Description of plan: As a high school librarian, I am always seeking ways to share resources with my colleagues. This lesson is a professional development presentation for classroom teachers of all levels. After visiting the Westmoreland Museum of American Art, I am inspired to share what I learned about using artwork with students. In this lesson, participants will be introduced to Visual Thinking Skills, which were demonstrated by Westmoreland Museum Staff, and learn how they can be used in the classroom. A slide-show presentation outlines the benefits and goals of visual thinking skills while tying them to both “higher order thinking skills” and Common Core content standards. Teachers will practice analyzing pieces of art in preparation of guiding students to do the same. For the sake of demonstration, the majority of examples relate to The Homestead Steel Strike and the steel mills of western Pennsylvania. This serves dual purpose as it allows for an introduction to both Visual Thinking Strategies as well as sharing a wealth of information about the Homestead Steel Strike. However, teachers will be able to take these strategies and apply them to any curricular subject area.

Introduction, overview, and unit rationale

*Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills*, a document by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, emphasizes the importance of Visual Literacy stating that learners must "demonstrate the ability to interpret, recognize, appreciate and understand information presented through visible actions, objects and symbols, natural or man-made." Furthermore, analyzing and appreciating works of art in relation to any historic event, time period, or other curricular focus directly connects to a number of content standards.

Art is a beneficial and abundant tool that can be used to enlighten and expand a students’ understanding of any historical event or time period. By guiding students to analyze not only the subject matter, but also the artists’ techniques, teachers are giving them the tools to become stronger historical thinkers (Litz). This lesson plan uses the Homestead Steel Strike to walk teachers through several Visual Thinking Skills exercises that they can use in their own classrooms with different age-groups and subject areas.
Unit Goals

Educators will be able to:

- Understand the importance of Visual Thinking Strategies
- Incorporate Visual Thinking Strategies in the classroom
- Guide students confidently in the analysis and appreciation of art
- Gain knowledge about the Homestead Steel Strike

Applied in the Classroom, Students will be able to:

- Recognize the capacity of art to reflect society and its values
- Identify ways in which attributes such as color, viewpoint, style, and composition convey ideas; and
- Develop interpretations of artwork based on visual evidence and evaluate alternate viewpoints expressed by peers

(http://www.metmuseum.org/)

Connections to state standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. CCRA. SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

(http://www.corestandards.org/)
Lesson Outline:

1. Slide 2: In order to get teachers’ attention, project slide #2 without much introduction or background information. (Recall the activity using this picture at the Westmoreland during the workshop, and emulate the process demonstrated by the museum staff.) Utilize common VTS questioning techniques by asking them: What’s going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can you find? (See handout “Westmoreland2” provided at the museum in the folder) See how much engagement you can elicit from this professional (hopefully engaged) audience. After some good discussion, move to Slide 3 and reveal the title information for the work of art and see if this information reveals any added comments.

2. Slide 4: Welcome teachers and tell them about your experience with the N.E.H. workshop *The Homestead Steel Strike and the Growth of America as an Industrial Power.* Tell them briefly about the Homestead Steel Strike and share other information about your experience as time allows. Explain that the picture they just viewed came from the Westmoreland Museum of American Art that owns an extensive collection of art related to the steel industry in Pennsylvania. (If you like, insert a couple slides of your own personal photos at the workshop.)

3. Slide 5: Discuss the rationale behind Visual Literacy and Visual Thinking Skills.

4. Slide 6: Discuss the goals of using art-based lessons with students.

5. Slide 7: Watch the 5 minute YouTube Video from the Museum of Fine Art that provides rationale for using VTS in the classroom and shows teachers and students practicing these strategies.

6. Slides #8–#11: Briefly outline some of the Common Core State Standards that are met by using Visual Thinking Skills in the classroom.

