

Visual Analysis/Museum Paper

Attend a professional exhibition of works made between the Renaissance and the early modern period (about 1910) and choose one work seen in person to visually analyze. Before you venture out to see contemporary works of art, please read Marjorie Munsterberg's explanation of visual description at, <http://writingaboutart.org/pages/visualdesc.html>.

Begin by describing what you see, drawing the viewer's attention to key elements (objects, subjects, symbols) in the composition. Identify three to five visual elements (subjects, objects, textures, lines, differing contrast, etc.) in the work. Discuss the work's subjects. What are the main components, what is represented, who is portrayed, where is the scene set? While you may want to keep your visual description concise, remember that you cannot assume that what you are seeing / experiencing is universal. In other words, be careful not to make assumptions!

Next, identify important formal elements in the work. While this may feel descriptive, what you're focusing on in this section are the qualities and characteristics of compositional elements such as perspective, balance, rhythm, and symmetry, as well the qualities and characteristics of the expression such as line, shadow, color, and texture. Ask yourself whether the work is abstract or realistic, what style is it made, and other physical aspects.

Finally, connect your private experience with the work with its visual elements (description, subjects, and form). What meaning do the visual elements convey?

Visual Analysis Paper Rubric	
The basics (artist, title, date, etc.)	out of 5 points
Consideration of subject	out of 10 points
Description of physical properties	out of 10 points
Personal experience	out of 10 points
Writing style	out of 15 points
Total	out of 50 points