

STEP INSIDE

A routine for getting inside viewpoints

Some core questions that can guide students in this routine are:

1. What does the person or thing *see, observe, or notice*?
2. What might the person or thing *know, understand, hold true or believe*?
3. What might the person or thing *care deeply about*?
4. What might the person or thing *wonder and/or question*?

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine helps students to explore different perspectives and viewpoints as they try to imagine things, events, problems, or issues differently. In some cases this can lead to a more creative understanding of what is being studied. For instance, imagining oneself as the numerator in a fraction. In other settings, exploring different viewpoints can open up possibilities for further creative exploration. For example, following this activity a student might write a poem from the perspective of a soldier's sword left on the battlefield.

Application: When and where can it be used?

This routine asks students to step inside the role of a character or object—from a picture they are looking at, a story they have read, an element in a work of art, an historical event being discussed, and so on—and to imagine themselves inside that point of view. Students are asked to then speak or write from that chosen point of view. This routine works well when you want students to open up their thinking and look at things differently. It can be used as an initial kind of problem solving brainstorm that opens up a topic, issue, or item. It can also be used to help make abstract concepts, pictures, or events come more to life for students.

Launch: What are some tips for starting and using the routine?

In getting started with the routine the teacher might invite students to look at an image and ask them to generate a list of the various perspectives or points of view embodied in that picture. Students then choose a particular point of view to embody or talk from, saying what they see, how they interpret the situation, what they value and wonder about. Sometimes students might state their perspective before talking. Other times, they may not and then the class could guess which perspective they are speaking from. In their speaking and writing, students may well go beyond these starter questions. Encourage them to take on the character of the thing they have chosen and talk about what they are experiencing. Students can improvise a brief spoken or written monologue, taking on this point of view, or students can work in pairs with each student asking questions that help their partner stay in character and draw out his or her point of view.

This routine is adapted from Debra Wise, *Art Works for Schools: A Curriculum for Teaching Thinking In and Through the Arts* (2002) DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, the President and Fellows of Harvard College and the Underground Railway Theater.