7. Slide #12: Explain to teachers that Visual Thinking Strategies uses the “Inquiry Method” where much of the responsibility is placed on students to think and draw conclusions. You can point out that the goal is for students to engage in thinking that encompasses the range of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

8. Slide #13: Refresh teachers on the three main questions they can use with students when exploring works of art.

9. Slide #14: Show teachers the grid of Higher Order Questioning. Show them how the basic questions can be expanded for a deeper discussion. (Optional: See in Slide Notes links to this slide as well as one from HOTSArt that can also be provided for teachers.)

10. Slide #15: Show the artwork and give teachers some extended time to view and think. In addition to the three basic questions “What do you see?” “What do you see that makes you say that?” and “What more can we find?” ask the audience to think about the “purpose” and try to determine the “story.”

11. Slide #16: Reveal the title and artist and see if there are more thoughts. (This is a perfect opportunity to elaborate on working conditions for those in the steel mill and share some of the interesting details learned during the workshop.)
12. Slide #17: Discuss the idea that a teacher doesn’t have to be a trained art teacher to be able to discuss the basic concepts of art. Take a look at the list of art vocabulary and encourage teachers to spend some time with it before teaching a lesson with their students. This will give them some words to use as they help students discover the work of art.

13. Slide #18 - #21: Project the piece of art and walk teachers through the quadrant of Higher Order Thinking Skills from slide #14. Ask teachers to comment. Take a few minutes to tell teachers about the labor intensive jobs in the steel mills and the challenges workers faced.

14. Slide #22-#23: Discuss the basic flow of a VTS art session with tips. For more suggestions consult the file “Westmoreland2” in the folder. This handout was provided at the museum during the workshop.

15. Slide #24: Ask a teacher to volunteer to come up and lead the group through a discussion of this piece. Have a copy of the Crocker Art Museum “How to Look at Art” as well as a copy of the “Art Vocabulary” in case the teacher wants some support during their practice session.

16. Slide #25: Reveal the title and artist. See if there is added discussion. This is the perfect time to further discuss the Homestead Steel strike, the stand-off with the Pinkertons, and the fall-out for unions moving forward.

17. Slide #26: Divide teachers into pairs or small groups. Give each group a handout from the Crocker Art Museum (Page 2 of the “How to Look at Art” file. It has four grids with room to write responses.) Provide a piece of art for each group to analyze. (Optional: Have two groups analyze the same work, so they can come together at the end to compare notes.) Choose more art from the Westmoreland Museum of Art related to the Homestead Steel Strike or any other piece of art/subject matter that you would like. Give teachers time to observe the art, fill-out the worksheet, and connect with other groups.

18. Come back together and give teachers time to share their thoughts and observations about the process.

19. Optional: Share a copy of the file “Westmoreland1” from the folder. This is an extension activity that was shared with the group at the Museum during the workshop. It is a handout called “A Worker’s Diary” that asks students to look at an artwork, think about it, and write a diary entry from the point of view of the subject. This would be a great way to allow students to delve deeper into a piece of art and further develop their visual literacy.

20. Slide #27 - #29: Optional: Tell your teachers about the “Picturing America” project and website with a number of great pieces of art to use with students– lesson plans included! Ask your librarian if your school owns a set of the “Picturing America” posters distributed to schools across the country by the National Endowment for the Humanities (2009). If so, these resources would be perfect to use for the activity in Slide #26. Show
the sample slide #29 that reveals the way the NEH provides curricular connections for a number of subject areas.)  
https://picturingamerica.neh.gov/

21. Slide #30-#32: Another way to bring VTS into the classroom is through the New York Times’ “What’s Going on in This Picture” Show a picture from the column to the group and discuss (if you have time.)  
https://www.nytimes.com/column/learning-whats-going-on-in-this-picture

22. Slide #33: Provide time for teachers to discuss and brainstorm ways that they can use VTS in their own classrooms.

23. Slide #34: Ask teachers to share their ideas with the larger group.

24. Slide #35: Optional: If time permits, allow teachers to research and gather art images for future lessons.

25. Slide #36: Wrap Up. Don’t forget to invite teachers to reach out to you if they want to further explore Visual Thinking Strategies or The Homestead Steel Strike.

