appliance or an inanimate object. **Indicate** the basis for this animal being you. **Examine** the use of metaphor by artists in different cultures. For example, Picasso utilized the concept of metaphor in his "Bicycle Bull." **Create** a mask based upon your personal metaphor.
16. Design a postcard about you. Consider the kinds of lines, textures, colors and shapes that you like. Now include these kinds of things in the postcard you make. Exchange postcards through the mail with a pen pal. Examine ways "new tools" (such as computers and fax machines) make new connections between people, between places and between ideas.

17. Visually examine your school. Decide and then illustrate how you would make your school a better place. Discuss and compare designs among class members. Value diversity and similarity of thinking.

18. Generate a group list of possible meanings of the word "shelter." Consider the broadest sense and application of the word. Analyze the various factors which effect how people design and build shelters in different parts of the world. How does culture influence shelter design? (e.g., extended families remain close together in multi-family units in some cultures; the habit of sitting on the floor in the Oriental home influences its design.) How does technology affect the design of shelters? Location? Climate? Design an "ideal" shelter for you and your family to live in. Construct a prototype model based on your drawing.

19. Recall the first time you experienced or witnessed injustice. Describe your thoughts and feelings at the time of this incident and how this experience confirmed or challenged your view of the world. Depict this scene in a drawing, using expressive lines to convey your feelings. Examine and compare works of art which protest social injustice (e.g., Picasso's "Guernica" and Rivera's "The Liberation of the Peons.")

20. Research hats and headgear. Find as many examples as you can from throughout the world, past or present. List various attachments and elements. Consider function and aesthetics. Create a hat or headdress that exemplifies your importance.

21. Identify the qualities of a "good design." Using a sheet of white paper only create "the best possible design." Enlarge or expand this product in any way you choose.

22. Generate a group list of things that cannot be seen, but that can be experienced in other ways (e.g., sounds, wind, tastes, feelings, abstract ideas, etc.,) Select one item from the list and use it as the basis for creating a work of art. Examine how various artists have depicted the "unseen."

23. Sequence a collection of art prints in order from the most to less beautiful. Determine criteria selected and justify the order.

24. Select an art work that you wish to promote. Determine the various qualities it possesses. Create a "sales pitch" for the value of this work. Test it out on others.

25. Observe a realistic/narrative work of art. Speculate what might be the next scene or where this scene might occur in a sequence of events. Draw out your idea.

26. Recall the major events of your life to date. Select an important event and then design a commemorative stamp.

27. Research and discuss the plight of the "homeless." Design a shelter for a homeless individual. Determine criteria for evaluating the best possible design.

28. Interpret the meanings of flavors. Create a 3-D form which will visually communicate the idea of a particular flavor. Test out your solution on other members of the class. Determine success of the form and redesign if necessary.

29. Imagine yourself as an inanimate object. Create this object (which is your personal metaphor) by tearing out its contour from a sheet of paper. Explain why.

30. Design your own art problem to solve. Create a solution.
Teaching for Critical & Creative Thinking

Students engage in critical thinking when they are encouraged to:
A. seek a clear statement of the problem or question.
B. gather, judge and connect relevant information in order to be well informed.
C. monitor their own thinking and progress.
D. withhold judgment.
E. be open-minded.
F. identify and challenge assumptions.
G. consider other points of view.
H. seek alternatives.
I. detect bias.
J. identify verifiable facts, opinions and reasoned judgments.
K. determine the factual accuracy and strength of an argument or claim.
L. determine the credibility of a source.
M. be honest and sensitive with others.
N. deal with ambiguity.
O. strive for precision, definition and clarity.
P. remain central to the main point.
Q. suspend judgment when sufficient evidence and reasoning are lacking.
R. support their positions with sufficient evidence and reasons.
S. change a position when evidence and reasons are sufficient to do so.

Students engage in creative thinking when they are encouraged to:
A. generate many ideas.
B. seek alternative solutions to a problem situation.
C. come up with unusual or innovative responses.
D. go beyond the ordinary and obvious.
E. expand or elaborate upon an idea.
F. be different from others.
G. take conceptual risks and expose themselves to failure or criticism.
H. make connections between things.
I. dream, fantasize and visualize mental images.
J. point out gaps in information given.
K. create order out of chaos.
L. be inquisitive.
M. persist with a problem where others may give up.
N. plan and develop an idea before committing it to materials.
O. work at the edge of their potential.
P. rely on their inner-self rather than others to determine the worth of their work.
Q. reframe a problem in order to develop new points-of view.
R. get away from an idea in order to put it in perspective.
S. predict possible outcomes without complete information.
Thinking like an artist means:

- looking at things more closely than most people do.
- finding beauty in everyday things and situations.
- making connections between different things and ideas.
- going beyond ordinary ways of thinking and doing `things.
- looking at things in different ways in order to generate new perspectives.
- taking risks and exposing yourself to possible failure.
- arranging things in new and interesting ways.
- working hard and at the edge of your potential.
- persisting where others may give up.
- concentrating your effort and attention for long periods of time.
- dreaming and fantasizing about things.
- using old ideas to create new ideas and ways of seeing things.
- doing something simply because it’s interesting and personally challenging to do.
We can get some idea of what it means to “think like an artist” from reading these quotes by a few well-known artists.

