



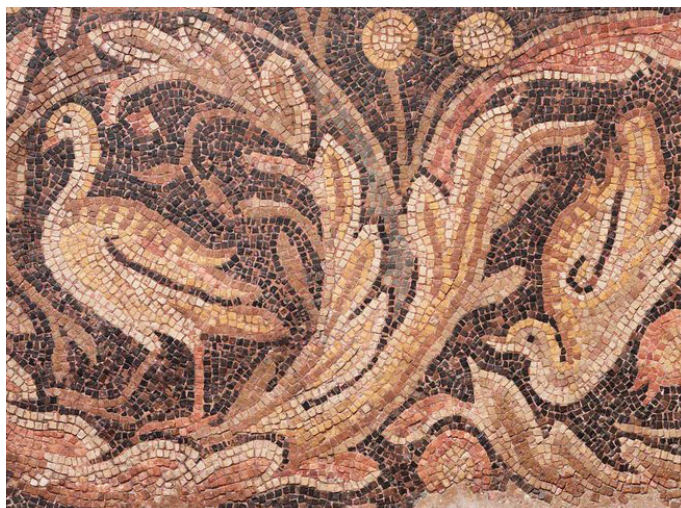
Art from Ancient Times to 1650

Self-guided group activity

Grades 9–12

Plan on spending time with 8–10 artworks.

Many of these questions are designed to prompt close looking and critical thinking. Read each artwork's label to find answers to fact-based questions. Artwork not on view? Don't worry: There are plenty of others to visit!



Syria, *Birds with Foliage* (detail), 69.49.1
Gallery 240 (Corridor)

What interests you most about this ancient Syrian mosaic? Why?

Imagine designs like these running the length of a border to a larger mosaic.

Why might artists at this time have used birds, vines, and fruit to symbolize life and renewal?



Greece, *Black-figure Hydria* (detail), 61.59
Gallery 241

What do you suppose this vessel was used for?

What suggests this to you?

What goddess is represented on the vessel?

What animals do you see?



Italy, *Standing Deity Holding Horn and Bucket* (detail), 79.21
Gallery 241

What two words would you choose to best describe this Roman god?

What aspects look most realistic? How do you think the artist made them look that way?

What is a fresco?

What natural disaster happened in Pompeii?



Iran, *Rectangular Tiles* (detail), 50.46.458 and 50.46
Gallery 243

What do you consider most artistic about these tiles?

What part of a mosque did these ceramic tiles probably decorate?

What do you wonder about these tiles?



Egypt, *False door* (detail), 52.22
Gallery 250

What, if anything, surprises you about this ancient Egyptian artwork?

What writing style is used on this false door?

Why do you suppose it is called a false door?

How do you honor your ancestors?



Djenne, Mali, Africa, *Equestrian figure (detail)*, 83.168
Gallery 250

What about this horse and rider show they are powerful?

How do historians know this is authentic?

What do you suppose the artist needed to think about before beginning to carve this sculpture from a single piece of wood?



Benin, Nigeria, *Tusk (detail)*, 56.33
Gallery 250

Who are the most important people on this carved tusk? How can you tell?

What kinds of animals do you see?

What purpose does the tusk serve?

Find the Portuguese soldier. How did the artist show he was a foreigner?



Roman, *Roman Matron (detail)*, 32.16
Gallery 230 (Rotunda)

Describe this woman.

What can you learn about her from the nearby label?

What is typically Roman about this sculpture?

What is more Greek?



China, *Sheng Ting*, 2005.92
Gallery 214

What did you first notice about this bronze vessel?

How was it used?

What details do you find particularly interesting? Why?

Compare this to the Jar in Gallery 205.

Which do you like better? Why?



China, *Celestial Horse* (detail), 2002.45
Gallery 215

Which aspects of the horse appear most realistic to you? What about them looks realistic?

How do you think the artist shows how important horses were to the Chinese people at this time?

Why did the Chinese so admire western horses?



Japan, *Jar* (detail), 82.9.1
Gallery 205

Be sure to look at the top and the surface. How would you describe the decorations on this jar?

