

Games & Activities to Use with Portfolio Presentations

1. A **pointer** may be used to direct the students' attention to a diagonal line, a geometric shape, converging lines of perspective, etc. A **magic paintbrush** may be used both as a pointer and to show how artist created brushstrokes. Also tap a young child on the shoulder with the magic paintbrush to enable him/her to have "magic eyes" and tell about the things that he/she sees in a picture. *To make a "magic paintbrush," cover the long handle of a paintbrush with white glue and glitter dust. To make a "super brush" attach a long, tapered dowel stick to the ferrule of a regular brush.* Try other pointers: long feathers when discussing birds, glitter wands for kings and queens, a twig for discussing trees, a flag for American history, etc.

2. A pair of **artist eyeglasses** may give the very young or somewhat shy child the confidence to describe the special colors or shapes or the subject matter that he/she sees. Children take turns wearing them while they make comments. Decorate cardboard eyeglasses or empty frames.

3. A **hand puppet** could initiate a conversation about a painting, with the puppet asking you questions and you "not knowing" the answers and asking a child to respond to the puppet. Many other improvisational situations with puppets can provide young children with a stimulating way to participate in the discussion.

4. Use a **toy microphone** to let children ask or respond to questions.

5. Bring along **scraps of textured materials** (satin, lace, burlap, wood, etc.) to use in discussing the simulated textures in the artworks. Also bring along a **real object** (fruit, beads, feather, flowers, musical instrument) that is in one of the paintings. Tell children to watch for these textures or objects.

6. You may want to **dress in special clothing and bring props** that are appropriate to the theme of the Portfolio. For instance, a clown's costume for Circus; cowboy hat and bandana for the Old West Portfolio; old-fashioned outfit for How People Dressed Long Ago, engineer's garb for Trains. Dress in the primary colors for Color Portfolio, different textures and patterns for Grade 4-A.

7. Use a **clear piece of vinyl** the same size as the reproduction, 22 x 28-inches. Then use a Vis a Vis water soluble marking pen to convey certain points. You may draw around all the round shapes, the directional lines, the perspective lines, all the places where the artist used red, the distorted shapes, etc. Wipe vinyl clean with damp paper towel and use again. See "Using Clear Vinyl" page for specific grade level examples.

8. Before the class sees the painting, cover it with clear vinyl sheet. Then tape a piece of white paper over it, cutting out an area such as the head of a figure. Then have several **students use markers to draw what they think is beneath the paper**. Remove the pap and vinyl to see the actual print.

9. Have children look quietly at a picture for a minute or so and **make up a good title for it**. This calls for description and interpretation. They should tell why they chose that name for it.

10. Write the **names of all the pictures** on the board. Let students make guesses as to which title goes with which reproduction.

11. Ask children to **imitate a pose, movement, or facial expression** that they see in one of the pictures. Have several students imitate a **group position**. Students may guess which picture is being imitated by the pose.

12. Ask children to choose **which person in a painting that they would like to be** and tell why. Or ask them to tell which painting they **would like to have created** and tell why.

13. Have the students **visually memorize** a picture for 20 seconds. They should each make up a question that they may ask of other students. Questions may relate to the subject matter, location of objects, position of figures, colors, shapes, lines, focal point, emotions felt, etc. Then turn the reproduction around and ask several students to ask questions to the other students. Or you may ask the class questions after they have memorized it.

14. **Start a story** about a print that contains figures or animals and have each student add on a part. Younger children may be tapped with the magic paintbrush when it is their turn. Have students tell what they think happened before and what might happen next. This requires the child to observe details and to use his or her imagination and feelings and to verbalize them. **For older students:** Divide class into several groups with 5 or 6 students in each group. Assign one student to be the recorder. Give a reproduction to each group and have each group begin a story about it. In three minutes they pass their reproduction and story to the second group who will add several sentences to the beginning lines. The third group of students complete the story and passes the story and print to the group who started the story. A recorder in the group then reads aloud the entire story that accompanies the picture.

15. Play a **telephone scenario**. An example of a scenario could be: You have just found a painting (one of the prints in the Portfolio) in your attic or in an antique shop, or you have just inherited it from an aunt or uncle. You wonder if it might be an important artwork, so you call a museum curator and describe it. The person with whom you are speaking can't see the picture, so you will describe its subject matter, colors, shapes, lines, focal point, etc., as well as its emotion or mood and artistic style. The person you are calling will respond with comments and questions.

