



Talk the Talk! Vocabulary Activities

Art has a language all its own. Here are some ways to help your students learn and use some art-related vocabulary.

Make a word wall

Choose some of the key terms you want your students to learn, and create a display that features them. For example, you might design a wall that focuses on the elements of art: title each section of your wall with one of the elements, and have the students add other words, magazine pictures, and so on, to illustrate each word. The section about “Line” might include words like curved, and horizontal; it might have student illustrations of different types of lines; and it might include a photo from a magazine showing railroad tracks. Add a few items to the wall each day, and use the words often in the days just before and after your trip to the Museum.

Play a matching game

Select a few terms for the game: four or five for younger students, eight to 10 for older ones. Write each term on a piece of heavy 9x12 paper and write each corresponding definition on a piece of heavy paper as well. Shuffle the pages and number the backs. To play the game, attach the pages to the board with magnets or tape in numerical order. Have a student choose two pages by their numbers and turn them over. If a term and its definition have been selected, remove the match from the game and call on another student to choose. When only two pages are left, have a student choose one to turn over and then predict what is on the other to make the match. This game can be played in teams or as a whole class. To play it in a small group, use index cards instead of 9x12 pages.

Ring a bell

List on the board the art terms you’d like to spotlight, and have a small bell handy. Conduct a class discussion about an artwork, ringing the bell each time a student uses one of the focus terms in a meaningful way. The resource “Let’s Talk” (part of the Crocker All-Stars curriculum guide) has suggestions for talking about art with students.

Look at a book

Many picture books are marvelous sources of art. Devote some read-aloud sessions to looking closely at some illustrations, identifying in them as many of the art terms as you and your students can find. You could also have students look at books in small groups and share their finds with each other. This could be a good activity for library day. Another activity is to have students first “read” the pictures in the book, then read the text.



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Make a book

For each student, staple several sheets of paper together and include an art term at the top of each page. Students then complete the pages by adding illustrations and related words in a composition they create. Provide an appropriate title. For example, a book called "Types of Art" might include the pages landscape, portrait, still life, etc.; a book called "Art Parts" would include a page for each of the elements of art.

Do an activity page

This resource guide includes several activities ready to print, copy, and use with your students.