

Lenses for Dialogue

A routine for looking through lenses and exchanging perspectives.

SEE

Look closely at the work. What do you notice?
Make lots of observations.

CHOOSE & SHARE A LENS

Think about how you see the world: your lenses. These could be related to your role in your family, your race, your ethnicity, your gender, your sexuality, or anything else about you. With a partner or small group, each choose one lens and take turns talking about how you might see or think about the work through that lens.

PROBE

Ask a question to understand more about another person's lens and perspective.

Possible question starters:

Say more about what you mean by...

Tell me more about why you see/think/feel...

REFLECT

Take a minute or two to look again at the artwork. Do you have any new observations or questions? What issues or themes did your lenses conversation invite you to think?

FACILITATOR NOTES LENSES FOR DIALOGUE

Before you begin

Choose an artwork that might speak to one or more civic themes—themes related to how we live together and how we aspire to live together. Civic topics may include issues such as climate and environmental change, migration, economic and other inequalities, gender and sexuality issues, race/racism, or any theme that addresses values, social conventions, power dynamics, institutions and systems that shape every level of community life, from the local to the global.

A word about lenses: The purpose of this routine is to look at an artwork with a distinct lens in mind. A lens is something you look through. Our lenses are affected by our identities or backgrounds. For example: gender, race, ethnicity, age, culture, place, occupation, family role, and more. These identities affect how we see and engage with the larger world. They also shape what we notice and think about when looking at an artwork. This routine invites students to be intentional about looking through distinct lenses as they explore an artwork.

Facilitating the Routine

Class time needed for this routine can range from 10-20 minutes or longer, depending on your facilitation choices. The routine is designed to support individual looking, thinking, dialogue with others, and then reflection. The discussion-oriented steps in the routine (Choose and Share a Lens and Probe) can be done in pairs or small groups.

**See Dialogue Moves for further ideas for deepening discussion.*

**See Viewing Moves for ideas to slow down and deepen looking at the artwork.*

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