

Creative Comparisons

A routine for metaphorical thinking.



What do you see in the artwork? / What do you know about the topic?

- Compare: Choose a category from the list below or identify your own category.
- Imagine: If this topic / artwork was a kind of _____ (category), what would it be?
- Explain three ways that it compares.

PURPOSE

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

The routine encourages metaphorical thinking—central to the work of any artist and to creative thinking in any discipline. Metaphors provoke our imaginations to create comparisons between dissimilar things, often leading to deeper and richer understanding of each.

APPLICATION

When and where can I use it?

Creating metaphors help students understand unfamiliar subjects by linking it to what they already know. Use the routine when you want to help students make connections between disparate elements or ideas, or to stimulate new insights and solutions.

LAUNCH

What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

Teachers should provide a list of categories related to the artwork or the topic. Good category examples include those that have a wide variety of parts or types. Sample categories could include: musical instruments, plants, toys, cities, parts of the body, artworks of all kinds (for topics that aren't artworks), music (for any topic or artwork that isn't music).

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.