

PRE/POST-VISIT ACTIVITY – Discover the Science of Museum Collections

The following activity is based on the scientific method and will help your students make the most of their visit to Winterthur. We believe that by completing these activities your students will gain a greater understanding of art conservation and the ways in which science and art skills are utilized within museums.

ASK A QUESTION

The scientific method begins by asking a question. To begin this process with students, ask them to formulate a general question about art conservation. For example: what is the role of an art conservator in a museum? During the students' visit to Winterthur they will participate in a variety of activities where they will take part in tasks completed by art conservators within the museum.

DO BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The next step is to do background research on the topic. Also linked on the website is a PDF version of an article, which will give students relevant background information on a career in art conservation.

CONSTRUCT A HYPOTHESIS

Now that students have some background information, they can now form a hypothesis based on their original question. Also attached on the website is a worksheet that will help students organize their thoughts throughout this assignment.

TEST YOUR HYPOTHESIS WITH AN EXPERIMENT

The next step in the scientific method is to test your hypothesis, which will be completed during the museum visit. Through this program they will gain a greater understanding of the role art conservators, and science in general, in the preservation of museum collections.

ANALYZE YOUR DATA AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS

After the visit, students should have small group discussions with other classmates to analyze the results of the field trip. Though each student participated in the same activities, with different guides and different students in each group everyone will have had a slightly different experience at the museum. After a period of discussion students can begin drawing conclusions about their experience.

COMMUNICATE YOUR RESULTS

The final step in this process is to communicate the results of the field trip. In a short writing assignment, students should review their visit to the museum. What was their original hypothesis about the role of art conservators in the museum, and the role of science in a museum collection? How has their view changed after their visit? What new things did they learn about the practical applications of science in museums?

