

tour strategies

how to talk about art

Your junior docent tour:

- Introduce yourself and the artwork
- Give a formal analysis of the artwork
- Give your interpretation of the artwork - what it means to you
- End with “thank you” or “are there any questions”

starting your tour

Before describing, analyzing and interpreting your chosen Dalí artwork, tell the audience:

- Your name, grade and school name
- The name of the artwork
- The year it was made

formal analysis

A **Formal Analysis** is a detailed description of the “formal” qualities of a piece of art.

What does “formal” mean to you?

What is an analysis?

formal analysis

Analysis = Investigation + Explanation

Goal: Attempt to explain how the artist puts together and uses different elements and principles of art.

A formal analysis

- Is an important technique for organizing visual information
- Can be applied to any work of art, from any period in history, like a photograph, sculpture, painting or ancient artifact

formal analysis

Steps to Formal Analysis:

STEP 1: Description (what everyone sees)

STEP 2: Analysis (what the artist did)

STEP 3: Interpretation (what you think)

step 1: description

Answers the question: What do you see?

- Pure description of the art object without any explanation or judgement
 - explanation = why or how the artist included it
 - judgement = if you think it is good or bad
- List and describe the different elements and principles of art

description

Example: “You can see movement in the trees as their shape changes here. The colors on the ground are brown and green.”



words to describe art

Elements of art

- line
- shape
- form
- space
- value
- color
- texture

Principles of art

- balance
- movement
- pattern
- proportion
- unity
- harmony
- variety

step 2: analysis

Answers the question: How did the artist do it?

Explain why the artist used the qualities discussed in the description.

Some ideas that can be discussed in analysis are:

- the main subject of the artwork
- some distinct features or details
- the background vs foreground

analysis

Example: “The painting shows a lot of girls playing and relaxing outside. You can tell they’re playing and relaxing by the way Dalí poses their bodies.”



step 3: interpretation

An interpretation answers the question: Why did the artist create it and what does it mean in terms of political, social or cultural history?

The different elements that are included in an interpretation:

- the main idea or overall meaning of the work
- sources or traditions that influenced artist
- the purpose for creating the art

interpretation

Example: “He created this piece while experimenting with different art styles like Impressionism and Cubism. The buildings look like blocks like in Cubist art and the landscape looks soft like in Impressionist art.”



additional information

After describing, analyzing and interpreting your chosen Dalí artwork, tell the audience:

- Why you chose the artwork
- What it reminds you of or how it relates to you
- What you learned from being a junior docent
- Thank you, I hope you enjoyed my presentation!
or Thank you, I hope you enjoy the rest of your tour!

- You can describe, analyze and interpret the whole artwork at once
or
- You can describe, analyze and interpret the artwork bit by bit, going back and forth between the 3 steps
- Sprinkle fun facts into your presentation
- Use a flashlight to point at different parts of the artwork
- Smile and have fun!

example tour

Hi, my name is Sumaya Ayad. I'm in 22nd grade at The Dalí School. Today, I'm going to speak about the painting *Cadaqués* done in 1923 - 100 years ago! Dalí was 19 years old when he painted this. I like this artwork a lot. You can see movement in the trees as their shape changes here. It looks like a windy day. The colors on the ground are brown and green; they look like dirt and grass. There are blocky buildings in the back and a hot air balloon in the sky. The water is a light blue, and it seems crystal clear because you can see the buildings reflected in it. The painting shows a lot of girls playing and relaxing outside. You can tell they're playing and relaxing by the way Dalí poses their bodies. Dalí is showing us a typical scene from the place he always went on summer vacation, Cadaqués, Spain. He created this piece while experimenting with different art styles like Impressionism and Cubism. The buildings look like blocks like in Cubist art and the landscape looks soft like in Impressionist art. I chose this painting because I liked the dogs in the front. It reminds me of spending time by the water when I go on vacation. As a junior docent, I learned a lot about Dalí. Thank you, I hope you enjoyed my presentation!

junior docent tour outline

plan and organize your tour information

Your Name:

What is the name of your selected artwork? What year did he paint it? What is the medium?

How old was Dalí when he made it? What was happening in Dalí's life at this time? Is it from a particular period in his career? When creating this piece, what was he inspired by?

What did you think the first time you saw this artwork? Why did you choose it?

What are the top three facts about your artwork?

1.

2.

3.

Finish the sentence: This painting is about...

What vocabulary words, historical events or symbols will you explain during your tour?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

After having researched this piece of art, what is your personal opinion about it?