

Visual Text Analysis Worksheet:

Adapted from "Photo Analysis Worksheet" created by Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration

"Kindred Spirits" by Asher Durand, 1849

OBSERVE:

Step 1: Study the image as a whole for 2 minutes. Write down your initial impressions and reactions.
summery, wild place, idealized natural scene, everything looks peaceful and untouched, artistic composition, well framed, perspective is perfect; humans are and aren't the focal point, they are small, but central.

Step 2: Divide the image into quadrants. Study each quadrant for 1 minutes. What new details become visible?

Quadrant 1: leafy trees, meticulously painted, shadowy, detailed, some red, mostly green; 2 men talking, standing on rock outcropping; one is pointing with a walking stick, both well dressed

Quadrant 2: mountains, clouds in the distance, colors fade as they mountains get farther, clear day

Quadrant 3: moss, lichen on the rocks, two men are divided b/w quad 1 & 3, splits at their waists, posture looks comfortable, wearing nice shoes (look little)

Quadrant 4: more natural features, waterfalls flowing into a river, greenery at a distance, looks very real
quads 1 & 3: closer, 2 & 4: distance

Step 3: Use the chart to list people, objects, and activities in the image:

People	Objects	Activities
older man	cane	talking
man with hat	hat	looking at scenery
	book	one man pointing to something
	stick, pointer?	
	waterfalls, trees, mountains, clouds	
	rock outcropping	

INFER:

Step 4: Based on what you have observed, list 3 things you could infer from this image:

1. It's a warmish but not too warm early fall day. Leaves still green with a little bit of turning.
2. The painter wants to show great reverence for nature, or awe. It's beautiful, a perfect scene. He's used detail, soft colors...it's grand and draws you in. I'm equally drawn to the depth of the landscape as I am the two men talking.

3. Men have come to this place together. It seems like they know each other. Man with the hat seems to be talking and pointing, and older man considering. They could be nature pilgrims/hikers, or they could be developers. It seems like they're not on a leisure stroll...no backpacks, look like dressed for the city. Who brings a book or map to go hiking...it seems like they're there to look at this spectacular place for a reason. The painter has captured them in the act of talking about something specific.

ASK & ANSWER:

Step 5: What questions does this image raise in your mind? What do you need to know to understand the image? Where could you look? Pick the most important question and use the web to research the answer. Record your findings and source here.

Are they hikers or real estate developers?

What else has Durand painted?

This seems like an example of grand nature painting, like Albert Bierstadt, or Ansel Adams (photography).

Where does Durand fit in that tradition?

Met link has some information about the painting:

The painting exemplifies Hudson School: American landscape art movement full of romanticism and aesthetics of nature

They are specific men: painter Thomas Cole of Hudson River School (it's not a map or blueprints, but an art portfolio), and nature poet William Cullen Bryant. Presumably they're there to share their love of nature--hence the title.

Sources: Met Museum: <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/L.2008.21>

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hudson_River_School