Step 3 Interpretation – *What is the artist saying?*

Using the information you gathered in steps 1 and 2, explain what your discoveries tell you the artwork or artist is trying to communicate. What is the meaning or mood being told through the artwork? Make guesses about the meaning of the artwork. Use the pink handout to help you make those determinations. What do the elements and principles tell you about the artwork’s meaning, mood or intent? Your interpretation may be different form each others because you each have different life experiences that influence you. Use expressive descriptive language, e.g. softly, bold, bright, (use blue handout)

Questions to think about during this process:
What do you think the artwork is about?
Why do you think that?
How does the artwork make you feel? Remind you of?

Example:
I think that the artist is trying to convey a connection between a sleepy peaceful mood and the quietness of the little town found behind the cypress tree. In contrast the movement of the night sky is exciting and is dotted with bright yellow stars…etc.

Step 4 Judgment – *Is this a successful piece of art?*

Now you can actually express your opinion about the success of the work. Your opinion is based however on what you discovered in the description, analysis and interpretation. You must be able to back up your opinion using the language of art. This is a carefully thought out decision in which you make a personal decision about an artwork’s success or lack of success (NOT like or dislike), preparing reasons to support your judgment.

- Is the work successful? Based on the different *Theories Of Art*. See other handout.
  - Imitation
  - Formal Order
  - Expression
  - Function
- Identify which criteria you are using for judgment
- Cite Evidence (give reasons)
- State you conclusions “I do not think this work is well designed because…..” or “I think this work is excellent because….”
- Do the design qualities, elements and principles make the work successful or not?
- Is the work well organized?
- How does the realism or lack of realism affect the work?

Example:
I think this work is successful because it is wonderfully organized making it visually interesting. The cypress tree in the middle-ground has a powerful presence that grabs the viewers attention. The stars in the dark blue sky twinkle and dance across the surface of the painting creating steps to follow like musical notes. The visual tempo of the picture is intriguing; the image successfully combines the fast rhythm of the short choppy brush strokes and slower rhythm with gently swirling stars. This picture reminds me of a peaceful late night spent looking up at the stars. Etc….
Four Step Art Critique
Step 1 Description - What do you see?

Much like the information found on the credit line, a description has basic information about the artwork that you need to begin looking for.

1st you must identify the credit line information. (Title, Artist, Date created, size, Medium, location and genre.)

2nd Describe what you see in the artwork (trees, people, shapes, colors lines etc...)
   - Begin by observing the picture and describe what you see. Make a list of objective observations. Use your identification skills; DON'T guess if you are not sure. Make your descriptions all observable facts. Go slowly through this process so you do not miss any details.

Example:
Starry Night, Vincent Van Gogh, 1832, size, media..... I see a large cypress tree in the foreground. The majority of the picture plane is occupied by an evening sky. There are many stars in the sky. There is a village behind the cypress tree. Etc.....

Step 2 Analysis – How is the work organized?

Focus on how the elements and principles have been used to organize the work. This is a clue-collecting step, no guesses. Study in detail, how the elements and principles were used. How have the principles organized the elements? Cite specific examples from the artwork. Analyze how the elements are put together. This step helps you discover how the artist created any moods, messages or ideas in the work.

1. Use the vocabulary of art to analyze the artwork. You need to create an outline to help you organize your information.

Elements of Art
Line       Shape       Space       Color
Texture    Value       Form

Principles of Design
Balance    Emphasis    Contrast    Rhythm    Pattern
Movement   Variety    Harmony    Proportion    Unity

2. Using your outline, now complete a paragraph making sure you organize your information with flow.

Example:
The night sky is dark blue. The sky is filled with vibrant yellow stars. The pattern of the stars moves the viewer’s eye back and forth through the painting. The small buildings of the village have small glowing yellow lights which mimic the color found in the stars; this repetition of the yellow creates harmony helping unify the picture. The image is made up of short brush strokes that create a heavy actual texture. Etc...