

Silent Discussion

- DOK 3
- Students exercise writing, collaborative discussion, critical thinking and viewing, application of disciplinary concepts
- May be adapted to a range of subjects and grade levels

Silent Discussion is a strategy that allows students to share and examine ideas on a topic, go deeper, and then summarize what they learned through shared writing and critical thinking. All students comment and respond to others, so even the more reserved members of the class have the opportunity to express their ideas.

The 3-part activity described below illustrates Silent Discussion in a Grade 9-12 arts classroom. The same activity can be adapted to history, science or other content areas, and a range of grade levels.

Topic: The Bauhaus Period – Silent Discussion

Prior Knowledge:

1. The class will have read about and discussed the Bauhaus Period and its historical and cultural underpinnings.
2. Students will be familiar with the language and format of art critique, having read and analyzed several example texts as a class.

For this activity, you will need to:

- Select eight photographs that represent the Bauhaus period (or fewer if working with smaller student groupings).
- Create enough sets of the eight photographs so that each group gets one set.
- Create a graphic organizer (for Part 2).
- Develop 3 or 4 guiding questions (for Part 2).

Part 1.

Divide participants into groups of eight participants (or number of pieces to be discussed) and conduct the silent discussion.

Say: As part of our study of changing artistic styles, we have been studying the Bauhaus Movement. We are going to conduct a close read of a series of iconic pieces that were produced around that period. While you are looking at them and engaging in a silent discussion, pay close attention to how the artists used the various elements of art we have already studied (e.g. balance, color, rhythm, line). Also, think about specific artistic techniques that were used and make a note of any cultural or historical influences upon the work.

Here is some language you may choose to use in your silent discussion. **(Pass out arts vocabulary sheet or remind students to use other resource from class.)**

To participate in a silent discussion, you are going to get into groups of no more than eight people. Each person will start with one photo and one piece of paper. You will have 2 minutes to look at the photograph and silently write your reaction – what do you notice, what do you wonder, what emotion are you having - to the piece?

Then you will pass the photograph along with the piece of paper. When you get the new image, study it, read your colleague's response, and comment to at least one point in the response, as well as write your own reaction.

We will continue the rotation until you all have read and responded to each piece.

Part 2.

Say: The person who started the comments on each piece will now take that silent discussion sheet and meet with the other classmates with the same piece. Review your findings together and then consider and discuss the following questions:

1. What message is the artist trying to convey with the work?
2. Which details in the work illustrate the artist's message?
3. How does this image develop your understanding of the Bauhaus Period in its cultural and historical context?
4. How did the Bauhaus Period influence modern-day art and design?

Report your conclusions out to the class. **As each group is reporting out in whole group, record their insights on a graphic organizer projected to be visible to the students (OHP, smart board, or other technology). Provide time to debrief in whole group.**

Part 3.

SAY: Now, using the information you have gathered today, I would like you to write a one-to-two page critique on your piece, following the guidelines for critique that we have previously studied.

(Depending on time, this may be an end-of-class assignment, homework or the opening activity of the following class.)

Standards Alignment for Art History 9-12

VA.912.C.3.1 – Use descriptive terms and varied approaches in art analysis to explain the meaning or purpose of an artwork.

VA.9.12.C.3.3 – Examine relationships among social, historical, literary, and/or other references to explain how they are assimilated into artworks.

LAFS.910.SL.1.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 910 topics, texts, and issues, building on others ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

LAFS.910.SL.1.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

LAFS.910.SL.1.3 Evaluate a speakers point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

LAFS.910.SL.2.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

LAFS.910.RST.2.4 Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to grades 910 texts and topics.

LAFS.910.WHST.2.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

LAFS.910.WHST.3.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.