“I'm a work horse. I like to work. I always did. I've never had a day when I didn't want to compose, I painted or stacked the pieces or something. In my studio I'm as happy as a cow in her stall.”

• Louise Nevelson

“The more an artist works the more there is to do”

• Ad Reinhardt

“All the really good ideas I ever had came to me while I was milking a cow.”

• Grant Wood

“A man paints with his brains and not with his hands.”

• Michelangelo

“I shut my eyes in order to see.”

• Paul Gauguin

“I think the artist has to be something like a whale, swimming with its mouth open absorbing everything until it has what it needs.”

• Romare Bearden

“Art is an adventure into an unknown world, which can be explored only by those willing to take the risks.”

• Mark Rothko
Design an Artrageous Hat!

Make a hat from paper that will help you to think like an artist.

Suppose you had a hat that would help you think like an artist. What would it look like? How would it work?

Try to imagine such a hat in your mind's eye. Once you have a mental picture of your hat, make it using a paper plate as a base and colored construction paper to create it's form. It may help to draw a picture of your hat before you start.

Materials You Need: A paper plate, assorted colored construction paper, white glue or glue stick, stapler, hole punch, yarn, and other materials that may make your hat unique.

The Project: There are no "rules" for making your artrageous hat (that's what makes it "artrageous.") The following suggestions may help you in deciding how to make your hat:

- Try to use several paper techniques to make your hat.
- Try to make a hat that no one else would think of making.
- Make it so that it can actually be worn. (Use pieces of yarn for ties to secure the hat on your head.)
- Make it strong so that it doesn't fall apart.
- Try to make it so it really works. (magic potion helps.)
- When you finish your hat, try it out by making some art. Be able to explain to others how your hat works.

Want To Do More? Explore the world of hats. There are many different kinds of hats and headgear around the world that are worn for many different reasons. Try to find as many different kinds of hats, head-dresses and crowns as you can.

For more artrageous art projects, visit the @rt room at <www.arts.ufl.edu/art/rt_room>
Art Postcard Games

The following games involve students in “structured play” using small art prints to explore art concepts. These games require carefully selecting examples and groups of art works beforehand in order to focus students’ attention on certain similarities and differences in works of art.

Interpreting Art Works
[This game requires selecting prints with narrative content] Have pairs of students select 3 or 4 postcards without knowing the purpose of the selection. Teach or review the parts of a story such as “the setting” which is the scene for some action, “the plot” which is the unfolding of the action, and “the climax” of the action. Ask the students to arrange their cards in a sequence to illustrate an imaginary story. Have them present their story to others in oral or written form.

Place a group of cards on a table which are active (abstract or non-objective) or which show narrative action by realistic figures. Have each group of students select one card without knowing the purpose of the game. Discuss dramatization possibilities together. Determine “rules” of the game (e.g., words or no words, props or no props, etc.) Provide time to determine the action appropriate to the selected cards. Place all cards in a location so everyone can see them. Each group in turn presents their dramatization. The audience then makes informed guesses on which work is being dramatized. Discuss the reasons for choices of action made by the students. Variation: Have students (in groups of 4 to 5) make the “sounds” their selected work would make. The audience then guesses which card was selected.

Classifying and Categorizing Art Works
One of the more interesting games to play with art postcards involves asking students to sort a group of art prints into self-determined categories. Have each group spread the cards out in front of them and then say, “Place these prints into groups that you think go together.” Afterwards, have each group explain how and why they grouped their prints. Identify works which were difficult to classify. Are their similarities in the ways groups completed the task?

Sort a group of art prints into theme categories such as landscapes, still lifes, portraits and ideas. Possible subcategories might include real and imaginary events. Share and reflect on the results. Discuss characteristics of prints found difficult to classify.

Define the terms “realistic,” “abstract” and “nonobjective.” Show an example of each. Have students sort a group of art prints according to these categories. Subdivide categories if possible. Identify works that were difficult to classify. Share and reflect on the results.

