

The New York City Writing Project developed this protocol for creating a gallery walk.

**NEW YORK CITY WRITING PROJECT
Institute for Literacy Studies
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Creating and Implementing a Gallery Walk

Preparation and implementation:

1. Gather a broad range of print and visual materials related to a topic. Include several of the following: poems, photographs, relevant quotations, maps, artifacts, graphs and charts, short stories, essays, primary source documents, cartoons, music, reproductions of paintings, editorials, newspaper/magazine articles, film or video clips.
2. Display the various texts around the classroom. Display options:
 1. juxtapose text with image
 2. place works side by side that are connected by theme or topic
 3. set up sharp contrasts between visuals
 4. scatter materials around the entire space
 5. set up “stations” for particular materials.
3. Prepare students with a general introduction to the topic. For example, ask students to do some informal writing on the topic of the gallery walk to ascertain what the class knows and feels about the topic and what questions they have. Share student writing orally so students can pool their knowledge; record their responses on newsprint/the blackboard.
4. Provide time for students to observe the items in the gallery and take notes. In response to the materials, students may:
 1. jot down observations
 2. record reactions
 3. raise questions
 4. identify themes and threads.

Students can travel independently or in small groups, pausing for a given period of time at particular “stations.” This browsing and jotting time is flexible, depending on the teacher’s goals and/or the length of the instructional period.

5. Provide the class with 5 to 10 minutes of writing time after the gallery walk. Students might write in response to specific prompts the teacher provides or simply be asked to write about their main impressions and questions after looking at the various texts. These writings (or sections of them) can be read orally to the whole class or in small groups. This sharing can generate a class list of questions that will inform the unit as well as inspire individual research.

Possible follow-up activities:

If you want students to engage more deeply with both visuals and printed texts, you can structure a variety of responses:

- a. Students might be asked to focus on one visual that interests them from the display. Students should jot down their impressions of the work and then discuss these visuals in small groups. (Note: You may need to model “how” to read a visual text. Ask students to describe what they see, venture interpretations about what the artist or photographer may have had in mind, and raise questions about the image. Modeling should be done with the whole class prior to students working on their own.)
- b. To have students read texts in greater depth, they can select a text on display to read, respond to and discuss in small groups. You might bring in additional texts of greater length and complexity and ask them to choose one for response and discussion.
- c. You may want students to select both a visual and a printed text from the gallery walk. After responding individually to each of their selected documents, students work in small groups discussing the visuals and printed texts they selected.

Note: You may want to design the small group work as a jigsaw activity. In this way, you need to arrange it so that there will be two rounds of small groups. In the first round, students who read and responded to the same printed text meet in a small group to share their reactions and/or interpretations. This can be followed by a second round of groups in which each student has read a different text. Here the purpose would be for students to broaden their understanding of the topic by learning about the content of the other texts read.

Things you need to consider in designing a gallery walk:

1. What is the purpose of the gallery walk? Is it to introduce, develop or conclude the study of a topic/book? How much time do you want students to spend with these particular texts? Do you plan on working with these texts again?
2. Give yourself a lot of time to find material. Look in your school library and online for quick access to pictures and texts.
3. In selecting material, you want both range and balance. Consider a mix of genres as well as a multiplicity of voices and perspectives.
4. Ask yourself, “What is missing? Whose voice or perspective is not here?”
5. Do you want students to contribute material?
6. Consider the space where you will hold the gallery walk. How will you set it up? How much time, prior to class, will you need to set it up? Can you leave it up during the periods you are not in the room?
7. Do you want to provide a worksheet for responding to the work?