

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN ANALYZING PAINTINGS

Elements of Art - The building blocks that artists use to create a painting.

- **Light and shadow** – Briefly describe the source of light in the painting, what is lit and what is shadowed, and what this use of light and shadow suggest to the viewer.
- **Shape** – Briefly describe the geometric shapes that are present, the patterns they may form, and what these all suggest to the viewer.
- **Line** – Briefly describe the way in which objects and shapes are made with lines that may vary from thin to thick, straight, to wavy.
- **Color** – Briefly describe the colors present and what they suggest to the viewer.

Principles of Design – The way the artist uses the elements of art to create a whole image.

- **Balance** – Briefly describe the way in which the visual elements of the painting are, or are not, balanced from top-to-bottom and side-to-side.
- **Emphasis** – Briefly describe the focal point of the painting toward which the viewer’s attention is drawn.
- **Movement** – Briefly describe the path that the viewers’ eyes take as it moves toward the emphasized focal point.
- **Pattern** – Briefly describe any repetition of a shape, object, or symbol.

Interpretation

- **Summary** – In a sentence or two, summarize what the painting is about.
- **People and things** – Identify any people or things present in the painting and explain which of them seem to be of most importance.
- **Symbols** – Identify any possible symbols and briefly explain what they might mean.
- **Degree of Representation** – Describe how closely the things in the painting resemble those same things in real life and hypothesize why the artist might have chosen this degree of representation.
- **Meaning** – Briefly explain what you think the painting means, the central idea(s) that is suggests to you, and identify how it makes you feel.

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