

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 decode the complexities of an artwork using Worksheets and either descriptive vocabulary or expressive drawings.

Objective Two

Students will be able to explain how the artist used the elements of art (color, line, shape, space) to represent different types of plants in unique ways.

Objective Three

Students will be able to verbalize ways in which the subject matter of this artwork might change over time.

Recommended Readings for Teachers

1. [Introduction to Trees](#)
2. Excerpts from *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben, [Page 5](#), [Pages 162-63](#)

LESSON PLAN

Objective One

Students will be able to decode the complexities of an artwork using Worksheets and either descriptive vocabulary or expressive drawings.

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Images	Trees by I-nen Trees Detail #1
Video	Trees Screens: A Closer Look
Assigned Reading	Introduction to Trees
Worksheet	See, Think, Wonder, Feel

Introduce students to *Trees* and ask what they see, encouraging students to openly share their responses out loud before recording them on paper. Demonstrate how they can record their observations with either words or drawings using the See, Think, Wonder, Feel Worksheet by adding illustrations or comments in the designated sections. Continue to explore the work by asking students what they think and wonder about the piece, and how the artwork makes them feel. Allow students to verbally share their thoughts and/or record them on paper.

Continue by showing students the *Trees* video. Ask students to add something to each section of their Worksheet after watching it. Read aloud the Introduction to the lesson and discuss the questions presented in it, allowing students to continue adding to their worksheet.

Objective Two

Students will be able to explain how the artist used the elements of art (color, line, shape, space) to represent different types of plants in unique ways.

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Image	Coxcombs, maize and morning glories
Worksheet	See, Think, Wonder, Feel

Provide students with another See, Think, Wonder, Feel Worksheet and have them use this framework to look closely and record their thoughts on *Coxcombs, maize and morning glories*,

either independently or with a partner. After providing time for this exploration, begin a group investigation of the work by asking students to identify examples of colors, lines, and shapes in the work. Use a round-robin format for this discussion in which one group is asked to give one example, then move around the room with each group providing another unique example of an art element they identify. As students provide examples, list them on the board for all to see.

Once every group in the class has had the opportunity to add one or two examples to the list, change the direction of the round-robin activity and reshape the question. Ask students to use directional words and phrases, such as “in the top right corner” to identify where examples from the list are located. This will challenge students to describe the details they observed by closely looking at smaller sections of the work of art. Summarize the students’ findings and ask them to draw some conclusions by answering one of the following questions:

- What visual evidence can you find that provides examples of how the artist represented various types of plants differently?
- Which plant do you feel is the most unique and why?
- Which of these plants do you think was the artist’s favorite and why?

Objective Three

Students will be able to verbalize ways in which the subject matter of this artwork might change over time.

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Images

[Trees Detail #1](#)

[Coxcombs, maize and morning glories](#)

Assigned Reading

Excerpts from *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben, [Page 5](#) and [Pages 162-63](#)

Start a new discussion examining both works for specific visual evidence. Using a series of guiding questions, ask students to reflect on how the plants in either *Trees* or in *Coxcombs, maize and morning glories* interact. Those questions may include:

- Describe the plants you see in the foreground. Describe those you would classify as being part of the middle ground. Finally, what plants can you find in the background?
- How does the artist use space to show interaction? What plants overlap with one another and how does that create a sense of depth?
- How does the size or scale of the plants in relationship with one another impact their interactions?
- Are there some plants that frame or point to other plants, drawing attention to them?
- Are some plants more or less important than others because of color, size, shape, detail?

Challenge students to consider whether paintings may or may not be realistic snapshots of those plants or how the artist may have arranged them to create a specific effect.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Science

Tap into the students' imaginations by showing them the *Trees* screens and asking students to describe how these plants might change over time and how someone or something might interact with the plants. Use excerpts from Peter Wohlleben's book *The Hidden Life of Trees* to dare students to think about not only humans' relationships with these plants but also the relationships among the trees by writing about one of the following prompts:

- Using the excerpt on page 5, describe the leaves you see as part of the canopy. What branches are acting as "partners" and how are they helping others to survive?
- Using the excerpt on pages 162–63, ask students to write about the "battle" they see in *Trees*. Which plants are taking up the upper story? Which might be struggling for survival? Who will win and why?