

SEE / THINK / WONDER

A routine for exploring works of art and other interesting things

- Look at the work of art for a moment.
- What do you see?
- What do you think about what you see?
- What do you wonder about?

WHAT KIND OF THINKING DOES THIS ROUTINE ENCOURAGE? This routine helps students make careful observations and develop their own ideas and interpretations based on what they see. By separating the two questions, *What do you see?* and *What do you think about what you see?*, the routine helps students distinguish between observations and interpretations. By encouraging students to wonder and ask questions, the routine stimulates curiosity and helps students reach for new connections.

WHEN AND WHERE CAN IT BE USED? This widely-used routine works well with almost any artwork or object. It is versatile, easy to use, and almost never fails to deepen students' interest in the topic at hand, whether students have lots of background knowledge or none at all. Many teachers like to use this routine at the start of a lesson, or as a first step in a more extended activity.

TIPS FOR USING IT. The routine works particularly well when used as a group; everyone can participate and because students invariably build on each others' ideas, it helps students vividly see the power of shared inquiry. The best tip for using this routine is to trust the routine and give it time, even if –or perhaps especially if – you're unsure of the direction the conversation will go in. Another tip is to keep the routine anchored to direct observation by returning often to the question, *What do you see?* One way to do this is to borrow a phrasing from another routine: When students address the "*What do you think?*" question by giving an opinion or interpretation, respond by asking: *What do you see that makes you say that?*