

Colors, Shapes, Lines

A routine for encouraging detailed observation of artwork.



Look at the artwork or object for a moment.

What **colors** do you see?

What **shapes** do you see?

What **lines** do you see?

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

The routine helps students make detailed observations by drawing their attention to the forms in an artwork—its formal aspects—and giving them specific categories of things to look for.

Application: When and where can I use it?

The routine can be used with any kind of visual art. It can also be used with visually rich non-art images or objects. Like the Looking: Ten Times Two routine, students can use the routine on its own, or prior to having a discussion about an artwork with another routine. It is especially useful before a writing activity because it helps students develop descriptive language.

Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

You can begin using this routine by simply building a broad inventory with students about each step: list of colors, then shapes, then lines. You can have students make their own lists first or scribe those to revisit and see if there is anything they can add after an initial look. Upon a closer look students might add more details to their initial observations.

Share your experience with this thinking routine on social media using the hashtags [#PZThinkingRoutines](#) and [#ColorsShapesLines](#).