

# Buy, Burn, Steal

Use this fun activity to get students thinking about their personal preferences in art, to support students in forming and sharing their opinions, and to get students to defend their claims with evidence.

**Time:** 5-10 mins

**Materials:**

- Selection of 4-5 different artworks that the entire group can see.
- Choose from our [online collection](#)

**Preparation:**

Put students at ease by reminding them that there are no wrong answers when sharing their opinions about art.

Choose a selection of artworks that you know will create a robust discussion-you know your students best!

**Steps:**

1. Display the artwork around the room, share it on the screen, or some other way that all students can see the available works.
2. Remind students that when it comes to art, there are no wrong answers! Students can think and feel whatever they want, and they can be right, as long as they can defend their ideas.
3. Give students some silent time to just look at the art and silently form their opinions.
4. Then, invite students to consider which painting(s) they would:
  - a. **Buy:** Which painting do you really like, and would hang in your home? Where would you hang it? Why?
  - b. **Burn:** Which painting do you *hate*? This painting is so awful to you that you would burn it up so you never have to look at it again. What do you hate about it? Could Clyfford Still have done anything different to make you like it?
  - c. **Steal:** Which painting do you love so much that you have to have right now, and you would steal it? What would you do with it afterwards? Why do you like it so much?
5. Ask for volunteers to share out their picks and why. Ask probing questions like “What do you see that makes you say that?” or “What did Clyfford Still do to make you notice that?” to encourage students to provide evidence for their interpretations.
6. Pay special attention when students have vastly differing opinions on the same artwork-how exciting! Invite students to wonder how two people can look at the same work and have such different interpretations.
7. Depending on time, you could wrap up the activity after a group share out, or extend it:
  - a. Ask students to vote for their opinion on a contested painting. Encourage students from all sides to make arguments for their positions, and then vote again to see if any students changed their minds.
  - b. Have students find a partner or group of students with a different opinion than their own. Encourage students to listen closely to each other to understand the other's perspective.