

Layers

A routine for structuring analysis of creative works.

Each Layer Consists of 4 Possible Elements to Seek Out and Identify in the Work

Narrative	The story, the back or pre story, the other or hidden story, the message
Aesthetic	The appeal (what pulls you in?), the reward or take away, the skill/mastery of the artist on display, the new/different/unusual
Mechanical	Technique, Form/structure, Methods, Symbolism
Dynamic	Surprise, Tension, Emotion and Movement
Connections	To other works (in and out of the medium/genre), to history, to oneself, to the artist's other works or personal life.

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

The routine provides learners with a structure for looking analytically at creative works through a variety of different frameworks.

Application: When and where can I use it?

There are many layers through which one can approach or look at any creative work (literature, dance, painting, etc.). Some layers may be more appropriate than others given the work being examined. Part of analysis involves selecting appropriate frames or layers to use in one's analysis. Selecting interesting and unexpected layers can help one understand the work better. Sometimes this means rejecting the obvious layer and starting with one of the other layers.

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

After looking closely at a creative work to fully notice what is there, students select a "layer" from the list to use in their analysis. This analysis can be done individually, with a partner, or whole group. Initially you may want to introduce one layer at a time with the whole class so that students have some collective experience using the layers. Initially, the analysis should be done verbally so that students hear and can build on others' ideas and contributions. Other possible ways of using the layers are:

- To identify prominent and hidden qualities: In this work, what layer immediately speaks to you? What makes you say that? Which layers seem more distant? What makes you say that?
- To compare and contrast: Use the layers to contrast 2 works to see how they relate to one another. Looking at 2 works, where do you see connections as well as differences in terms of the layers?
- As a sieve: Pick one element from each of the layers through which to explore the work.
- As a source of questions: Use the layers and their elements to identify questions you want to ask an expert about the work of art.

Share your experience with this thinking routine on social media using the hashtags #PZThinkingRoutines and #Layers.