Group art prints according to time periods (e.g., works completed in the 14th century, 15th century and so on.) Select the category containing the largest number of prints and make inferences regarding what the works suggest about the art (and culture) of the time period. Determine ways to verify conclusions drawn. Share results.
Classify art prints according to emotions or moods expressed in the works. Students may invent their own categories or they may be given descriptive words such as “exciting,” “playful,” “calm,” “sad,” “indifferent,” and “mad” and asked to sort their prints accordingly. Select a work from each category and determine what the artist has done to convey the emotion. Share results. Identify works which were difficult to classify. Discuss the personal and universal quality of emotions.

Sort art prints according to the nationality of the artist. (See back of prints.) Compare works within each category and identify similarities. Contrast works among categories and identify differences. Identify interrelationships across groups.

**Ordering & Ranking Art Works**

Before doing the following activities, the teacher should explain how a continuum consists of two extremes with the middle portion displaying characteristics common to both ends.

Have students rank a group of art prints in order from 1 (least liked) to 10 (best liked) among the group. Share rankings and criteria used to make decisions. Determine why a certain print was ranked fifth and the next one sixth. Decide if the group ranking reflects “popular” values among the public. Conduct a survey to verify conclusions drawn.

Place art prints on a continuum from oldest to most recent. Ask students to draw conclusions regarding the history of art as reflected in their time continuum. Discuss conclusions and indicate the basis for decisions made.

Sequence a group of 10 art prints from the most to least beautiful. Share the criteria used to justify the order. Discuss the personal and universal quality of “beauty.”

Place art prints on a continuum according to the depth shown (i.e., infinite/deep space to decorative/flat space). Identify and discuss ways artists show depth in a work (e.g., size, color, overlapping, perspective and so on).

Rank a group of art prints in order from 1 (most likely to be popular) to 10 (least likely to be popular) with the general public. Share rankings and criteria used to make decisions. Discuss issues related to “art in public places.” Predict how the ranking might change according to the audience (e.g., big city vs. small town, parents vs. children and so on).

Rank a group of art prints in order from 1 (most significant) to 10 (least significant). Share the criteria used to justify the order. Find examples of “great art” and determine what makes them significant.

Place art prints on a continuum from “active-noisy” to “quiet-still.” Select a print and ask “What has the artist done to make this a _______ painting?” Try other polar pairs such as warm/cool, lonely/crowded or sharp/soft.

Have students invent their own art postcard games to play.
"Ask Mr. van Gogh"

Directions: Your group will be given a set of prints of art work by Vincent van Gogh. Look over the images and then arrange them into groups that you feel go together. Once your group has completed this task, respond to the following items:

1. What do all the works seem to have in common? (list 2-3 similar characteristics below)

2. If Mr. van Gogh were to walk into the classroom right now, what questions would you want to ask him? (write your questions below)
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

3. Next, place the postcards in chronological order from oldest to most recent. Then, think of a few more questions to ask Mr. Van Gogh if he were in the classroom right now:
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

4. Lastly, choose one of your questions and write down the answer you think Mr. van Gogh might give (and be prepared to give a reason for your answer.)

5. Since Mr. van Gogh is no longer alive, where might you find answers to your questions?
Art Worksheet: Letter to an Artist

Your Name: __________________________________ Grade Level: ________

Directions: Choose a work of art from the Letters to an Artist envelope. Look at the work closely. What do you see in the painting? What do you think about this painting? What questions would you like to ask the artist about this painting? (Information on the artist and the work can be found on the back of the postcard.)

Once you have finished examining this painting, write a letter to the artist. You may say anything you wish.

Title of the Work: _________________________________________________

Artist’s Name: ____________________________ Today’s Date: __________

Dear
Teaching Thinking: Recommended Reading


Related Web Sites


Framing Essential Questions
From Now On Vol 6|No 1|September|1996 http://www.fno.org/sept96/questions.html

Strategies for Teaching Critical Thinking.

Teaching Thinking Online: Better or Worse than Face to Face? by William Peirce 2000 academic.pg.cc.md.us/~wpeirce/MCCCTR/ttol.html


Understanding Thought Processes for Improved Teaching of Thinking by Janine Huot (1998) fox.nstn.ca/~huot/model-tk.html

The Art of Questioning by Dennis Palmer Wolf http://www.exploratorium.edu/IFI/resources/workshops/artoquestioning.html

Classroom Strategies to Engender Student Questioning http://www.questioning.org/toolbox.html


The Thinking Classroom learnweb.harvard.edu/alps/thinking/

Habits of Mind www.habits-of-mind.net/

The Branco Weiss Institute for the Development of Thinking www.brancoweiss.org/ii/new/thinking/tqtmain.html