



What to Expect at Tacoma Art Museum

Parking and Buses

If you take a school bus to the museum, have your bus driver drop you off along Pacific Avenue between Union Station and TAM. This drop-off area will be marked with a large red portable sign. The bus driver can park on Dock Street to wait for the end of your program.

If you drive in separate cars, parking is available underneath TAM, accessed along Hood Street. Park in spots marked TAM, underneath the building. Parking is \$2 per hour; you can pay with cash or card at the meter by the TAM entrance. Driving directions and more information are available at www.tacomaartmuseum.org/visit/plan-visit/.

Arrival

TAM opens to the public at 10:00am. Unfortunately, we are not able to open earlier for school groups. Please plan to arrive as promptly as possible, but expect that the doors will be locked before 10:00. If your program begins after 10:00, please plan to arrive 15 minutes before your program's scheduled start time. This allows for plenty of time to get checked in, use the restroom, etc., before your program begins.

When you arrive at TAM, we will gather your whole group in the lobby. You will store backpacks, coats, and lunches in a bin. Chaperones will also need to store backpacks, large bags, and food/drinks in the bin. Most classes are divided into smaller groups (approximately 10 students per group) for the program. The easiest way to do this is by chaperones – for example, one chaperone and the students they're supervising go with one educator, and another chaperone and their students go with another educator. So, it's helpful if students and chaperones are pre-assigned, chaperones know who their students are, and vice versa. (Color-coding name tags helps with this!)

If you requested any special accommodations for students, educators will check in with you about those accommodations at this time.

Museum Manners

Here are some guidelines for behavior while at the museum:

- Look at art with your eyes, not your hands. The oils in our hands can damage artwork.
- Use walking feet in the museum.
- Use inside voices. Be polite listeners and active participants in conversation.
- Stay with your group.
- Be respectful of the building and facilities. This includes not jumping in the elevator, being careful around barriers, leaving areas clean, etc.

Tour

Your program includes a tour of the art galleries led by our professional educators. This tour lasts approximately 60 minutes and typically looks at 3-4 works of art. Students will spend a moment quietly looking at the art, then engage in a discussion using Visual Thinking Strategies. They will also participate in other activities to deepen their understanding of the art, such as movement, partner discussions, drawing and writing, and/or a picture-book reading. These activities are adapted from Harvard's Project Zero, and are designed to build critical thinking skills and cultivate visual literacy.

If you would like to better prepare your students for this portion of the program, you can practice looking at art together in the classroom. Find any work of art – it could be an illustration in a picture book, a historical photograph that relates to your social studies lesson, or a mural on the side of your school building. Follow this structure for looking at the art:

- Have the students sit quietly and look carefully at the work of art for at least 30 seconds.
 - After 10 seconds, you may offer prompts such as “start at the top and let your eyes work their way down to the bottom,” “look carefully at what’s in the corners,” or “look carefully at what’s in the center.”
- Ask, “What do you notice?”
 - Call on one student to point out something they notice in the art.
- Ask, “What do you see that makes you say that?”
 - Ask that same student to describe why they said what they did. (For example, “It looks like clouds because the shapes are fluffy and layered.”)
 - Paraphrase what the student said – this is a good opportunity to incorporate target vocabulary, make connections with other learning or what other students said, and check for understanding.
- Ask, “What more can we find?”
 - Call on another student to point out something they notice, and repeat the process, asking them to describe their reasoning.
- Repeat until at least 5 students have had the chance to share something they noticed. If you would like to give additional information about the work of art (such as historical context or some information about the artist), do so at the end.

Some of our programs also have pre- and post-visit lesson plans available on our website.

Art-making

Your program includes approximately one hour of art-making. Our studio time is driven by the Studio Thinking framework, which emphasizes student voice and agency during the creative process, and the cultivation of the Studio Habits of Mind. Five different art-making stations are set up around the room; students can move between the stations as they wish. Each program has a slightly different prompt, which students are free to interpret in whatever way feels best to them.

- How Artists Create/Tools of Expression: create a work of art about something in your life
- Seeing Stories: create a work of art that tells a story
- Our Northwest Home: create a work of art about your community
- People & Places: create a work of art about a significant moment in history

We encourage students to pursue their own ideas and think creatively during the art-making time; perfection is not required, and is in fact discouraged. However, time restraints and the desire to make “good art” can produce a stressful environment for some students.

Often, there is not enough time for students to finish their artwork or for all students to share with the class about their art. It may be a good idea for you to set aside some time in the classroom later that day for students to finish or share their projects.

After Your Program

If you reserved a lunch space for your group, you will be assigned to eat in one of our classroom spaces or in our larger Event Space, depending on the size of your group and space availability. The classroom has tables and chairs; in the Event Space, you will sit on the floor. Please be respectful of the room and clean up after yourselves. If you did not reserve a lunch space, we suggest that you take your group across the street to Tollefson Plaza to eat lunch.

If you requested free exploration time in the museum after your program, please make sure that your students stay with their assigned chaperones as they explore. Groups engaging in free exploration should have a chaperone ratio of 1 chaperone per 5 students. Remember the guidelines for museum behavior:

- Look at art with your eyes, not your hands. The oils in our hands can damage artwork.
- Use walking feet in the museum.
- Use inside voices.
- Stay with your group. Students should be within approximately 10 feet of their chaperones, and within eyesight of chaperones, at all times.
- Be respectful of the building and facilities. This includes not jumping in the elevator, being careful around barriers, leaving areas clean, etc.