

BONUS ACTIVITY (ONLINE ONLY)



Aesthetics – Seeing the Beauty in a Common Object

Learning skills: *drawing, visualizing and sensing*

WHY



Aesthetics (or aesthetics as it is sometimes spelled) is the study of beauty and one's responses to it. This includes not just the beauty to be found in art objects but the beauty in all things. The ability to see and appreciate surrounding beauty is what many people seek as part of their personal development process. Incorporating aesthetics into your plan for personal development provides you not only with a greater sense and appreciation for beauty but also with a greater degree of enjoyment from life itself.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



1. Look critically at common objects and discover beauty (perhaps not before realized).
2. Simplify what is observed and then translate it into a drawing.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA



CRITERION #1: your answers to the Critical Thinking Questions

Attributes:

- a. originality
- b. creativity
- c. expresses emotions, feelings, and/or visualizations

CRITERION #2: the significance your drawing produces for you and others

Attribute:

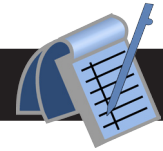
evokes feelings and emotions

RESOURCES



- various fruits or vegetables
- knife (for cutting the fruits or vegetables)
- pencil
- piece of plain white paper

PLAN



1. Carefully read the Information section.
2. Select one of the available objects (fruit or vegetable).

As a team, work through steps 3 and 4 of the Plan and answer Critical Thinking Questions 1-4.

3. Look at the object your team has selected. Really look closely at it and scrutinize it. Hold it in your hand and consciously feel it. Turn it around to see and feel the top, bottom, and all-around. Take several minutes to do this. Look at the shapes and lines, and feel the textures. As you examine the object, say aloud the things you observe and perceive; the Recorder should document what is said. This will imprint visual impressions to be recalled later when you begin to draw.
4. Use a knife to cut the object in half. Carefully scrutinize the appearance of the insides. Again look for the shapes, lines, and textures with your eyes and hands, speaking aloud what you observe. The Recorder should be documenting these verbal comments.
5. Decide on a view that appeals to you the most. You are not going to try to make what you see look like a photograph. You are going to make a drawing of shapes, lines, and textures suggested by the inside of the object. Realize that since most people do not examine things as you have been asked to do, your drawing will probably not be recognizable as the fruit or vegetable it is. This will be a personal and unique drawing. It needs to have meaning only to you, the artist.

Individually perform steps 6-10 of the Plan and answer Critical Thinking Questions 5 & 6.

6. Begin by lightly drawing the basic shape that is the outline of the object.
7. Lightly draw the smaller shapes within the object. Do not concern yourself with making the shapes look “correct.” There is no such thing as correct or incorrect in this drawing. You are learning to create your own drawing from the shapes, lines, and textures as you perceive them.
8. Hold the drawing away from you and compare it to the object. This is not to check its “correctness” but to get ideas on how to emphasize the parts that appeal to you. Use contrast to vary the lines and shapes and then add textures.
9. Emphasize the parts of the drawing which are most important to you by darkening, widening, varying what you have drawn in whatever way you choose.
10. Add interest or emphasis to the drawing by adding texture. Before you do this, however, look at the drawing from a distance and decide what areas you want to enhance.

Choose a partner for step 11 of the Plan and answer Critical Thinking Questions 7 & 8.

11. Exchange your drawing with someone else and share observations with each other.



This activity is designed to help you look carefully at a common object and to see its beauty. Truly seeing something (perceiving it through the senses) is the beginning step to recognizing beauty and understanding what is esthetic. Recognizing beauty is a typical human trait, but many people lose this ability and have to relearn it. The assumption here is that by carefully looking at something, one can begin to see and appreciate its beauty. A person's life is enhanced by being able to look at surrounding life and identify the beauty that is there. The following are terms which you might find helpful for this activity.

Shape

Shapes can be any size.

Shapes can be angular, as in a rectangle or triangle.

Shapes can be curved, and are abundant in nature, such as in lemons, flowers, ears, hearts, etc.

Many shapes are a combination of angles and curves, such as a bicycle, a keyboard, a teardrop, etc.

Line

Lines vary in appearance:

- dark or light,
- long or short,
- straight or jagged,
- thick or thin,
- continuous or broken,
- vertical, horizontal, or diagonal.

Lines can be drawn around any shape.

Lines can symbolically express emotion:

- horizontal is calm—lying down to sleep, a meadow, the horizon;
- vertical is supportive—standing, columns, corn stalks;
- diagonal is active—leaning forward to run, lightning, trees in a strong wind;
- thick is bold, thin is subtle; and
- dark is strong, light is soft.

Texture

Texture deals with the sense of touch.

Textures can be actual or simulated:

- actual is how it feels with your fingers, and
- simulated is how it looks in a picture or drawing.

Textures vary in how they look or feel. They can be rough or smooth, bony or furry, velvety or scratchy.

Textures are simulated in pictures by markings that have different characteristics.

Contrast

Contrast is putting opposite things next to each other. You can do this with variety in shapes and lines as shown in the examples. Texture can add contrast to a drawing. Contrast is an important tool in emphasizing selected parts of a drawing.

Looking at your drawing.

5. How has the observation of your object influenced what you drew?

6. What do you like about your drawing?

If you like something, you would probably say that it has beauty. However, if you do not like something, you are likely to say that you do not see beauty. Realize that sometimes, you may not like an entire drawing, but like only part of it.

Looking at someone else's drawing.

7. How is the other person's drawing distinct or different from yours, in terms of shape, line, texture, and contrast?

8. What beauty or emotions do you see in this person's drawing?
(What do you like? What feelings does it evoke?)

EXERCISES

1. Write a short paper discussing how this activity helped you to better understand what is meant by aesthetics. Discuss how you felt about your drawing and having someone else look at your drawing.
2. Select one drawing from each team and put these drawings on a wall for all to observe. Share your insights and opinions with the class in a short oral report.
3. Select a picture of a famous painting that you enjoy from an art book. Carefully look at it. Identify the shapes, lines, and textures and describe why it appeals to you. The best place to select a painting would be on a visit to an art gallery!