Generally, for each painting you should use Visual Thinking Strategy (VLS) questioning. This is a method of questioning in which you broadly ask the students:

1) What do they see?
2) Why do they think that?
3) What else do they see?

This is to encourage the students to study the painting, back up their observations with evidence, and entice them to notice more details. They might say it took place in the past based on the clothes, for example, or that it is winter based on the snow on the ground.

In addition to these VTS questions, we have provided notes to accompany each painting in the notes section of this PowerPoint that include guiding suggestions for general reference or in case the students get stuck.
Warm Up

Look at the following picture. Write down the first 5 things you notice.

As a warm up, give the students 2 to 3 minutes to write down the first 5 things they notice about this painting.
Warm Up

Now compare your list with a partner. What did they notice that you did not? How much detail did you each include? Why do you think you listed the things you did?

Why might someone choose to paint this picture?

After students make their own list, have them pair up with a partner to discuss the questions on the slide:

What did their partner notice that they did not?

How much detail did they go into? (Did they notice large things like the clouds and trees or did they notice more specific things like a man hunting with his dogs, people walking on the path?)

Why did they list the things they did? (What made these details stand out to them?)

After students discuss with a partner for a minute or two, have each pair share their findings with the whole class. Get them to think about how different details stood out to each of them. Note that similar to each group, different things stand out to different artists. Thus, different artists might paint the same scene differently with things that stand out to him or her.

Do your students need an opportunity to move around? Try SUHUPU (stand up, hand up, pair up) for partners. Upon your directions, each student will stand up, raise his/her hand, find someone (not near them) who also has his/her hand up, pair up with a high five, and begin their discussion.
Landscape Painting

Lands**cape**s are a type of art in which an artist shows a scene from nature. They can be based on real life or come from the imagination. Even those based on real life will be made with different levels of detail, with some showing lots of details and others not. Landscape paintings can be a way to experience nature from around the world from someone else's point of view.

How an artist chooses to paint a **landscape** might depend on his or her life experiences, where he or she lives or works, what techniques he or she wishes to practice, and what other artists are doing at the time. When you look at the following paintings ask yourself:

- What catches your attention?
- Why do you think the artist chose to paint that scene?
- What is the artist's purpose in painting that scene?
- What personal or historic events might have influenced them?
- What does the painting remind you of in your own life? Why?

Landscape painting goes back more than one thousand years and can be found all over the world. The focus of this exhibition, however, will be landscapes in Belgium.

This slide contains general information about landscapes and questions students should be asking themselves as they view each work. The questions can also be found on the Questioning Cards (included in this packet) for students to have out on their desks. On the student worksheet is a fill-in-the-blank version to use at your discretion. The bolded words are useful vocabulary words with in-text definitions.
The following slides contain information about the country of Belgium.
Geography

Capital: Brussels
Size: 11,787 square miles (about the size of Maryland)
Population: Over 10.5 million (16 times the population of Boston)
97% of Belgians live in cities
Famous cities: Bruges, Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and Spa (where we get the word ‘spa’ from)

Geographic features:
- Lowlands: This means much of the land is below sea level and floods easily
- Windmills
- Tulips

http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/belgium.html
Languages

• **Dutch** (also called Flemish) is spoken in the north

• **French** is spoken in the south

• **German** is spoken by a small group by the town of Liège in the east

https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/belgium/belgium-ghent-channel.jpg
Culture

Industries: farming, oyster 'farming,' fishing
Culture

Industries: farming, oyster ‘farming,’ fishing
Known for: chocolate, lace, waffles
Culture

Industries: farming, oyster ‘farming,’ fishing

Known for: chocolate, lace, waffles

Popular interests: soccer, cycling
Culture

Industries: farming, oyster ‘farming,’ fishing

Known for: chocolate, lace, waffles

Popular interests: soccer, cycling

*Fun facts:* Belgians invented what we call French fries!

The saxophone was also invented here.
History & Government

- Got its independence from The Netherlands in 1830
- Has both a prime minister and a king
- Uses the Euro like many European countries
- Helped found the European Union
- Like in America, citizens over 18 get to vote

https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/belgium/belgium-ghent-channel.jpg
Printmaking

In the 15th century, artists developed a new technology called printmaking that required lots of talented artists to work together.

