

Writing in the Art Museum

Visit Opportunities at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum

The Museum offers two programs for "College Writing" students. Schedule a visit for your class at kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/writing-tour-request. Direct questions to Rochelle Caruthers, university academic programs coordinator, at rochelle.caruthers@wustl.edu.

Analysis Portfolio Preparation

Objectives

- Broaden ideas about what constitutes a text.
- Practice observation and collecting evidence for use in analysis.
- Introduce a step-by-step process for visual analysis; connect it to other forms of analysis.

Artwork 1: Visual Analysis Discussion—Process Narrated

The facilitator will narrate to the students the visual analysis process: first describe (collect an inventory of visual evidence), then start to develop an interpretation (based on patterns, contrast, anomalies, feelings, knowledge, associations, etc.). After students have reached an interpretation, the facilitator will introduce information about the artwork, and students will determine whether this new information supports or challenges their initial interpretation.

Artwork 2: Visual Analysis Discussion—Student Directed

The procedure follows the same process, but students (not the facilitator) will articulate each step.

Research Paper Preparation

Objectives

- Consider the many lenses through which a text can be explored.
- Discover how multiple interpretations can coexist and inform each other.
- Practice applying secondary sources to a subject of analysis.

Artwork 1: Lens Discussion—Effective Use of Secondary Sources

Students will divide into groups of three. After a minute spent observing the artwork, students will generate a question in their small group and come up with a working thesis based on their observations and initial interpretation. Each group will share their initial thesis, and will then receive information placing the artwork in historical context. The small groups will continue their discussions, weaving the new content into their initial interpretation. Each group will share their revised interpretation without directly relaying the new information; students must work the source material into their argument, using it to support or complicate their initial ideas. Finally, each group will receive an additional piece of information that explores the artwork through a specific lens, again working it into their argument before sharing with the rest of the group.

Museum Resources

- Digitized collection: kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/collection/explore
- Spotlight Series (essays about the collection): kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/spotlight/archive