

## Glossary

**Criticism** The act or art of analyzing and judging the quality of a literary or artistic work.

**Critique** The act or practice of criticism.

## Describing Art

Describing art is a verbal pointing so that features of a work of art will be noticed and appreciated.

Describing art often involves gathering internal and external data.

- Internal descriptive information
  - subject matter
  - medium
  - form
- External descriptive information (context)
  - facts about artist
  - time artwork was made
  - medium used

## Interpreting Art

- Artworks have “aboutness” and demand interpretation.
- Interpretations are persuasive arguments.
  - The object of interpretations are artworks, not artists.
  - Critics rely on evidence from observation about the artwork, the world, and the artist.
  - Interpretation is not so much absolutely right, but more or less reasonable, convincing, enlightening, and informative.
- No single interpretation is exhaustive of the meaning of an artwork.
  - The meaning of an artwork may be different from its significance to the viewer.
  - An artwork is not necessarily about what the artist wanted it to be about.
  - Good interpretations invite us to see for ourselves and to continue on our own.

## Judging Art

- Judgments are informed critical arguments about the value of a work of art.
  - Judgments are based on definable criteria.
  - Judgments without reasons are uninformative and nonresponsive.
- Critics judge art for an audience of readers, not for the artist of the work.
- Critics wish to persuade the readers to appreciate (or not appreciate) the work the critic does for the same reasons.

## Describing, Interpreting, and Judging

is about making decisions, providing reasons and evidence for those decisions, and formulating arguments for one’s conclusions.

**Descriptions** gather and present internal and external description information.

**Interpretations** seek to determine what the works are about.

**Judgments** seek to determine how good the work is or isn’t and why and by what criteria.