Artists used this method to make many copies of a work all at once so that more people could see them.

Because these prints were made at a time when many people could not read, artists used images to tell people stories from the Bible and ancient mythology.

They would paint these stories in a setting or landscape that looked like their hometown rather than where the story actually took place. By making the stories look like they took place nearby, artists were able to teach viewers important lessons!
This work was part of a series of four prints each representing a season. Students can point out what season they think it is and why. They might notice people ice skating, falling through the ice, putting on skates, and farming in the background, etc.
St. Jerome

*Landscape with St. Jerome* depicts the biblical story of St. Jerome. St. Jerome translated the Old Testament from Greek to Latin and wrote a number of scholarly works about Christianity. He is one of the patron saints of scholars and libraries. He also set up many monasteries. In one famous story, St. Jerome is said to have pulled a thorn from a lion’s paw. In thanks, the lion stayed by the monastery to guard the monastery’s donkey or mule. St. Jerome is also often depicted with a skull because he liked to remind himself that he was not immortal, but that his words could be.

Desert Meets the Low Countries

While this print depicts a monastery (evidenced by the low buildings and the church), students may notice camels, which point to the story’s original desert location. To make this story more relevant to those in the Low Countries, the artist has included windmills, farms, and local flora and fauna.

Activity

See if the students can identify where the scene is located. Note the mismatching locations: the mixture of the desert with the Low Countries.

See if the students can pick out the elements of St. Jerome’s story. Students might notice aspects associated with St. Jerome, including the lion, skull, hat, and cross. They may also point out how we know which figure is St. Jerome by the halo around his head, his proximity to the cross, and the items around him.
18th-Century Romanticism

In the 18th century, people began to travel more and wanted to buy landscapes to remind them of the places they had seen.

Later on, a style called Romanticism became very popular. The goal of Romantic paintings was to show how awesome, great, thrilling, and sometimes terrifying nature could be.

Artists did this so that the person looking at the painting could experience the same emotion that they felt when they painted it. Some artists also tried to show nature in a way that is pleasant or nice to look at.
Mood and Tone

Just like an author or a director, an artist might try to make the viewer feel a certain feeling towards the work. This is called **tone**, or the *creator's attitude* towards the topic.

**Mood** is how the work makes you feel.

*Tip:* Remember, **mood**=me and **tone**=the other person. Think of a scary movie, the creator's **tone** might be serious, gloomy, or sad. But the **mood**, how it makes you feel, might be scared, worried, or even annoyed!
Students will mostly notice the bridge in this picture. Ask them to think about what the artist's goal was in making this painting, how he was trying to show or depict nature, and what makes them think that. What is the artist’s tone here? What is the mood the painting creates? Why?

Ask them about the bridge, how is it shown? Sturdy or not? How can we tell?

Students might talk about the height, the narrowness of it, the thin or spindly nature of the support beams, and the broken railing. Students might also point out the animals on the rock in the foreground. Where was the artist standing when he painted this?

**Additional Activity**
Ask the students to think of words to describe this painting and/or the bridge.

Eugène-Joseph Verboeckhoven, *Mountainous Landscape with Bridge*, n.d., oil on paper, laid down on canvas, 57.2 x 46.4 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Collection, promised gift of Wheelock Whitney III, and purchase, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. McVeigh, by exchange, 2003.42.55
Again, ask the students to talk about the artist’s tone and the mood in this painting. What about the painting tells them that (e.g., the dark colors, the choppy brush strokes, or perhaps the subject matter: that floods are scary)?
Types of Realism

In the 19th century, artists were also dedicated to painting real nature and its peacefulness rather than fantasy scenes.

However, their goal was to paint the scene as they saw it, from their perspective or point of view.

When two people look at the same landscape they often represent the same scene in different ways. They choose to focus on or highlight different things and, if painting from memory, remember the scene in different ways. Everyone’s reality looks different.
What can the students pick out in this painting? Is there a reason it might be so blurry? (Perhaps because it’s in a snow storm, for example, or the artist was painting this from memory, or the artist wanted to convey the tone of it being cold, tiring, and/or worrisome to be traveling at night). Where might these people be going? Students can use the title to help them figure this out.
Make sure students discuss why the work on the left looks so dark. Why might the artist have chosen to make it look like that? See what buildings they can identify. Can they pick out the factories? How can they tell? What are the things that look like clouds in the first work?

