

Lesson plan

Artstor on JSTOR virtual field trip

Foster equity, strengthen engagement, and build visual and information literacy in the classroom

“Members of Gen Z are incessantly exposed to multimedia elements such as images, videos and audio... As a consequence, they expect faculty to use technology so as to make the learning process more engaging and effective.”

–Jenny Darroch, “Students Are Less Engaged; Stop Blaming COVID,” Inside Higher Ed

Valuable in assorted liberal arts disciplines such as art, anthropology, history, art history, political science, and sociology

1. Provide students with a list of keywords related to a recent lecture or reading.
2. From the [JSTOR home page](#), have students choose one word from the provided list to enter in the search bar—but, be sure to search by “image.”



Georges de La Tour. The Fortune-Teller. 1630s. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

3. Have students browse through the images from their search results. Students should choose five images that are most intriguing to them—for any reason at all—and save them to their personal Workspace by hovering over the image thumbnail and clicking on the ribbon in the lower right-hand corner. Students will need to register for a [free personal account](#) to access their Workspace, but this takes just a few minutes to set up. Tell students not to click to enlarge each image just yet; instruct them to save images to their Workspace without opening them.

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4. After saving five images to their Workspace, students should move to their Workspace to open each individual image. As they do so, they should read the information provided with each image to learn more about it. Ask them: Which image or two speaks to you most and why? Jot down your thoughts on your laptop or a piece of paper.

5. Next, direct students to get into groups of two or three. Groups can be arranged organically or by the instructor. Ask the students to share their images and any thoughts they have about them with their group members. Students should be directed to ask one another:

- Why did you first choose the five images at face value?
- What stuck out to you about them?
- Why did you choose the one or two images after viewing them more closely and reading about them?
- Most importantly, what connection—no matter how small—does the image or its context have to the recent lecture or reading, beyond the fact that it stemmed from a provided keyword list?

6. Now, open the discussion up to the entire class. Call on one or two students from each small group and ask them to share not their own decision-making and thoughts, but rather those of their group members. This will prompt students to engage more deeply with the opinions and reflections of their peers.

7. After tying the lesson together by noting how a handful of the images relate to the recent lecture or reading, provide students with a short reflection essay assignment that asks students to further articulate their chosen images and its connection to the lecture or reading. This essay can be completed in class, or assigned as homework, depending on time constraints and instructor preference. Provide specific essay instructions and citation directions to ensure students properly cite their sources.



Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez. Juan de Pareja. 1650. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.