**Formal and informal assessment**

This lesson will be assessed informally as you work with teachers to make sure they are comfortable with the Inquiry Based Instruction and Visual Thinking Strategies.

**Technological needs**

Computer and Projection equipment

**Material needed to complete the unit**

High-quality, adequately sized printed artwork (or posters) for small groups to analyze.

**Other sources to consider**

https://picturingamerica.neh.gov/
Works Cited


“English Language Arts Standards.” Common Core State Standards Initiative, corestandards.org/.


“Vocabulary.” Oberlin College. PDF File.
## Sample Question Stems Based on Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remember</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>What does this mean?</td>
<td>Predict what would happen if...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>Which are the facts?</td>
<td>Choose the best statements that apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which one?</td>
<td>State in your own words.</td>
<td>Judge the effects of ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What?</td>
<td>Is this the same as ...?</td>
<td>What would result ...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How?</td>
<td>Give an example.</td>
<td>Tell what would happen if ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Select the best definition.</td>
<td>Tell how, when, where, why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much?</td>
<td>Condense this paragraph.</td>
<td>Tell how much change there would be if ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many?</td>
<td>What would happen if ...?</td>
<td>Identify the results of ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td>Explain why ...</td>
<td>Write in your own words ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What expectations are there?</td>
<td>How would you explain ...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read the graph (table).</td>
<td>Write a brief outline ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are they saying?</td>
<td>What do you think could have happened next?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This represents ...</td>
<td>Who do you think...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What seems to be ...?</td>
<td>What was the main idea ...?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is it valid that ...?</td>
<td>Clarify why ...</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What seems likely?</td>
<td>Illustrate the ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who spoke to ...?</td>
<td>Show in a graph, table.</td>
<td>Does everyone act in the way that ... does?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which is true or false?</td>
<td>Which statements support ...?</td>
<td>Draw a story map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What restrictions would you add?</td>
<td>Explain why a character acted in the way that he did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outline ...</td>
<td>Do you know of another instance where ...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What could have happened next?</td>
<td>Can you group by characteristics such as ...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you clarify...?</td>
<td>Which factors would you change if ...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you illustrate ...?</td>
<td>What questions would you ask of ...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does everyone think in the way that ... does?</td>
<td>From the information given, can you develop a set of instructions about ...?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sample Question Stems Based on Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyze</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Create</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the function of …?</td>
<td>What fallacies, consistencies, inconsistencies appear?</td>
<td>Can you design a … to …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s fact? Opinion?</td>
<td>Which is more important, moral, better, logical, valid, appropriate?</td>
<td>Can you see a possible solution to …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What assumptions …?</td>
<td>Find the errors.</td>
<td>If you had access to all resources, how would you deal with …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What statement is relevant?</td>
<td>Is there a better solution to …?</td>
<td>Why don’t you devise your own way to …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What motive is there?</td>
<td>Judge the value of …</td>
<td>What would happen if?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What conclusions?</td>
<td>What do you think about …?</td>
<td>How many ways can you …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the author believe?</td>
<td>Can you defend your position about …?</td>
<td>Can you create new and unusual uses for …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the author assume?</td>
<td>Do you think … is a good or bad thing?</td>
<td>Can you develop a proposal which would …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State the point of view of …</td>
<td>What changes to … would you recommend?</td>
<td>How would you test …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What ideas apply?</td>
<td>Do you believe …?</td>
<td>Propose an alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What ideas justify the conclusion?</td>
<td>How would you feel if …?</td>
<td>How else would you …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s the relationship between?</td>
<td>How effective are …?</td>
<td>State a rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The least essential statements are …</td>
<td>What are the consequences of …?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s the main idea? Theme?</td>
<td>What influence will … have on our lives?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What literary form is used?</td>
<td>What are the pros and cons of …?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What persuasive technique is used?</td>
<td>Why is … of value?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the point of view, bias, values, or intent underlying</td>
<td>What are the alternatives?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presented material.</td>
<td>Who will gain and who will lose?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which events could not have happened?</td>
<td>Can you explain what must have happened when …?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If … happened, what might the ending have been?</td>
<td>What were some of the motives behind …?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is … similar to …?</td>
<td>What was the turning point?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you see as other possible outcomes?</td>
<td>What are some of the problems of …?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did … changes occur?</td>
<td>Can you distinguish between …?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you explain what must have happened when …?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"How to Look at (and Approach) a Work of Art."

