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## INFER Thinking Routine

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**Class Periods:** 1 | **Overview:** Analyze a visual artifact (painting, sculpture, photograph, etc.) using the INFER thinking routine.

**Steps:**

1. **Select an Appropriate Visual Artifact:** Choose an image-based artifact connected to a specific historical event or moment students have already begun studying. Paintings, photographs, or sculptures work especially well when they reflect a particular perspective or interpretation of an event.
2. **Walk students through the INFER routine:**
  - a. **Imagine:** Before revealing the artifact, provide students with the event or historical context, ask students to briefly sketch or describe what they expect the event to look like, encouraging them to consider people, setting, tone, and action. (Emphasize that accuracy is not the goal. This step is about activating prior knowledge and surfacing expectations and assumptions.)
  - b. **Notice:** Display the visual artifact and guide students through structured noticing. Prompt students to consider what is present, what is absent, and whose perspectives appear centered or marginalized.
  - c. **Find differences:** Ask students to directly compare their imagined representations with the artifact. Support discussion or written reflection focused on differences between expectation and depiction, encouraging students to consider why those differences might exist.
  - d. **Evaluate:** Ask students to reflect on what the artifact teaches about the historical event, the artist's perspective, and broader historical context. Encourage students to consider bias, purpose, audience, and how their own assumptions influenced interpretation.
  - e. **Reimagine:** Extend students' thinking by inviting students to "zoom out" beyond the borders of the image. Ask them to imagine what or who might exist outside the frame and what additional historical context might complicate or deepen understanding of the moment represented.
3. **Conclude with a discussion, written reflection, or claim-based response** connecting the artifact to larger historical themes or inquiry questions. Encourage students to articulate how their thinking evolved throughout the routine.



## Guiding Questions for the INFER Routine:

INFER Routine	Guiding Questions
<p><b>Imagine</b> <i>Briefly sketch what you expect to see.</i></p>	<p>Who is present? What are they doing? How are they dressed? Where are they? What does it look like? What other objects are present? What is the tone?</p>
<p><b>Notice</b> <i>Look at the real image. Notice carefully.</i></p>	<p>What do you see? What do you not see that you might have expected? Who or what is foregrounded or highlighted? What perspectives are represented? What perspectives are not represented?</p>
<p><b>Find differences</b> <i>Look for differences between what you have drawn and the visual artifact.</i></p>	<p>How does your imagining differ from the visual artifact? What did you include/omit that the creator of the artifact did not?</p>
<p><b>Evaluate</b> <i>Interpret what the artifact reveals about the historical event, the creator's perspective, and how this compares with your initial sketch.</i></p>	<p>What does the visual artifact teach you about the historical period or event? What does the visual artifact teach you about the perspectives and/or biases of the artist? What does your initial imagining teach you about your own perspectives, biases, or understanding of the event?</p>
<p><b>Reimagine</b> <i>Return to your original image and recontextualize it – thinking about what might be beyond the borders of the image itself.</i></p>	<p>What might you see? What/ who else might be there? What/ who else could be there? What additional historical context might inform what you would see if the frame were expanded?</p>



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**Why this works:** This thinking routine invites students to activate prior knowledge, recognize preconceptions, and reflect on how those preconceptions may be formed by information they've encountered or by personal biases/blind spots. This routine also introduces students to a visual artifact, to which they will compare their own representation to evaluate perspective, their understanding of the event, and how the event is situated in the larger historical narrative of the period. Students act as historians in a creative context.