

Painting Nature

Depictions of Close Botanical Observations

FEATURED ART

[Trees by Master of the I-nen Seal](#)



Trees by Master of the I-nen Seal

Objective One

Students will be able to explore depictions of close botanical observations through a close-looking activity that builds descriptive vocabulary.

Objective Two

Students will be able to compare and contrast different artistic styles in a single work of art.

Objective Three

Students will be able to draw conclusions about a work of art based on visual analysis and personal experience.

Recommended Readings for Teachers

1. ["Formats and Techniques" by Brenda Jordan](#)
2. [Introduction to *Trees*](#)

LESSON PLAN

Objective One

Students will be able to explore depictions of close botanical observations through a close-looking activity that builds descriptive vocabulary.

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Image	Trees Detail #1
Video	Trees Screens: A Closer Look
Assigned Reading	Introduction to <i>Trees</i>

Partner students. Give one a blank piece of paper and a pencil, and give the other a printed copy of *Trees* folded as the full-size screen appears in the video. Ask students to stand the screen on their desk so one student can see the artwork and the student with pencil and paper cannot. Explain how in this activity each student will play a particular role.

- The student who can see the screen is the "Viewer" and will describe the artwork in detail. They cannot look at what their partner is drawing.
- The student "behind" the screen is the "Visualizer" and tries to draw what is being described. They cannot ask questions or peek at the artwork until the activity is complete.

Provide time for students to describe and draw the work of art, signaling when students have one minute and again when they have thirty seconds left. Before allowing the Visualizers the opportunity to reveal what they have drawn, remind the Viewers that the Visualizers could only draw what had been described to them.

Show the video *Trees Screens: A Closer Look* and reference the Introduction to *Trees*. Ask students to describe how they approach a screen affects what they see and how they see this work of art.

Objective Two

Students will be able to compare and contrast different artistic styles in a single work of art.

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Images	Summer and Autumn Flowers by I-nen Summer and Autumn Flowers Detail #1 Summer and Autumn Flowers Detail #2
Video	Summer and Autumn Flowers: A Closer Look
Recommended Reading	"Formats and Techniques" by Brenda Jordan

Introduce students to another screen by showing them the video *Summer and Autumn Flowers: A Closer Look*. Use the Detail images that visually divide this screen based on botanicals. Divide the class into groups and assign a different Detail to each group. Have students examine the botanical imagery, asking the following questions:

- What do you see in your Detail? What types of colors, values, shapes, and lines are used by the artist?
- How would you describe the style used by the artist? Is it clean or messy? Skilled or sloppy? Broad or detailed?
- What type of brush do you think the artist used to paint your Detail? Did the artist use only one brush or several different types? What leads you to that conclusion?

Discuss the painting techniques employed by the artist, using some of the information from Brenda Jordan's "Formats and Techniques." Explain how while many works of art depict plants from a specific season, this one combines a variety of plants that would not normally grow in the same season.

Objective Three

Students will be able to draw conclusions about a work of art based on visual analysis and personal experience.

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Images	Chrysanthemums by I-nen Summer and autumn flowers by I-nen
Worksheet	Four Gracious Plants

Share the worksheet with students, explaining the symbolism of the Four Gracious plants that represent the four seasons. Ask students to choose a plant from *Summer and autumn flowers*, or the flowers in *Chrysanthemums*, or one of the Four Gracious plants that they feel represents them best. In a writing activity, challenge students to address the following questions:

- Why did you choose a particular plant? What physical or symbolic characteristics attract you to this plant?

- Thinking metaphorically, what traits do you have in common with this plant? Are you big and bold, colorful, strong? How does this plant show this and how do you demonstrate these characteristics?

If students need help brainstorming and writing, briefly model these questions and responses by returning to the *Trees* screen. Have students select a tree that they believe represents the teacher. Ask them to share examples of how a particular set of leaves best describes the teacher and why. Then give students the opportunity to go back to *Summer and Autumn Flowers* or *Chrysanthemums* and do this activity for themselves, writing their responses about themselves.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Language Arts

Follow the directions in Objective One and then engage students in a discussion of what items they could identify in the work students drew and what details might be missing or unclear. Debrief with a discussion of both the process and product of this activity, helping students build their descriptive vocabulary by adding follow-up questions asking students to provide specific examples for their responses. Questions can include:

- Can you identify one area in your team's drawn example that best represents what they see on the screen?
- What adjectives could have been more helpful in describing a certain feature seen in the screen?
- What directional words might have helped the Visualizer place pieces more accurately in relationship to one another?