DESCRIPTION

- Describe what you see.
- Describe the artist’s use of color. How many colors have been used?
- How has the artist applied the paint?
- Describe the texture.
- Describe the lines in the work.
- What kinds of shapes do you see?

ANALYSIS

- Is your eye drawn to any particular area of the painting?
- Is there an element that stands out in the composition?
- Is the composition balanced?
- Does the work make you think of movement? How does the artist show movement?
- Does the painting look flat or does it give a feeling of depth or space?
- Where might the artist have stood while painting this picture?

INTERPRETATION

- What kind of mood or feeling do you get from the painting?
- If you could imagine yourself within the painting, how would you feel?
- What sounds would you hear?
- Why do you think the artist choose this particular subject to paint?
- What part of the landscape, building, person, animal etc. most interested the artist? Why do you think so?

JUDGEMENT

- Find an interesting painting. Why is it interesting to you?
- What do you like or dislike about the work?
- The more you look ... the more you will see.

https://kinderart.com/blog/how-to-look-at-art/
# Higher Order Questioning: Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description:</th>
<th>Analysis:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What kinds of things do you see in the work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How would you describe them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What information can you get from the credit line?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What Elements of Art did the artist use (line, shape, space, form, texture, color)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What Principles of Design are used (rhythm, movement, balance, proportion, variety, emphasis and unity)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretation:</th>
<th>Judgment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What do you think this piece is about?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the title fit?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pretend you can climb inside. How does the painting feel? How does it make you feel?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Would you agree with the choice of medium and colors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the date make a difference?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why do you think other people should see this work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What would you do with it if you owned it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is worth remembering about this picture?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to Look at Art

The following is a guideline containing four basic components or stages of looking at art as suggested by art educator Edmund B. Feldman. The questions can be used to provoke curiosity and inquiry and encourage active student participation and to help students better understand and share their feelings on a work or works of art.

DESCRIPTION

- Describe what you see.
- Describe the artist’s use of color. What colors have been used?
- How has the artist applied the paint?
- Describe the texture.
- Describe the lines in the work.
- What kinds of shapes do you see?

ANALYSIS

- Is your eye drawn to any particular area of the painting?
- Is there an element that stands out in the composition?
- Is the composition balanced?
- How does the artist show movement?
- Does the painting look flat or does it give a feeling of depth or space?
- Where might the artist have stood while painting this picture?

INTERPRETATION

- What kind of mood or feeling do you get from the painting?
- If you could imagine yourself within the painting, how would you feel?
- What sounds would you hear?
- Why do you think the artist chose this particular subject to paint?
- What part of the landscape, building, person, animal etc. most interested the artist? Why do you think so?

JUDGMENT

- Find an interesting painting. Why is it interesting to you?
- What do you like or dislike about the work?
- What criteria would you use to assess this work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Look / Describe</th>
<th>Analyze</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line, color, texture, shape/form, space, value</td>
<td>Key ideas, action, subjects, themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpret</th>
<th>Judge / Assess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context, importance, composition</td>
<td>Success, effectiveness, execution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Why?” “What further questions do you have?”
Art Vocabulary:

