

Presentation Suggestions

1. In order to give everyone the feeling of participation and a chance to really see what you are talking about, you may wish to gather the students together on the floor near you (the primary children are used to this).
2. You may want to keep the artwork turned toward the wall while you make initial remarks about the artist – the excitement of viewing the work obscures any information, however brief, you might want to convey at the beginning of the presentation. It helps to write the artist's name on the board and have the class pronounce it.
3. An effort has been made to give you just a brief background of the artist. However, you may go online to find out additional information. A brief summary should be given at the beginning of the presentation. The summary might place the artist in the context of time (he was born about the same time as your grandparents, he lived at the same time as George Washington, etc.); point out why the artist is remembered, or state a few facts that make the artist interesting and appealing. The real purpose of the presentation is to get the students to "interact" with the artwork itself through discussion. They will discover many of the background facts for themselves as they respond to the questions. The presentation is not intended as a lecture in art history. After the discussion period, there may be further questions about the artist, which could lead back to the background facts.
4. Most presentations will be about 45 - 60 minutes total, but be sure to stick to the time upon which you and the teacher have decided. You can choose how much of that time is spent on the presentation and discussion question and how much is spent on the art activity, based on what works best for the classroom.
5. In some classes a few children may tend to dominate the discussion while the more shy students retreat into silence, at least until they get to know the presenters. The presenter should try to draw as many children into the discussion as possible. Everyone should be able to respond to a question such as "What colors do you like best?" The classroom teacher may have a way to help engage more students; feel free to ask.
6. If a child reacts negatively to a work, you can ask why he or she doesn't like it and emphasize that everyone is entitled to his or her own reactions.
7. Some of the children don't understand that the two-dimensional works are reproductions or copies of the real works, which are in museums (or sometimes private collections). We can explain that it isn't possible for us to travel to all of the museums to see the real works, so the next best thing is to bring reproductions to the school for them to see.

8. Questions about the texture may be confusing, especially since paper reproductions do not duplicate the same surface texture as the original work. However, the students could be asked about textures you can see in the work. Has the artist been able to make us recognize textures such as wood, a cat's fur, smooth cloth, burlap, etc? Touch boards are useful devices for promoting an understanding of texture.

9. If a student asks a question you can't answer, you might agree to find out the answer, or in the case of older students, you could suggest that they conduct their own research to find the answer.

10. Please be prompt for the presentation – a late arrival might inconvenience the teacher. If you would like, you can take someone along to observe so we can build up the ranks of future presenters. Please be sure to have the students help clean up where possible and leave the room as you found it, or cleaner. We don't want to create more work for the teachers who invite us into their rooms.

11. Try to have fun! We want the students to know art should be enjoyed. Relax and have a good time.

12. If time allows, take pictures of the students making art. It's great to take a class photo at the end of the project with all the students showing their work. Please be sure to check with the teacher if all students are allowed to have their pictures taken. Share these with the BCA Art Presenter Program on our Facebook page.