














When doing an art critique or any critique there are key things you want to note and these handouts (below) are meant to help you with some terminology that can be useful when making descriptions. This information is transferable and can be utilized anytime you are talking critically about something you are looking at and trying to describe. These are meant to solely be a guide and used if you deem it necessary within your own writing. They are a good point of departure for talking critically about artwork and can be used in many other disciplines!! :)

The Elements of Design (the tools to make art)		
Line		Horizontal, vertical, diagonal Straight, curved, dotted, broken Thick, thin
Shape		2D (two dimensional)/ flat Geometric (square, circle, oval, triangle) Organic (all other shapes)
Space		The area around, within, or between images or parts of an image Relates to perspective Positive and negative space
Value		The darkness or lightness of a color. White added to a color makes it a <i>tint</i> . Black added to a color makes it a <i>shade</i> .
Texture		The feel, appearance, thickness, or slickiness of a surface (for example: smooth, rough, silky, furry)
Colour		Refers to the wavelengths of light Refers to hue (name), value (lightness/darkness), intensity/saturation, or amount of pigment, and temperature (warm and cool) Relates to tint, tone and shade

This review sheet was edited from Wando High School and does not include Type.

The Principles of Design (how to use the tools to make art)		
Pattern		A regular arrangement of alternated or repeated elements (shapes, lines, colours) or motifs.
Contrast		The juxtaposition of different elements of design (for example: rough and smooth textures, dark and light values) in order to highlight their differences and/or create visual interest, or a focal point.
Emphasis		Special attention/importance given to one part of a work of art (for example, a dark shape in a light composition). Emphasis can be achieved through placement, contrast, colour, size, repetition... Relates to focal point.
Balance		A feeling of balance results when the elements of design are arranged symmetrically or asymmetrically to create the impression of equality in weight or importance.
Proportion/ Scale		The relationship between objects with respect to size, number, and so on, including the relation between parts of a whole.
Harmony		The arrangement of elements to give the viewer the feeling that all the parts of the piece form a coherent whole.
Rhythm/ Movement		The use of recurring elements to direct the movement of the eye through the artwork. There are five kinds of rhythm: random, regular, alternating, progressive, and flowing. The way the elements are organized to lead the eye to the focal area. Movement can be directed for example, along edges and by means of shape and colour.

ART CRITIQUE

1. DESCRIPTION:

(I will take inventory. I will look, identify & describe.)

- * Name objects.
- * Describe elements of art.
- * Identify patterns (a principle of art).
- * Identify materials used (techniques too).
- * Identify genre (portrait, still life, landscape?).
- * Identify style of art.

2. FORMAL ANALYSIS:

(Discovering Relationships)

- * Find examples of unity through repetition.
- * Look for variety through contrast of shapes, lines, etc.
- * Look for center of interest (focus, eye grabber).
- * Look for balance & rhythm (principles of art).

3. INTERPRETATION:

(Figure out in meaning)

- * Use the evidence in 1. & 2. to figure out a meaning of the art for you.
- * What is the artist saying? What are your reasons?

4. EVALUATION:

(Forming a judgment)

- * Is it a quality piece of art? Why?
- * How does it compare to similar works?
- * Is the artist successful? Why?