**Elements of Art:** The visual components of color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>An element of art defined by a point moving in space. Line may be two- or three-dimensional, descriptive, implied, or abstract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape</td>
<td>An element of art that is two-dimensional, flat, or limited to height and width.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>An element of art that is three-dimensional and encloses volume; includes height, width AND depth (as in a cube, a sphere, a pyramid, or a cylinder). Form may also be free flowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>The lightness or darkness of tones or colors. White is the lightest value; black is the darkest. The value halfway between these extremes is called middle gray.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>An element of art by which positive and negative areas are defined or a sense of depth achieved in a work of art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td>An element of art made up of three properties: hue, value, and intensity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hue: name of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Value: hue’s lightness and darkness (a color’s value changes when white or black is added)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Intensity: quality of brightness and purity (high intensity= color is strong and bright; low intensity= color is faint and dull)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>An element of art that refers to the way things feel, or look as if they might feel if touched.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Principles of Art:** Balance, emphasis, movement, proportion, rhythm, unity, and variety; the means an artist uses to organize elements within a work of art.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td>A principle of design that indicates movement, created by the careful placement of repeated elements in a work of art to cause a visual tempo or beat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>A way of combining elements to add a feeling of equilibrium or stability to a work of art. Major types are symmetrical and asymmetrical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis (contrast)</td>
<td>A way of combining elements to stress the differences between those elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>A principle of design that refers to the relationship of certain elements to the whole and to each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradation</td>
<td>A way of combining elements by using a series of gradual changes in those elements. (large shapes to small shapes, dark hue to light hue, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>A way of combining similar elements in an artwork to accent their similarities (achieved through use of repetitions and subtle gradual changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>A principle of design concerned with diversity or contrast. Variety is achieved by using different shapes, sizes, and/or colors in a work of art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>A principle of design used to create the look and feeling of action and to guide the viewer’s eye throughout the work of art.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Vocabulary." Oberlin College. PDF File.
Introduce the VTS: it allows students to examine art, to think, to contribute observations and ideas, to listen, and to build understandings together. Ask students to recall these aspects of the process often. Call students’ attention to the first image. Always give students a moment to look in silence before you invite them to speak.

After they have examined the image, ask the question, *What's going on in this picture?* Once students have learned this question, use variations.

Whenever students make a comment that involves an interpretation (a comment that goes beyond identification and literal description), respond first by paraphrasing, and then ask, *What do you see that makes you say that?* Once students understand the point of this question, begin to vary it.

In order to keep students searching for further observations, frequently ask them, *What else can you find?* Again, variations are useful once students are familiar with the point of the question.

**Listen** carefully to students, making sure that you hear all of what they say and that you understand it accurately.

**Point** to what they mention in the slide. Be precise, even when it is a comment that has been repeated. Use encouraging body language and facial expressions to nurture participation.

**Paraphrase** each comment. Change the wording, but not the meaning of what is said. In paraphrasing, demonstrate the use of proper sentence construction and rich vocabulary to assist students with language.

**Accept** each comment neutrally. Remember that this process emphasizes a useful pattern of thinking, not right answers. Students are learning to make detailed observations, sorting out and applying what they know. Articulating their thoughts leads to growth even when they make mistakes.

**Link** answers that relate, even when there are disagreements. Show how the students’ thinking evolves, how some observations and ideas stimulate others, how opinions change and build.

Thank students for their participation. Tell them what you particularly enjoyed. Encourage them to think of viewing art as an ongoing, open-ended process. Avoid summaries, linking throughout is enough to show how conversations build.
Visual Thinking Skills:
Teaching with Art Across the Curriculum

Kerrie More
Glacier High School
Kalispell, MT
What do you see?
Pittsburgh Industrial Scene,
John Shryock, b 1914
Westmoreland Museum of Art
Acknowledgement:

This lesson was inspired by:

*The Homestead Steel Strike and the Growth of America as an Industrial Power*

LANDMARKS OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE WORKSHOPS FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

- National Endowment for the Humanities
- Rivers of Steel
- The Westmoreland Museum of American Art
- University of Pittsburgh Library System
Visual Literacy:

- 21st Century Skills emphasizes **Visual Literacy** stating that learners must "demonstrate the ability to interpret, recognize, appreciate and understand information presented through visible actions, objects and symbols, natural or man-made."

