

Art Institute of Chicago (AIC)

Location: 111 S. Michigan Ave. Chicago, IL 60603

<http://www.artic.edu/visit/directions-and-parking> Enter through the Modern Wing on Monroe Street, or enter through the Michigan Avenue entrance at Adams Street.

Admission Rates and Hours: <http://www.artic.edu/visit>

- As of October 2013, the AIC is free to Illinois residents on Thursday evenings, 5-8pm.

AIC Online Collections: <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/search-artwork>

AIC Pathfinder: <http://www.artic.edu/pathfinder/php/pathfinder.php?page=2&floor=1&path=0&id=13853&roomId=0&catId=0&code=PN>

Questions for the exterior

1. Examine the exterior of the old Art Institute building that faces Michigan Ave. (not the Modern Wing). What type of triangle forms the pediment over the main entrance to the museum? What other geometric shapes do you see? How are they arranged?
2. Ancient Greek temple architecture tended to be built with sides that followed an $x : 2x+1$ ratio. If a short side of the temple had a width of six units, calculate how many units long the other side would be:

Demonstrate use of appropriate calculations to determine whether that ratio is evident in the exterior of the original Art Institute Building on Michigan Ave.

If so, where do you see evidence of that ratio? If not, how do you know?

Explain the steps one must take to answer this question.

Questions for the interior

Gallery numbers (referenced in various questions below) are written inside door frames or painted in upper corners of the galleries. Refer to a map or ask a guard for directions if you have trouble locating a specific gallery. Keep in mind that exhibitions are subject to change at the discretion of the curators.

3. Find a work of art in galleries 101—109, 131—133, or 140—142 depicting a figure with extra appendages (multiple sets of arms, legs, heads, etc.). Identify the culture, title, and date:

Describe the figure and the message conveyed to you by the additional limbs. What does it make you wonder?

4. Describe three animals seen in the Indian Art of the Americas gallery (136), and describe three animals seen in the African Art gallery (137).

Indian Art of the Americas:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

African Art:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Are any of them hybrid creatures (mixtures of various animals)?

If so, what associations do you have with the various animal components? What might the combination of different species symbolize?

Do you notice any differences or similarities in the way the different animals are represented?

Do you notice any differences or similarities in the types of objects on which the different animals were depicted?

5. Find two depictions of a Buddha (see the label next to each image for the title) in galleries 101—109, 131—133, or 140—142.

Identify the culture, title, and date of the first:

Identify the culture, title, and date of the second:

Describe at least two similarities and two differences in the representations of the Buddha figure (consider their attire, pose, expression, etc.)

Describe at least two differences between the two representations (consider their attire, pose, expression, etc.)

Find a representation of a bodhisattva (see the label next to each image for the title) in galleries 101—109, 131—133, or 140—142.

Identify the culture, title, and date:

How is this representation different from the Buddhas you have seen in the galleries? (consider their attire, pose, expression, etc.) Reflect on these differences.

6. Select a painting in an American or European gallery (galleries 161-179, 201-248, 261-273).

Identify the artist name, title, and date:

Describe the subject matter (the content: what is being depicted in the scene). Use at least three adjectives (describing words).

Describe the way it is depicted. What visual textures, colors, and compositional elements were used? Use at least three adjectives (describing words).

Why do you think the artist emphasized the aspects that (s)he did? What message or meaning does it convey to you or what mood does it create?

7. Select a work of decorative art (such as a vase, a piece of furniture, other home décor, etc.).

Identify the culture, artist name, title, and date:

How is it functional?

How is it decorative?

8. Find a two-dimensional (flat) work of art (such as a print, photograph or painting) and a three-dimensional work of art (such as a sculpture in the round) that depict similar content/subject matter.

Identify the culture, artist, title, and date of the 2-D work:

Identify the culture, artist, title, and date of the 3-D work:

How does the structure and design of each artwork affect your response to or understanding of the subject matter/content?

9. Compare and contrast masks from two different African cultures (gallery 137). What do you know about what they represent or how they are used, either from your own observations or from museum text?

Identify the culture, title, and date of the first:

Identify the culture, title, and date of the second:

10. Of the works you saw in these galleries (#-#) today, which was your favorite, and why?

Identify the artist name, title, and date:

What did you like about this work of art? How did it make you feel, and what did it make you wonder? Did the artist of this work do anything that you found particularly innovative?

11. Of the works you saw in these galleries (#-#) today, which was most difficult to understand or appreciate, and why?

Identify the artist name, title, and date:

12. Did you feel like you got more out of just looking at objects, reading text about them (either on the label next to the object or elsewhere on the walls), watching one of the films or listening to audio segments, or a combination? Why?

How can you adapt your study routine and approach to normal class work to take advantage of what you learned about your learning style and preferences today?

13. What is your definition of “art”? Based on your definition, did any of the pieces you saw today fail to meet your criteria?
14. Without asking or looking up data, how can you tell which exhibits are the most popular at the museum?

Questions to begin during your field trip and continue working on after you leave (it may help to take photographs—without flash—if photography is allowed in the gallery)

15. Examine the names inscribed on the exterior of the Art Institute building on Michigan Ave. (just below the roof line). List the names you know and circle the names of people that are familiar to you.

Research at least one name that is not familiar to you using the HWC library, and describe what you learn about that figure.

Recommend two names to add to those included here: one should belong to an artist who has died within the last hundred years; the other should belong to an artist who is still living.

Justify your selections by explaining what your two recommended artists add to the array of figures already featured on the museum’s exterior.

16. What buildings have been added to the original Art Institute building?
After you leave the museum, do research to discover when were they added and what style of architecture they represent.

Should a new style be used for a future Art Institute of Chicago building or should it borrow from an existing style of one of the additions?

Justify your selection of architectural style based on its appropriateness to the city of Chicago and the museum's collections. If you would like to sketch your design in greater detail, you are welcome to do that.

17. Find a still-life (try gallery 209 or 213: see the label next to each image for the title) that is painted *illusionistically*—using paint to create the impression of objects and textures as if they really existed in our space.

Identify the artist name, title, and date:

What objects are represented? Specify as many as you can see and identify.

How are the different objects arranged in the painted space? Where is the focal point?

What visual textures do you see? (Based on the painting, how would the different objects feel to touch)? Use at least three adjectives (describing words).

Using terms of biological classification (see your textbook and other HWC library resources), how many kingdoms are included in the painting? Which ones?

Using your textbook and other HWC library resources, properly apply two of the other ranks of biological classification (phylum/division, class, order, family, genus, species) to describe the organisms you see in the painting.

What details did you pay attention to in order to help with identification?

Select two or more of the species or families whose organisms are included in the painting, and investigate, using your textbook and other HWC library resources, whether or not they are native to the same region(s).

18. Select one of *The Chicago Panels* by Ellsworth Kelly (1989-99) (gallery 261—around the main stairwell). What color is the shape?

Without touching the painting, calculate the area. (*Hint*: it may help to take a photograph, without flash, of the painting).

Explain the steps one must take to answer this question.

Which step is the most difficult?

Investigate the history of that color using the HWC library resources. What materials were used to make that color before paint was purchased in tubes?

19. Imagine that you are a figure (human, animal, god—be creative!) in one of the works of art in the museum. Write a journal entry (at least 7 complete sentences) describing a day in your life.

Describe what you think, feel, and also what your senses (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch) convey to you.

After you write your journal entry, underline at least two passages and explain how those passages are supported by the details you observe in the work of art or by what you know about the historical context.

How would another figure in the artwork view your character's life? What similarities and differences would you expect between your character's self-concept and an outsider's judgment of that figure?