

University Museums

Object Learning and Visual Literacy

To assist you in exploring and understanding works of art, material culture and daily objects please describe, interpret and evaluate the objects. Use questions to inquiry and assist in gathering information and observations about the objects. Also, use oral history and text-based resources to augment your visual observations.

Look.....react....think about cultural context.....make judgments...

1. Manufacture

- What is it made of?
- How does it feel?
- How was it made?

2. Function

- How was/is it used?
- What other things are needed to make it work, if any?
- Can you think of other ways to use the object?

3. Environment

- What are some related objects?
- What are some possible places it was used?

4. Development

- What are some differences between this object and similar objects from other time periods?
- What are some similarities between this object and similar objects from other time periods?

5. Cross Cultural Comparison

- What are some differences between this object and similar objects from other countries or states?
- What are some similarities?

6. Influences

- Are the design elements or decoration similar to those of other countries or time periods?

7. Value

Does the material or decoration affect the object's value? Remember value is not only measured in monetary terms. Does it have societal value? Is the material valuable to the people who use/used it?