

THE CLARK

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

 Best for Grades 4 and up
 Links to Drama and Visual Art

INTRODUCTION

The Clark's collection features many images of interactive moments between people, animals, and their surroundings. This activity helps you bring these **subjects** to life by imagining their inner thoughts and feelings. **Actors**, people who perform on stage, in movies, or on television, spend a lot of time thinking about the **perspective** of the characters they play.

HOW TO PLAY

You can start off by exploring three paintings from the Clark's collection—*Musical Group*, *Undertow*, and *Study of a Young Man*—but feel free to choose any other image from our [digital collection](#). You can play on your own or with loved ones, in person or even on a phone or video call!

To work on your **acting** skills, you can **imitate** the person in the painting. Simply strike the pose of the person you're bringing to life. Then, create a story about what they are thinking or feeling in that moment. You may want to spend some time imagining and writing down who this character could be. Or, you can **improvise** on the spot!

GET INSIDE THEIR HEAD! TRY OUT A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW.
LOOK CLOSELY AT THE PAINTING. CAN YOU TELL ANYTHING ABOUT THE PERSON'S **MOOD**
BASED ON CLUES IN THE PAINTING?

FEATURED VOCABULARY

IMITATE

TO COPY A PERSON'S MANNERISMS OR SPEECH

IMPROVISE

TO CREATE AND PERFORM WITHOUT PREPARATION

INANIMATE OBJECT

A THING THAT IS NOT ALIVE AND DOES NOT MOVE, SUCH AS A ROCK, A CHAIR, OR A BOOK

MODEL

IN ART, A PERSON WHO POSES FOR A PAINTER OR SCULPTOR; ALSO CALLED A SITTER

MOOD

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

PERSPECTIVE

THE POINT OF VIEW

SUBJECT

THE FOCUS OF THE ARTWORK, OR THE MAIN IDEA

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COLLECTION CONNECTIONS



Françoïis-Joseph Navez, *Musical Group*, 1821. Oil on canvas. Acquired by the Clark, 1976. The Clark Art Institute, 1976.1.

Dressed in fine velvets and silks and accompanied by a mandolin and tambourine, the members of Françoïis-Joseph Navez's *Musical Group* are certainly showstopping. **Imitate** one of the people in this picture by striking a similar pose.

Have a partner to ask you ten different questions about yourself. For example: what do you like? What concerns you? What is a secret you have? Take turns asking each other surprising questions to bring these characters to life.

WHO IS THE FIRST FIGURE WHO CATCHES YOUR EYE
WHEN YOU LOOK AT THIS PAINTING?

A real rescue that Winslow Homer witnessed in 1883 may have inspired him to paint this scene, capturing these heroic actions at sea.

Imagine what these figures might be thinking at this dramatic moment.

How might each tell the story of this rescue a few hours later . . . or a few days later?

WHAT DO YOU IMAGINE EACH PERSON MIGHT
SAY ABOUT THIS PAINTING IF THEY SAW IT?



Winslow Homer, *Undertow*, 1886. Oil on canvas. Acquired by Sterling and Francine Clark, 1924, 1955.4.

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Jean-Baptiste Greuze likely made this study by painting from a **model**—so this young man probably worked very hard to maintain this expression! Honor his effort by trying out his pose for yourself.

Sit down, lean your head back, open your mouth slightly, and look up to the side. Let your mind wander. Do you think that your daydreams would be similar to his?

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE IN COMMON?

WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT?

(REMEMBER, HE LIVED OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO!)

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Study of a Young Man*, c. 1760. Oil on canvas. Acquired in honor of Richard Rand (Senior Curator, 1997-2015), 2015, 2015.6.

OTHER WAYS TO PLAY

Consider inhabiting the thoughts and feelings of animals or **inanimate objects**, too. What might make a dog from the past wag its tail? What is the rotting apple in a still life wondering? Remember that you can always visit the Clark's collection online to find your next muse!

Try playing with a theme, like food, nostalgia, or current events.

What dessert might the Musical Group sing a ballad about?

What embarrassing childhood memory is on Greuze's young man's mind?

Play with opposites! If you think a person in the painting looks bored, what pose would show the opposite emotion: excited? What might they be thinking about now?

You can also try this activity with an advertisement from a magazine or someone else's selfie. The possibilities are endless!