Just as authors tell tales with words, artists use paint to describe scenes, characters, action, and conversations.


After you’ve seen the exhibition, you can examine other paintings in the Museum with this guide!
Artists shape a story by creating and arranging elements in their compositions.

Using your own words or sketches, describe the element(s) in the painting you chose that…

1. Create(s) a mood or atmosphere:

2. Tell(s) that the story occurred in the past?

3. Indicate(s) the time of day:

Now imagine CHANGING one of the elements you described above. How would this change the story?

Glossary

Atmosphere: the main mood or feeling

Character: a person in a story or play

Composition: the way in which parts are put together; arrangement

Depict: to show, or represent, in a picture

Element: one of the parts of which something is made up

Mood: feeling or atmosphere

Narrative: tells a story

Scene: a view, picture, or setting of an event
In making a narrative painting, the artist might describe one or more events from a story. Use the following questions to examine the scene in the painting you chose.

1. What do you think is the most important part of the story? Why?

2. Describe what you think is happening in this scene.

3. What happened just before the action in the painting?

4. What will happen just after the action in the painting?

5. Sketch your favorite part of this story.
Narrative paintings often show what people say and how they act, just like characters in a story or a play. Look at the painting and choose A or B below:

**A  DID YOU CHOOSE A PAINTING WITH ONE PERSON?**

1. Why do you think he or she is alone?

2. Describe in words or pictures what you think this person is doing and thinking:

3. Circle the words that might describe the character’s mood(s):
   - quiet
   - excited
   - funny
   - serious
   - relaxed
   - anxious
   - proud
   - surprised
   - other: ________________

4. Sketch or describe a detail from the painting that suggests one of these moods:

**B  DID YOU CHOOSE A PAINTING WITH TWO OR MORE PEOPLE?**

1. Who is/are the main character(s)? How do you know?

2. Sketch or describe what you think they are saying and doing:

3. Who is/are the main character(s)?

4. Sketch or describe a detail from the painting that suggests one of these moods: