

## **Appendix B: How to Analyze a Piece of Art**

### **In the Title**

List the basic information of the piece: artist's name, title, date, medium, size, and location.

Examples:

Botticelli, *Primavera*, 1482. Tempera on wood, 80 × 124 in. Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Michelangelo, *David*, 1504. Marble, 17 ft. Piazza della Signoria, Florence.

Ustad Lahauri, *Taj Mahal*, 1653. Mausoleum, 240 ft. Agra, India.

Edvard Grieg, "In the Hall of the Mountain King," 1876. Theatre score, 2:41.

### **In the Introductory Paragraph**

- What immediately catches your eye?
- What is the subject matter (what's happening in the artwork)?
- Is there a message? How is that message communicated to the viewer (briefly)?

### **Analysis of Technique**

- Is the style and technique helping accomplish the artist's intent? Why or why not?
- *Specific to paintings/drawings:*
  - Where is the light coming from in the painting/drawing and how is it used?
  - What is the perspective of the painting/drawing and how is that significant?
- *Specific to sculptures:*
  - Setting: Was it mounted on a pedestal? Set on top a building? In a public square?
  - Space: How big is it? Was it meant to be seen from one perspective only?
- *Specific to architecture:*
  - What holds up the building? What is the roof like (flat, domed, etc.)?
  - How is the building lit? How is it decorated?
- *Specific to music:*
  - Instrumentation: What instruments are used and how are they used?
  - If lyrics: How do the lyrics and the tune fit together to send the message?
  - If no lyrics: How does the artist use melody, tempo, or harmony?

### **Historical Context**

- What was happening in the artist's life during the time the composition was made? *or* What was happening during this time period? *and* How does that relate to the artwork?
- Who was the intended audience for this artwork (be as specific as possible)?
- Compare this artwork with one other piece composed within 50 years of its creation.
- What does this painting tell us about the time and place where it was made? Can we deduce anything about the values of this civilization? What was important to them?

### **Interpretation:**

- What was the artist's intention with creating this work? Did he or she succeed?
- How does the artwork make you feel? What is your reaction to it? Why do you react so?
- Critical Judgment: Is it good; is it true; is it beautiful? Why or why not?