

Learning to Look:

Introduce the painting to the students, guiding their looking and using open-ended questions to elicit their personal responses.

- ▶ *This is not the time to focus on the background information; save it until the students have shown interest in the information, generated some questions and tried to answer their questions through looking!*



“Take a few minutes to look quietly at the image.”

Older students could write down their thoughts while looking.

“What do you see?”

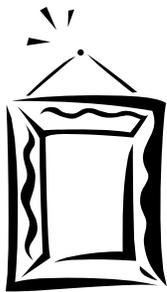
This is an opportunity for everyone to offer an idea, as each new thought enables everyone to see new things. Precise verbal descriptions help to clarify and identify details and usually allow for “correction” of any unsubstantiated ideas.

- ▶ *Teacher facilitates the discussion but should not be an expert on what “should” be seen, or how the painting “should” be interpreted!*

“How does the artist help us to see that?”

Colors used, placement of objects in the composition, use of light and shadow to highlight details, use of strong or dynamic lines, size of objects, and other decisions made by the artist can help us to “read” the painting.

“What questions do you wish you could ask the artist?”



Looking to Learn:

The suggested activities are strategies to enhance student observation and analysis skills while having fun looking and learning.

Make copies of the worksheets for use by individuals or groups of students.

Project the image and outline selected features on blackboard or large paper.

Students can then add appropriate details or “continue the story” in mural-form.

Create a museum-in-the-classroom (or hallway) so students can see each other's work and share their ideas.

Art Alive! – Lessons for the Primary Classroom

The Fable of the Fox and the Heron, 1630-40
Frans Snyders and workshop, Flemish, 1579-1657
oil on canvas
72.75



LET'S LOOK: What do you see?
 What in the painting makes you say that?
 How does the artist help you to see that?
 What questions do you have?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

Five Senses

Ask students to imagine and describe textures, smells, sounds, and tastes they “see” in the artwork. What specific details are they “reading?”

Using the line drawing of the painting, students can fill in the missing details that they think are important

Then What Happened?

Introduce the artwork as if it were a scene from a storyboard. Ask the students to imagine how the story might continue (group activity).

Using the storyboard worksheet, the students can draw additional or alternate scenes using details gleaned from the brainstorm session.

Fact or Fiction?

This scene looks so real, but could it really have happened? Ask the students to identify details that are imaginary. What details are not only realistic but are also believable?

Read Aesop’s fable “The Fox and the Crane” (included) and have students identify the story details in the artwork.

TARGETED SKILLS:

description, details, vocabulary,
point of view

story structure, details, sequencing

details, categorizing, sequencing,
compare/contrast

The Fox and the Crane

Once upon a time there was a Fox who decided to play a trick on his friend the Crane. Fox invited Crane over for dinner, much to Crane’s delight. However, when Crane arrived, he found that Fox’s dinner consisted of soup served in a shallow dish. Fox easily lapped up his soup, but Crane’s long bill kept him from tasting a single drop. Fox was delighted with the success of his trick, but Crane went away hungry and annoyed.

The next day, Crane visited Fox, thanking him for the delightful dinner and inviting Fox to have dinner at his home that evening. Fox, always eager to avoid extra work, agreed happily. On arrival at Crane’s house, though, Fox found his dinner presented in a jar with a tall, narrow neck that was too tight for his own short snout, and he could only watch Crane enjoy his own delicious meal.

MORAL: Treat others the way you would like to be treated.

Art Alive! – Lessons for the Elementary Classroom

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Frans Snyders and workshop, Flemish, 1579-1657
oil on canvas
72.75



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Then What Happened?

*Introduce the artwork as if it were a scene from a storyboard.
Ask the students to imagine how the story might continue
(group activity).*

*Using the storyboard worksheet, the students can draw
additional or alternate scenes using details gleaned from the
brainstorm session.*

Fact or Fiction?

*This scene looks so realistic, but could it really have
happened? Ask the students to identify details that are
imaginary. What details are not only realistic but are also
believable and factually correct?*

Research real animals found in the painting.

*Read Aesop's fable "The Fox and the Crane" (below) and have
students identify the story details in the artwork.*

The Fox and the Crane

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***The Fable of the Fox and the Heron*, 1630-40**
Frans Snyders and workshop, Flemish, 1579-1657
oil on canvas
72.75



About the Painting:

Several familiar animals dominate this painting: a furry red fox, very similar to those in upstate New York; two tall herons with black and white feathers; a mallard duck, and assorted frogs. They are all arranged at the muddy edge of a stream beneath a tree. The animals are looking intently at a large glass vase containing a fish, some frogs, and an eel. The heron is eating while the fox looks on anxiously. In the background you see distant woods, seemingly people-free except for the tall steeple of a church. Also in the distance, another fox and heron bend over a plate or shallow dish.