Why is this jar associated with fire?

Compare this to the *Sheng Ting* in Gallery 214.

Which do you like better? Why?



Japan, *Guardian figures*, 83.76.2 and 83.76.1
Gallery 205

How are these two figures alike?

How are these two figures different?

What did these sculptures function as?

Would you be intimidated by them? Why or why not?



Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Portrait of Moritz Buchner*, 57.11
Gallery 342



Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Portrait of Anna Buchner, née Lindacker*, 57.10
Gallery 342

What do these paintings suggest about this couple's relationship?

What message do you think they wanted the artist to communicate?

What, if anything, surprises you about this pair?



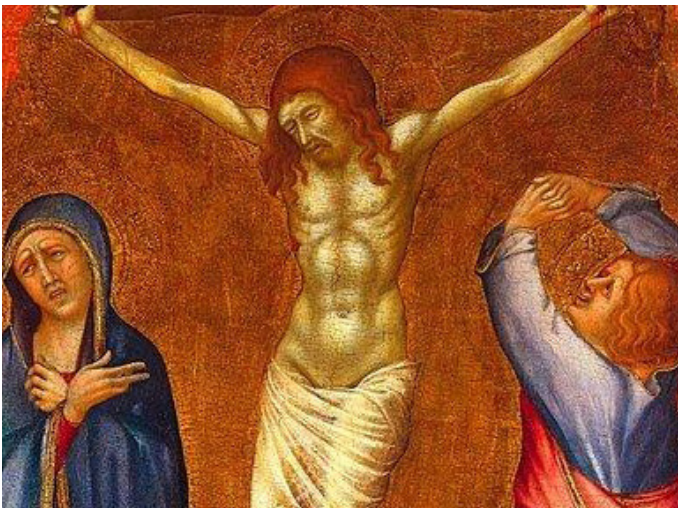
Peter Paul Rubens, *The Union of England and Scotland (Charles I as the Prince of Wales)* (detail), 26.2
Gallery 331

From what angle was this meant to be seen? Why?

What monarchy does the painting celebrate?

How do monarchies differ from democracies?

Rubens was one of Europe's most important painters in the 1600s. Based on this painting, what do you think made him so admired?

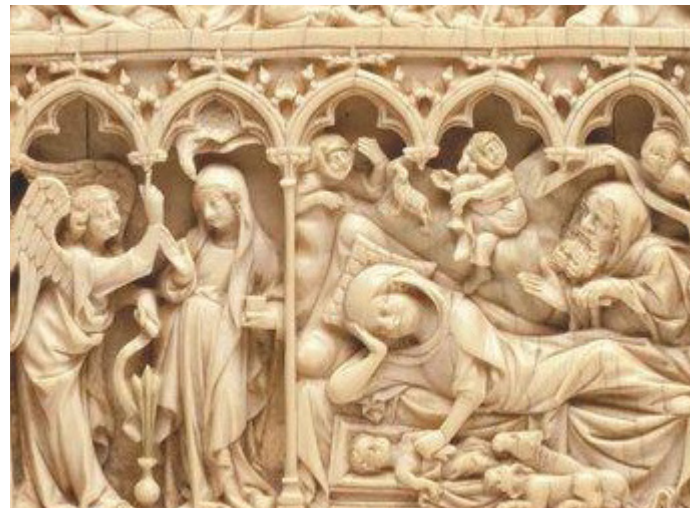


Lippo Vanni, *Crucifixion with the Virgin, Saint John the Evangelist and a Clerical Donor* (detail), 79.19
Gallery 343

What is going on in this image? What do you see that makes you say that?

How does the artist appeal to your emotions?

Why might someone ask an artist to include his or her portrait in a religious scene like this one?



France, *Diptych with scenes from the life of Christ* (detail), 83.72
Gallery 343

Think about how long it might have taken to carve this hundreds of years ago.

Look closely to see traces of color still on the ivory.

Why do you suppose it was worth it to the artist to invest so much time in making this?

How was this used?