- Art = Text
Visual Thinking Strategies: Goals

Students will be able to:

- Recognize the capacity of art to reflect society and its values
- Identify ways in which attributes such as color, viewpoint, style, and composition convey ideas
- Develop interpretations of artwork based on visual evidence and evaluate alternate viewpoints expressed by peers.

(http://www.metmuseum.org/)
Video: VTS

Visual Thinking Strategies and Museum of Fine Arts School Partnerships

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKb4uuRAymM
VTS: Meeting the Standards:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. CCRA. SL.1**

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
● CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
The Inquiry Method:

Uses levels of questioning to:

- Trigger curiosity
- Emphasize higher order thinking
- Encourage independent observations
Visual Thinking Strategies:

- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

https://kinderart.com/blog/how-to-look-at-art/
## Higher Order Questioning: Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description:</th>
<th>Analysis:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What kinds of things do you see in the work?</td>
<td>- What Elements of Art did the artist use (line, shape, space, form, texture, color)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How would you describe them?</td>
<td>- What Principles of Design are used (rhythm, movement, balance, proportion, variety, emphasis and unity)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What information can you get from the credit line?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretation:</th>
<th>Judgment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What do you think this piece is about?</td>
<td>- Why do you think other people should see this work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does the title fit?</td>
<td>- What would you do with it if you owned it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pretend you can climb inside. How does the painting feel? How does it make you feel?</td>
<td>- What is worth remembering about this picture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Would you agree with the choice of medium and colors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does the date make a difference?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do you see?
The Iron Workers’ Noontime, 1883
Thomas Pollack Anshutz (1851-1912)
Art Vocabulary:

PRINCIPLES OF ART: Balance, emphasis, movement, proportion, rhythm, unity, and variety; the means an artist uses to organize elements within a work of art.

Rhythm  A principle of design that indicates movement, created by the careful placement of repeated elements in a work of art to cause a visual tempo or beat.

Balance  A way of combining elements to add a feeling of equilibrium or stability to a work of art. Major types are symmetrical and asymmetrical.

Emphasis (contrast)  A way of combining elements to stress the differences between those elements.

Proportion  A principle of design that refers to the relationship of certain elements to the whole and to each other.

Gradation  A way of combining elements by using a series of gradual changes in those elements. (large shapes to small shapes, dark hue to light hue, etc)

Harmony  A way of combining similar elements in an artwork to accent their similarities (achieved through use of repetitions and subtle gradual changes)

Variety  A principle of design concerned with diversity or contrast. Variety is achieved by using different shapes, sizes, and/or colors in a work of art.

Movement  A principle of design used to create the look and feeling of action and to guide the viewer’s eye throughout the work of art.

ELEMENTS OF ART: The visual components of color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value.

| Line | An element of art defined by a point moving in space. Line may be two- or three-dimensional, descriptive, implied, or abstract. |
| Shape | An element of art that is two-dimensional, flat, or limited to height and width. |
| Form | An element of art that is three-dimensional and encloses volume; includes height, width AND depth (as in a cube, a sphere, a pyramid, or a cylinder). Form may also be free flowing. |
| Value | The lightness or darkness of tones or colors. White is the lightest value; black is the darkest. The value halfway between these extremes is called middle gray. |
| Space | An element of art by which positive and negative areas are defined or a sense of depth achieved in a work of art. |
| Color | An element of art made up of three properties: hue, value, and intensity.  
  - Hue: name of color  
  - Value: hue’s lightness and darkness (a color’s value changes when white or black is added)  
  - Intensity: quality of brightness and purity (high intensity= color is strong and bright; low intensity= color is faint and dull) |
| Texture | An element of art that refers to the way things feel, or look as if they might feel if touched. |
Description: Determining subject matter and design elements

