

Making a Successful Portfolio Presentation

1. The Portfolio Pocket contains the Artist Name Cards, a Photo File to be used with the Hands-On lesson, and a Manual with the Portfolio lesson, and an Inventory sheet. Docents need to schedule the day and time with the teacher. The teacher remains in the room.
2. Study each lesson before making the Presentation. Use a yellow marker on your own copy to underscore the parts that you wish to remember and emphasize, or make notes on index cards. *Do not read the lesson to the students.*
3. Arrange the reproductions where all the class can see them, with students as close to them as possible. Attach Artist Name Cards to the reproductions with plastic clips. Don't use paper clips.
4. Begin your Presentation when you have the attention of all the children. Speak clearly and loudly enough for all the class to hear you. Smile, show enthusiasm, and your own enjoyment and interest. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know" if the occasion arises, and then try to find out the answer before your next visit, or let children speculate on what the answer might be.
5. Be sure that the children understand that you are showing them *reproductions* of artworks; the *originals* are in museums or in private collections. A reproduction may be of a different size than the artwork that the artist actually created.
6. Younger children have very little sense of the chronology of history, but to tell them an artist lived about 100 years ago, or when the Pilgrims arrived in America is sufficient. Lessons for older children include more definitive data. You may figure to determine how long ago an artist lived.
7. Tell the students that the questions will help them understand a work of art; some may be answered silently with each child having different answers. Name tags for students will enable you to preface a question with, "Mark, can you find...." A question presented to the entire class, rather than a specific student, often results in a number of voices responding at one time.
8. Avoid questions that require students to make a quick judgment. *Don't start out by asking the students which picture they like the best.* We want the students to learn how to describe, analyze, and interpret a work of art and then later, be better prepared to state that, "I like it because....." Avoid expressing your own opinions as students will mimic your responses. We want students to know that there is no one "right" way to make a painting and that artists create in many ways and for many different purposes; for example, some art is created to record how a person or place looks; some to inspire religious or spiritual responses; some to tell stories, convince, inform, or move people to action. Some artists paint realistically; others emphasize their emotional responses to the world in an expressive way and may distort or change what they see. Others are interested in the colors, shapes, and lines and arrange them in abstract ways. Still others show us the world of fantasy, the imagination, and their dreams. We don't taste an apple and state that we don't like it because it doesn't taste like pumpkin pie. We taste it and judge it on its "appleness."
9. Keep the Presentation brisk and lively. Feel free to use all or some of the reproductions in the Portfolios. There is more information in the lessons than you can cover in one Presentation. You will decide which points to accent, which areas seem to be of the most interest to the class, etc.
10. Make sure that the students understand the vocabulary. You may write several new words on the board and use them in context with references to the reproductions.
11. Try to incorporate one or more Games or Activities, either as an introduction to a Portfolio, during the Presentation, or as a conclusion. Also check on the Art Notes at end of lessons.