About the Artist:

Frans Snyders (1579-1657) was a very successful artist who lived and painted in Antwerp. By 1620, Snyders was the pre-eminent master of still life painting in Antwerp, but he also painted hunt and animal scenes. Snyders was one of the first painters to specialize in fable pictures, producing about 25, including two versions of *The Fox and the Heron*. He often loosely based his designs on engravings in a popular edition of *Aesop's Fables*. However, the believability of the animals and their setting comes from Snyders' careful observations and sketches from nature. This story is usually called *The Fox and the Stork* or *The Fox and the Crane*, but Snyders may have used a heron partly because it was a common native bird he could easily observe.

Additional Information:

Antwerp is a city now in Belgium, but in the 16th and 17th centuries the area was known by the name of Flanders, and the people there were called Flemish.

Parts of this painting fit into 3 painting types popular at this time:

Still Life: detailed paintings of artfully arranged fruit, flowers, glasses, bread, etc.

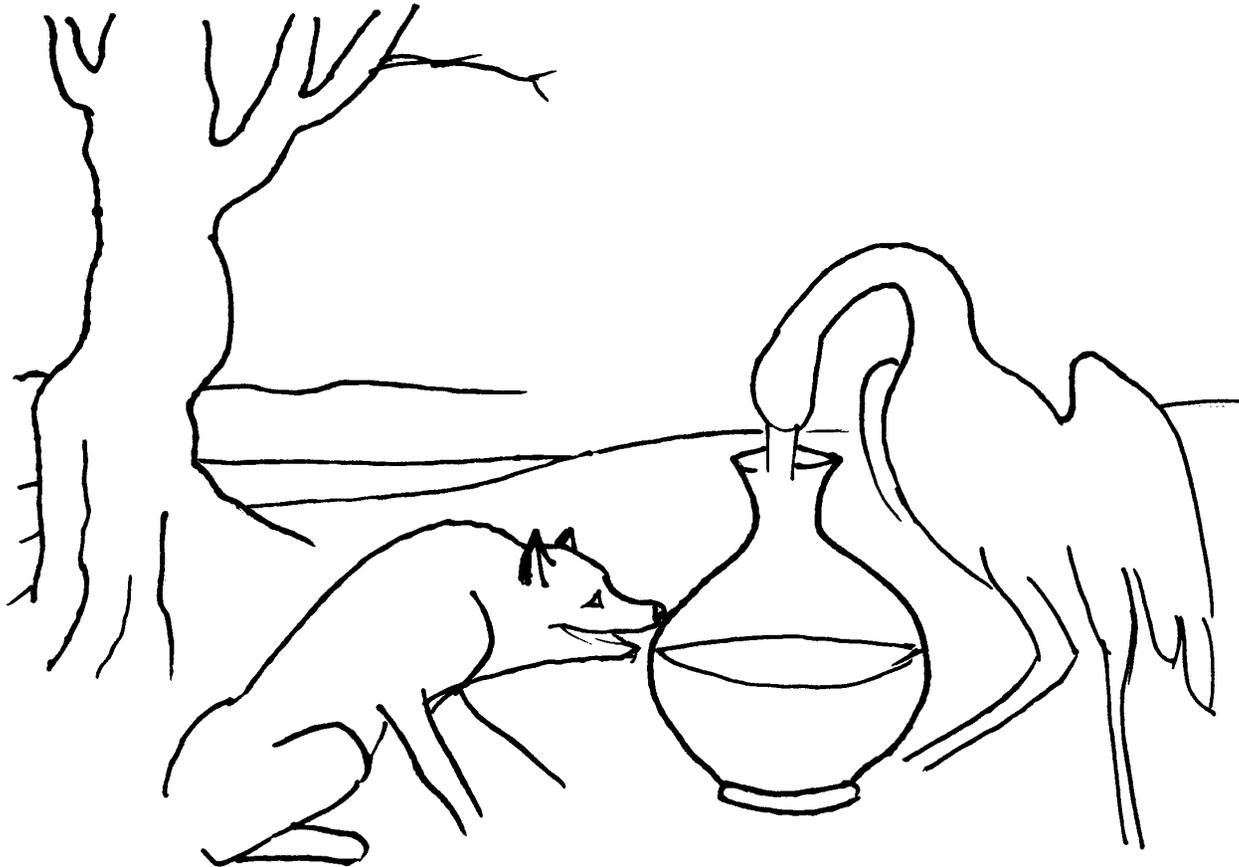
Landscape: outdoor views, with trees, mountains, cloud-filled skies, etc.

Narrative: a scene from a story -- in this case, a fable attributed to the ancient Greek writer Aesop.

Fables are stories that teach a lesson through the interactions of animals with human-like qualities, and the fables of Aesop have been read, taught, and interpreted for centuries. In Snyders' painting, the distant fox and heron represent the first part of the story, while the episode continues in the foreground.

Name _____

The Fable of the Fox and the Heron, 1630-40
Frans Snyder and workshop, Flemish, 1579-1657
oil on canvas
72.75



Name _____

***Then What Happened?* A Storyboard Worksheet**

Sketch out your story scene by scene, just as movie makers do.

Develop your story idea by placing the painting in as a beginning, middle or ending scene, and then draw two other scenes that fill in the story.

FRANS SNYDERS AND WORKSHOP

The Fable of the Fox and the Heron, 1630-40

Story Title: _____

