

Beginning, Middle, End

A routine for harnessing the power of narrative to observe connections, patterns, and meaning.



Choose one of these questions:

- If this artwork is the **beginning** of a story, what might happen next?
- If this artwork is the **middle** of a story, what might happen before? What might be about to happen?
- If this artwork is the **end** of a story, what might the story be?

PURPOSE

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine uses the power of narrative to help students make observations and encourages them to use their imagination to elaborate on and extend their ideas. Its emphasis on storytelling also encourages students to look for connections, patterns, and meanings.

APPLICATION

When and where can I use it?

The routine works with any kind of visual art that stays still in time—such as painting or sculpture. Use "Beginning, Middle, or End" when you want students to develop their writing or storytelling skills.

LAUNCH

What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

You can use the questions in the routine in the open-ended way they are written. Or, if you are connecting the artwork to a topic in the curriculum, you can link the questions to the topic. For example, if you are studying population density, you can ask students to keep the topic in mind when they imagine their stories. The routine is especially useful as a writing activity. To really deepen students' writing, you can use the "Looking: Ten Times Two" routine with the same artwork prior to using this routine as a way of helping students generate descriptive language to use in their stories.

This thinking routine was developed as part of the Artful Thinking project at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Explore the full PZ Thinking Routine Toolbox at pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines.

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