- Line
- Color
- Shape
- Form
- Texture
- Value
- Space
Analysis: Discovering how the artwork is organized

- Emphasis
- Balance
- Harmony
- Composition
- Movement
- Proportion
- Unity
- Contrast
- Rhythm
- Variety
Interpretation: Determining feelings and meaning

- What is the mood of the painting?
- Why do you think the artist chose this subject matter?
- Who are the people portrayed?
- How can we place the artwork in a historical context?
- If you could imagine yourself in the painting, how would you feel? Why?
Judgment: Making decisions about the artist’s merit

- What do you like or dislike about the artwork?
- Do you think this is an effective composition?
- Would you hang this artwork in your home?
- What further questions do you have about the artwork?

Portrait of Mike Kessel (1938-1940)
Francis Komperda
1. Project artwork. Choose a work that is not abstract.
2. Ask students to look closely and silently at it for a minute or two.
3. Three questions guide the discussion.
   a. Open with: “What’s going on here?”
      ■ Summarize student responses using conditional language (“Raoul thinks this could be…”). This keeps the conversation open to other interpretations by other students.
   b. If appropriate: “What do you see that makes you say that?”
      ■ This encourages students to back up their statements with things they see in the work of art.
   c. Ask the group: “What more can we find?”
      ■ This continues the conversation.
Tips for Discussions:

● During discussion, link responses together—compare and contrast what other students have said.

● Avoid inserting information. Let students look closely and reason out their responses, rather than discussing the facts. If a student comes to a factually incorrect conclusion, gently correct if absolutely necessary during your classroom lesson, *not* during the VTS conversation.

● Allow the conversation to go where it will, even if it gets off topic. Remember, the goal is not to share information, but to encourage critical thinking.

● At the end of the conversation, continue with your lesson, linking the content with comments that students made.
What do you see?
How to Look at Art: Activity

With a partner:

● Look at the piece of art for 60 seconds.
● Discuss and document your observations
Picturing America, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) brought masterpieces of American art into classrooms and libraries nationwide.

The project concluded in 2009. However, many of the educational materials created for the program are still available for use by students, teachers, and lifelong learners.

https://picturingamerica.neh.gov/
Lesson Plans:

http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/picturing-america
**The Dove: Romare Bearden (1964)**

**Historical Connections:**
- Black History
- Great Migration
- Harlem Renaissance
- Civil Rights Movement

**Geography:**
- Urban Geography

**Music:**
- Jazz
- Blues

**Arts:**
- Collage; mixed media

**Literary Connections:**
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neal Hurston

https://picturingamerica.neh.gov/
“Every Monday during the school year The New York Times posts a photograph stripped of its caption and context, and ask students what they see going on in this picture. Hundreds of students participate every week from classrooms across the country and around the world — from elementary through high school, and even adult education E.S.L. classes — sharing their observations. Our partners at Visual Thinking Strategies moderate the discussion and encourage students to look even more closely for more details.”

“The Year in Pictures” 2007

Original caption:

Senator Charles E. Schumer walked through a room full of cots on his way to the Senate floor, where an all-night session was being held in July.

https://www.nytimes.com/column/learning-whats-going-on-in-this-picture?
Think-Pair-Share:

- Think of one lesson (or more!) that you could enhance with an art-based lesson and share it with your partner.
Group Discussion:

- How do you plan to explore visual literacy in your classroom?
- Share your plans for using art and the inquiry method with your students.
Thinking Ahead:

- Search for images to use with an upcoming lesson or unit.
- Create a folder and/or document to start collecting information and images for a visual literacy lesson.
Next Steps:

- Seek ways to incorporate visual literacy into your lessons.
- Ask your librarian and/or art teachers for help in discovering artwork that will complement different topics of study.
- Share successes in incorporating art into your classroom with your colleagues!
The Homestead Steel Strike:

Please reach out if you want to explore some amazing resources to enhance your lessons on Industrialization, Labor, Immigration, Steel, etc.