

Disciplinary Literacy in Art & Design

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Welcome to the Disciplinary Literacy in Art & Design site.

You will find resources to better engage students in creativity, communication, and critical thinking, while remaining true to the rigors of the visual arts. Art is a visual representation of ideas. Our understanding of the elements that make up a piece of artwork offers the learner a deeper understanding of the components of the work, as well as an idea of the message the artist may have been communicating to the viewer. Art allows people across countries, cultures, and time to engage within the expressive principles of art and design. Through artistic ideas, learners can both read, write, listen, think critically, and communicate ideas.

Disciplinary Literacy - Wisconsin Definition

"Disciplinary literacy is defined as the confluence of content knowledge, experiences, and skills merged with the ability to read, write, listen, speak, think critically and perform in a way that is meaningful within the context of a given field."

For visual arts this definition supports the continual building of skills, knowledge, and techniques while continuing to focus on the art form's elements. Art and Design instruction offers students the opportunity to explore, create, and respond through a variety of multi-sensory modes.

Literacy is one of many tools that can assist in developing art skills and knowledge. Literacy tools can assist students in:



- * developing art and design vocabulary;
- * deciphering the graphic representation of ideas; and
- * communicate those ideas through critique and analysis of artwork genres, styles, media use, and artist intent. For art and design instructional examples and resources, visit the [Fine Arts Pedagogy site](#).

Vocabulary of Art and Design Principles

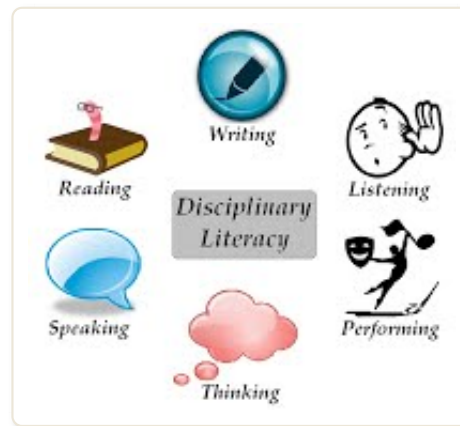
Most visual art is deployed as a form of communication—artists using a chosen media to convey specific concepts. Artists use medium-specific language; a photographer might discuss aperture or shutter speed, while a painter may use words such as tint or glaze. Artists, educators, critics, and historians have different ways of speaking about art, using terminology specific to medium. The basic elements of art and design are:

- **Elements of Art** - line, shape, form, texture, color, space, value
- **Principles of Design** - [balance, proportion, rhythm, emphasis, and unity](#)
- Art Vocabulary Words
 - [Elementary Art Vocabulary Words](#) (Retrieved from Incredible @rt Department)
 - [Art Vocabulary - Middle School](#) (Quizlet example); HS [Flash Cards](#) (Flash Card Machine)
 - [Art Vocabulary - High School](#) ; [Fine Arts Study Guides](#) ([Word Dynamo](#) examples)

[Project Articulate](#)- showcases the elements with visuals for class use.

Disciplinary Literacy Tools in Visual Arts

Artists are naturally involved within the activities of reading, writing, listening, speaking, thinking, and performing/exhibiting their work.



A meaningful engagement with art-making or viewing requires that the participants have an understanding of the fundamentals of art and design

principles. Because art-work is truly a text itself, background information and a viewer's understanding of art principles is needed to be an informed participant. Just as a student in an English class is taught to search for an author's biases in an essay, the art student will also benefit from an investigation of an author's intent and background to better distinguish the network's meaning.

Artists regularly engage in critique. This may take many forms - critiquing their own work or the work of others. An example to consider in the classroom - have the student artist exhibit their work to the class in order to receive feedback and criticism. This allows the artist to describe ideas and processes about the creation of the piece. The viewers have an opportunity to share their thoughts. Both participants should be encouraged to utilize the terminology of the art-form appropriate for their level of expertise.

Besides discussions in art, learners could support their skill and knowledge of art development through the use of art history texts, magazine articles, journals, art-websites, artist statements, and newspaper reviews.

8 Steps to Building Art Knowledge through Literacy ([Template](#))

1. **Build prior knowledge.**
2. **Build specialized vocabulary.**

3. **Learn to deconstruct complex visual representation of ideas.**
4. **Use knowledge of artistic elements and genres to identify main and subordinate ideas within the piece.**
5. **Articulate what the graphic representations mean within a work or ideas to support its main components.**
6. **Pose discipline relevant questions.**
7. **Compare artistic elements of the**

For more examples of application in art and design education, visit:

- o **(i.e., what counts as evidence to evaluation claims).**
- o [DPI DL in the Arts- Tip Sheet](#)
- o [Eight Steps to Building Literacy in the Arts](#) - Template for educators to consider using within their review of informational text resources.
- o [Art and Design Pedagogy](#) - This Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction site provides articles, videos, and other resources that help build and deepen artistic ability through activities such as: creating, connecting, reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking critically.
- o [Arts Skills Map](#) from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.
- o [Arty Pants](#) - This series offers several episodes exploring artwork with children. View these episodes which also highlight vocabulary and critical thinking skills with art. [Portrait](#) (4 minutes 21 seconds);
- o [Bloom's Taxonomy Art Table Tents](#) - This table tent can be used with multiple media through critique. It incorporates each of the six areas of Bloom's Taxonomy: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation, as they relate to the arts. Consider having this at each art table for students to use, discuss, and grow their use of vocabulary and ability to apply artistic concepts.
- o [Junior Curators](#) - podcast of 5th grade students highlighting artwork.(Scroll down to end of page and click on each picture/ audio link.)
- o [Wisconsin DPI Text Type](#) - This document lists informational text types, which includes images common in art, music, theatre, and dance.

- [Perceive Card](#) - This tool offers four areas to investigate a piece of artwork with from the University of Minnesota. Also check the artful writing [activities](#) for this site.
- [Reading with Art](#) - Online Resource from the Milwaukee Art Museum connecting their art collection with art literacy.
- [Visual Literacy Across the Curriculum](#) (4 minutes) and [Visual Literacy in the Classroom](#) (14 minutes) - These videos offer a deeper explanation of what visual literacy is and application to real world experiences.
- [Visual Literacy - CoreStand](#)- This video (4 minutes) reviews ideas for supporting student learning in visual literacy and includes helping them read illustrations, charts, and photographs.
- Wisconsin Art Education Association - ArtTimes articles
 - [Spring 2013](#) (Issue Topic - Literacy and Art)
 - [Disciplinary Literacy - Tools for In-Depth Artistic Study](#) by J. Palkowski
- [Wisconsin Disciplinary Literacy](#)
 - [Art and Design](#)
 - [Dance](#)
 - [Music](#)
 - [Theatre](#)
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction site for [Art and Design Education](#).

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please contact [Julie Palkowski](#), Fine Arts and Creativity Education Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

[Accessibility and Disclaimer](#)

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- Do not contain unsupported accusations; and
- Do not contain attacks on individuals or groups.