

Metropolitan Museum Assignment

Dr. Horton / ARTH102

Due: December 4th, upload to Brightspace.

1. **Visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art:** Visiting the museum is part of the assignment. Attach some sort of “proof” that you went to the museum to your assignment, such as a selfie with the art. Plan on spending at least 2 hours in the museum.

Location: 1000 Fifth Avenue (83rd Street and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan)

Hours: Sunday-Tuesday, 10-5 / Friday and Saturday 10-9, Closed Wednesday

Tickets: Take your QC ID to any admissions desk to get a ticket. Admission for students from NYC is “pay what you wish.” (Donate \$0.25 or \$1...)

The website, <https://www.metmuseum.org>, has lots of helpful info about directions, etc. There is free WiFi.

2. Assignment: **Complete 1-page responses to FOUR of the five questions below.** You can ignore one question – you pick. You do not need to write an Intro/Conclusion. Just list the question you are answering and then answer it. You will turn in about 4 pages of writing altogether.

Grab a map when you enter, and ask the helpful guards / museum staff as you move through the museum.

The questions will focus on European painting galleries, mostly located up the Grand staircase on the second floor.

To be sure you’re looking at the right painting, check the Accession Number.

**Accession Numbers are ID numbers for museum objects. Look for them on the labels, near where the titles, dates, etc. are listed. The first number indicates the year an object entered the museum 42 = 1942; the second number indicates when the object entered the museum in that year (42.25 = 25th item in 1942).

You can also search for an object on metmuseum.org by entering the Accession Number in the Search bar at the top of the website.

QUESTION 1 – Choose ONE of these two comparison questions.

- (1) Gallery 534 (first floor, the big courtyard just after the main entrance), the Patio from Velez Blanco, is filled with marble sculpture. I think that the statue called *Bachannal* (1976.92) is the best in the gallery.
 - Compare this statue to the others in the same room. In 1-2 paragraphs tell me why I am correct or not. There is not a correct answer, but you should provide plenty of description to support your view.
- (2) Look closely at the faces in Gallery 602, which is filled with Renaissance portraits. Some are sculpted in marble, some painted; some are small, some large, some have elaborate backgrounds, some simple fields of color...
 - Choose one portrait from the room and in 1-2 paragraphs describe why it is the “best” portrait in the room. There is no correct answer, but you should explain why you think the chosen work is successful with a lot of specific description.

QUESTION 2 – Find ONE of these two paintings to focus on: Velasquez’s *Juan de Pareja* (Gallery 625, 1971.86) OR Rembrandt’s *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer* (Gallery 616, 61.198).

- Photograph the painting with your phone.
- Compare your photo(s) with the painting.
- When you look at the photo compared to the painting, what is ‘lost in translation’?
- How does the painting look different on a screen compared to in the museum?
- Think about scale, light, color, placement, other objects nearby...all the factors that compromise context.

QUESTION 3 –Find ONE of these three paintings to focus on: Boucher’s *The Toilette of Venus* (Gallery 631, 20.155.9) OR Labille-Guiard’s *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* (Gallery 632, 53.225.5) OR Brueghel’s *Harvesters* (Gallery 613, 19.164). All located near benches.

- Make yourself look at the painting for at least 5 minutes. (This will feel like a looong time. That’s OK! Set a timer.)
- Write down little lists, taking note of what you notice:
 - At first, what drew you to the painting?
 - After 1 minute of looking closely
 - After 5 minutes, how does your impression change over time?
 - Does the painting look different as the light shifts, or as you (mentally) zoom in on one part of another? Are there parts that you didn’t notice at first, that come into focus later?
- In 1-2 paragraphs, reflect on the process of slow-looking and how it changes your view of the chosen painting.

QUESTION 4 – Choose ONE of these galleries to focus on.

In Gallery 819, you will see a corner with three Monet works: *Haystacks* (29.100,109), *Rouen Cathedral* (30.95.250), etc.

In Gallery 825, you will find a collection of Seurat paintings: *Circus Sideshow* (61.101.17) and others.

Looking at Monet or Seurat’s paintings in person, which features stand out the most to you? Look at the paintings up-close and then step as far as you can. In 1-2 paragraphs, describe how your impression changes?

QUESTION 5 – Find a work from Gallery 918, 919, 920, or 921 (all Modern Art) that intrigues you. Choose a work that has a long label (more than just the basic info, at least a paragraph of text).

- At first, ignore the label and just look at the object.
- Formulate 3 questions that you would like to know about the object.
- Then read (and reread) the label. Did it answer your questions? If not, what questions did it answer?
- How successful was the label at increasing your understanding of the work? Explain why.
- Outline the questions you would address if you were writing the label. (You don’t have to answer the questions; just formulate lines of inquiry.)