Top Ten Things to Know Before You Go

School Tours at the National Gallery of Art

Alexander Calder, *Untitled*, 1976, Gift of the Collectors Committee
1. What is the National Gallery of Art?
Located on the National Mall, these two buildings—the neoclassical West Building and the modern East Building—house a collection that includes more than 200,000 works of art...
from EARLY RENAISSANCE
to modern

Giotto, Madonna and Child, probably 1320/1330, Samuel H. Kress Collection

Frantisek Kupka, Localization of Graphic Motifs II, 1912/1913, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund and Gift of Jan and Meda Mladek
The National Gallery welcomes more than four million visitors from around the world every year.

Including you.

Welcome to the National Gallery of Art.

2. What’s inside?
Thousands of original works of art are on view.

Among them you’ll find:

- Paintings
- Sculpture
- Drawings and prints
- Photographs
- Decorative arts

Any one might be ten or hundreds of years old.
3. Less is more
Many museum visitors look at a work of art for only about \textbf{seven seconds.}
On a school tour, you’ll have the time and space to explore four to five works of art for much longer...
4. The art of looking
Press pause.

Looking takes time.
Let your eyes wander over the entire surface of a painting.

Edouard Manet, *The Railway*, 1873, Gift of Horace Havemeyer in memory of his mother, Louisine W. Havemeyer
Walk around a sculpture to view it from all sides.

What do you see?
5. Think out loud
Your ideas matter.

Share them with your fellow students and teachers.
6. Any questions?
You’ll want to know...

• Who?
• What?
• When?
• Where?

Original works of art can be important primary sources of information about the past.

Jacques-Louis David, *The Emperor Napoleon in His Study at the Tuileries*, 1812, Samuel H. Kress Collection
But also ask...

- Why?
- I wonder...?
- What if...

You might find that questions generate new ideas and interpretations.

Pablo Picasso, *The Tragedy*, 1903, Chester Dale Collection
© 2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
7. Try something new
And have fun, too!

There are many ways to experience and understand works of art.

On a school tour—or anytime—you might try creative writing, drawing, or movement in response to a work of art.

Here’s one way...

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Two Women at a Window*, c. 1655/1660, Widener Collection
Strike a pose

Choose a character in a painting or sculpture and recreate his or her pose with your own body. Got it?

Now...

• Imagine how that character might be feeling.
• What might he or she say?

Try this with a group of friends, too—it’s called a tableau vivant.
8. Every picture tells a story
In fact, works of art tell many stories...

...about artists, history, and society...

...as well as the stories we imagine.

Jan Steen, *The Dancing Couple*, 1663, Widener Collection
9. Be inspired
Be inspired by your visit to the National Gallery to look for, learn about, and create your own works of art.

Mark Rothko, *Untitled*, 1949, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc. Copyright © 1997 Christopher Rothko and Kate Rothko Prizel

Vincent van Gogh, *Girl in White*, 1890, Chester Dale Collection
10. You’re always welcome at the National Gallery of Art.
We hope you’ll want to visit with your friends and family, too.

Wayne Thiebaud, Cakes, 1963, Gift in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art from the Collectors Committee, the 50th Anniversary Gift Committee, and The Circle, with Additional Support from the Abrams Family in Memory of Harry N. Abrams
To find out more...

...including information about films, concerts, exhibitions, and events for families,

Visit us at:

www.nga.gov
We hope you enjoy your visit.
Wait! One last thing to know before you go...

Please don’t touch the works of art.

Gilbert Stuart, Catherine Brass Yates (Mrs. Richard Yates), 1793/1794, Andrew W. Mellon Collection