16. Play the **detective-and-robber scenario**. You have just successfully bid on a painting at an art auction. As you are going home with your purchase, you are robbed. When you call the police, you are asked to describe the painting. Tell the detective its subject matter, colors, lines, focal point, etc., as well as its emotion, mood and artistic style.

17. Tell the students that they had a job as a **guard in an art museum**. One day they fell asleep and when they awakened, a painting had been stolen off the wall. They must call a policeman and describe the painting so that the officer can look for the thief and recover the painting.

18. Ask students to choose two pictures and tell what these **two pictures have in common: all the ways they are alike** (subject matter, position of figures, colors, lines, shapes, mood, emotion, brushwork, style of art — realism, abstract, expressionistic, fantasy.) Then have students tell how the **two artworks are different from each other**. Encourage unusual responses and fluency. Let students have enough time to go beyond immediate easy responses.

19. Ask students to enter a painting and **take a walk with their eyes**, telling what path their eyes follow and what lines, shapes, and colors directed them. This is an analysis that helps children find a focal point and understand how the artist organized the composition. Responses are individual.

20. Have students write or discuss what they think the person/s in a figure painting would write in his/her **journal or diary** that night. This calls for interpretive responses.

21. Let one student **interview** the person in the picture, and have another student stand behind the reproduction and answer questions. This calls for interpretive responses.

22. Ask a student to **pretend to be the artist**. You might bring along a small artist smock, hat, and palette for role-playing. Ask student to imagine preparing to paint the picture, where they went, who posed for it, what they wanted to succeed in doing, what they would change, add, or "erase", or would they leave the picture just as it is. You might ask them what they, as the artist, probably did first when they made the picture - reconstructing, thinking like an artist.

23. When the Portfolio includes landscapes, cityscapes, or seascapes, ask the students to imagine taking a trip to these places. Then ask them what they would **write an imaginary travel journal**. What did they do there? How did they travel there? Who was there?
24. Students **imagine the artist alive today**. Where would take him/her and what conversations they would have if they could spend one day with the artist. What questions would they ask? What would they like to show the artist in today's America? How do they think the artist would react? What would they most like to tell the artist?
25. Two students **imagine a conversation** that might occur if two artists from long ago could meet and talk with each other today. Would they argue? Upon what would they agree? Would they be surprised at anything? What themes or subjects would they paint about in today's world?
26. Play **tic-tac-toe** on the board. Divide the class in two teams, with a captain for each team. Prepare nine questions ahead of time to ask at the end of the Presentation. You may leave the reproductions on display or turn them to the wall. Let teams take turns answering, with the team captain placing an "X" or "O" for each correct answer.
27. At the close of your Presentation, let one student be a salesperson and have 30 seconds to **sell the painting** of his/her choice to the group. Sales pitch should be based on how the artist used the elements and principles of art, how the artist handled the medium, how the artist portrayed a strong mood, emotion, or told a story, or how the picture influenced artists who followed. It is advisable for Docent to model this activity before having students do it.
28. You are on a ship taking the paintings in this Portfolio to a museum in Paris for an art exhibit. The ship is sinking and after everyone is safely on the lifeboat you remember the valuable artworks, but there is **only room on the lifeboat for ONE painting**. Which one will you decide to save? Why did you make that decision? Base your reasons on things that were observed and discussed during the Presentation of the Portfolio.
29. Your aunt just died and **her will says you may choose one painting from her collection**. Give 3 reasons for your choice. OR: You can select any painting in the Portfolio as a **birthday gift** for a parent. Which would you choose? Give three reasons for your choice.
30. **"Can you find it?"** One student finds a detail in a painting, such as gold chain, an umbrella, etc., and asks the other students to find it.
31. Use several **"Art Cards"** from the Manual (descriptive phrases related to the elements and principles of art, technical qualities, emotional interpretation, or styles of art). Cut apart, mount on tag board and laminate. Select appropriate Art Cards for the Portfolio being used. Give each student a card. Tell them to place their card beside a print for which they feel it is most appropriate. Explain and defend their choices.
32. **Word Gymnastics**, write **an artist's vertically** on the board, one letter to a line. After Presentation, have students think of short phrases that relate to that artist and his/her work:
- D - ancers on the diagonal
 - E - mphasized movement
 - G - raceful ballerinas
 - A - dmired Japanese prints
 - S - culpted dancers and horses
33. Have students write **haiku, cinquains, tankas, preposition poems and adjective poems** about artworks . (See directions in Manual.) Model this activity first by having students suggest lines while you write them on the board. Students may write individual poems or work in small groups.