Again, try SUHUPU to partner up if students need to move around. (Stand up, hand up, pair up.)
The Impact of Industrialism

Many people were moving to cities from the country during the 1800s to find work. This was called the Industrial Revolution.

Many machines were invented and many factories were started that created lots of jobs in the city rather than the country.

Though there were jobs, people had to work very hard for long hours. Their environment was often dark, cramped, and unhealthy due to lots of smog in the air made from burning coal. Many artists during this time tried to show cities as places where people suffered.
If needed, prompt the students to notice that this is a group of people leaving somewhere. They have children with them and are holding packs of their belongings. Explain that an emigrant with an “e” is what someone leaving a place is called, and that when the emigrants get to their new home, they become an immigrant with an “i.”

Based on the prior slide, where might the people depicted be coming from, and where could they be going? Based on the setting, what time of year might this be?

Students might notice that these people are of a lower socio-economic class based on their clothing, lack of shoes, and the fact that they have to travel by walking.
The School of Tervuren

In the 1800s, many people moved to cities. This inspired some artists to paint landscapes more than other subjects.

In the country of Belgium, one group that felt this way was called “The School of Tervuren.” They focused on painting quiet and peaceful scenes of nature, often of fields and forests outside the town of Tervuren.

They thought nature offered an escape from the chaos and hard life found in cities. Because of this, they wanted to paint country life like it was: calm, peaceful, and without many humans.
Have the students brainstorm some words about how the School of Tervuren artists probably felt about the cities, and life there (they should be negative words). Then have them say words about how the group probably felt about the country (these should be positive). Ask the students what they notice (the sheep: which may mean they’re on a farm; people fishing: they may have more time for leisure activities; etc.). Based on this discussion, why might the artist have chosen this scene to paint? What is his tone? What mood does he create?
Ask the students what they think undergrowth in a forest means. What can students pick out in this picture? Why do they think the artist chose to paint like this? What kind of mood does this create? See if they get the sense of light filtering through the forest. Have they ever been in a forest where not a lot of light gets through the trees? Have a few students share about a time when they were in the woods. What did they see? What was the lighting like? What was their feeling in that moment?
Reality and Symbols

Artists use symbols when they want to represent something without drawing or saying anything. For example, you might draw a heart to represent love.

Artists during this time often wanted to use nature to represent emotions.
The students might notice that the figures are probably farmers working in their fields. Based on the title and that the trees are bare, but the grass is green, they should conclude it is spring time. Ask them what spring often represents. Possible answers include new beginnings, rebirth, and hope.
Students will notice the man sawing the log in half. What could he be making? Based on the title, it might be a coffin. They may also notice the two stumps and say it looks like he's cut down two trees or that it is probably late at night based on the color of the painting. Note that “nocturne” (in the title) means night.

What do they notice about the men? How many are there? Ask the students what they think this painting symbolizes. Potential answers may include working to death, long work hours, or simply work in a negative context.
The Changing Use of Symbols

One Belgian artist, Fernand Khnopff, really liked to use nature to represent emotions and feelings.

He especially liked to paint scenes from his childhood from memory to create a feeling of nostalgia, or a longing for the past.

He also liked to use the mirror-like quality of water to show reflectiveness, or deep thoughts especially about oneself.
Tell the students that this is a painting of Fernand’s childhood home. See if they can identify the houses and the fact that there is a flood (based on how high the water comes up on the trees). Students might point out that this looks blurry, why might this be the case? They might think that he’s doing this from memory and the memory is hazy, that he may have painted this quickly, or is attempting to paint his emotions into the scene.
See if the students notice that the woman is kissing a mirror. She is therefore kissing both herself and (perhaps) the memory of the town in the background. The town is Bruges where the artist Fernand Khnopff spent much of his childhood.

Does the woman like or miss what she sees? How can you tell? Notice also the bridge showing that much of the scene is taken up with water. How does that relate to the mirror?

Have the students discuss what the title means.