

Landscapes of the Mind

Choose one of the questions below and reflect on your recollection of a landscape.

1. Describe a memorable landscape from your **personal experience**. Describe. What qualities made it memorable?

2. What landscape in **literature** is most memorable to you? Describe. Can you recall aspects of the author's literary style or expression that made it memorable?

3. What landscape in a **film** most impressed you? Briefly describe the scene. Do you recall how visual effects made it memorable?

In the Galleries:

Choose a painting that appeals to your imagination (or to your senses). Working alone, or with a partner, try to imagine yourself as the artist—choosing the subject, observing it, and engaged in the action of painting the picture. Write a description of these processes from your point of view.

Looking at Landscapes

with younger students

1. Study the painting. Write down ten words that come to mind:

2. Building on the observations listed, complete the sentences below:

I am standing _____

From here I can see _____

But I can't see _____

If I walk further into the picture _____

The colors that I've noticed are _____

The following areas of the picture are in shadows or seem hazy _____

...while these areas are in bright light

Classroom Discussion

Share the observations as a point of departure for discussing where the artist has placed the viewer and what effect this has. Visually (on a flip chart, or classroom board) cluster words and descriptive phrases. (You might wish to organize words into different grammatical categories.) Discuss the colors used, the quality of light, dominant lines, shapes, and other strong compositional devices.

These visual elements often evoke a particular mood. Describe the mood produced by this landscape. Would you consider this work a real or ideal image of nature? Give your reasons.

What else is in the picture: Which details seem to add to the expressive qualities of the painting? What if these details were absent? (For example, would the painting be as dramatic if the sea was calm.)