SEE / THINK / WONDER

Choose an object or artwork and look quietly at it for a few moments. Then discuss the following questions. Take time with each question.

1. What do you see? (Make many observations)
2. What do you think about what you see?
3. What do you wonder about?

CLAIM / SUPPORT / QUESTION

- Make a claim about the object or artwork.
- Identify support for your claim.
- Ask a question related to your claim.

Claim: An explanation or interpretation of an aspect of the object or image.

Support: Things you see, feel, and know that support your claim.

Question: Alternative explanations, counter-evidence, puzzles, or challenges that could call your claim, or its support, into question.

Take a few moments to look quietly at the object. Then take turns using the routine, so that each person makes a claim about the object, identifies support for the claim, and raises a question about the claim. Following each person’s report, take a moment as a group to discuss the object in relation to the claim, before moving on to the next person.

CREATIVE QUESTIONS

Brainstorm a list of at least 12 questions about the image or object. Look for different kinds of questions. If you like, use these question-starters to help you think.

Why...?  
What are the reasons...?  
What if...?  
What is the purpose of...?  
How would it be different if...?  
Suppose that...?  
What if we knew...?  
What would change if...?

Review the list and star the questions that seem most interesting. Then select one of the starred questions and discuss it for a few moments. (If you have time, you can discuss more than one question.)

Adapted from the Artful Thinking Program, © Harvard Project Zero http://www.pz.harvard.edu/at/
Corn Chip Exercise: Selected on-line sources:
Colonial Williamsburg http://www.history.org/
Searching under corn yields everything from recipes for corn chowder to work songs.

Common-place http://www.common-place.org/
Searching under “maize” I found an “Object Lesson” by Matthew Underwood on John Winthrop’s botanical specimens. It included an image, courtesy of the American Antiquarian society, of “Turkey Wheat,” an early name for maize.

Connor Prairie http://www.connerprairie.org/
The website for this Midwestern museum yielded several useful entries, including one to a 19th century corn planter,

Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project
Wonderful primary material on the use of corn and cornmeal (as well a many other foods.) Has an alphabetized gallery of historical cookery equipment.

FoodShouldTasteGood http://www.foodshouldtastegood.com/#/media_features/
Click on “Food Network” image to see a step by step description of manufacturing chocolate corn chips.

History Matters http://historymatters.gmu.edu/
Under “maize” and “corn,” I found, among other things, American Indian creation stories, African-American worksongs, colonial probate inventories, a biography of biologist Barbara McClintock, and an 1941 painting of “The Corn Parade”.

Iowa Corn Growers Association http://www.iowacorn.org/
Straight from agribusiness, this site offers data on exports and ethanol.


Selected Articles:


Shari Tishman is Director of Project Zero, an educational research group at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. She continues her work as a Research Associate and Principal Investigator at Project Zero, and as Lecturer on Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Current and recent projects include: The Qualities of Quality: Excellence in Arts Education and How to Achieve It, an examination of how arts educators and arts programs in diverse contexts and communities across the United States define the characteristics of excellence—the "qualities of quality"—in arts teaching and learning; Learning in and from Museum Study Centers, an investigation into how visitors learn in the Harvard Art Museums' study centers; Artful Thinking, a program that helps classroom teachers use works of art in subjects across the curriculum in ways that strengthen student thinking and learning; and Visible Thinking, (also called "Innovating with Intelligence") an approach to the teaching of thinking that emphasizes the development of thinking dispositions, the use of "thinking routines," and the documentation of student thinking and learning. Of particular importance for this workshop is her essay, "The Object of Their Attention," EL: Educational Leadership, 65 (February 2008): 44-46 http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb08/vol65/num05/The-Object-of-Their-Attention.aspx

For more information on and links to her research, see her profile at:
http://www.pz.harvard.edu/pis/ST.htm
For more information about thinking routines see: http://www.pz.harvard.edu/at/

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich is 300th Anniversary University Professor at Harvard University where she teaches in the History Department. Her works in early American history include A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 (1990) which won the Pulitzer Prize for History in 1991 and became the basis of a PBS documentary. In The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Making of an American Myth (2001), she used eleven ordinary objects as focal points for a study of interaction between Native Americans and English colonists and between household economies and politics.

As President of the American Historical Association in 2009, she contributed several articles to Perspectives that illustrate her interest in object-centered inquiry. These include: "Grasping the Gavel, Perspectives in History March 2009; "Erasing History," Perspectives in History, May 2009; and "Mr. Everyman Buys Coal," Perspectives in History, September 2009. All are available on line at: http://www.historians.org/info/AHA_History/pres_index.html#Ulrich

For teaching strategies based in part on her work see:
Massachusetts Studies Project, Teaching Tools for Local History: Material Culture http://www.msp.umb.edu/LocHistoryTemplates/MSPMaterialCulture.html

For additional information on Professor Ulrich and links to some recent essays, see her profile on the History Department website at:
http://history.fas.harvard.edu/people/faculty/ulrich.php