

INTERACTIVE TECHNIQUES

Active participation and exchanges of information
make experiences more memorable and meaningful.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Why ask questions?

Questions encourage your visitors to look more carefully at an artifact.

A question will result in interaction between you and the visitors, or among themselves.

A question can connect prior knowledge to an understanding of new information.

Open-Ended Questions

- Can be answered regardless of a visitor's knowledge base.
- Can be used to encourage dialogue or responses that engage the audience.

The way a question is phrased can promote audience participation, OR it can make visitors feel trapped and uncomfortable. The best questions in our museum setting are usually ones that have obvious, easy answers, or that have no wrong answers.

Poor examples:

Does anyone know how to spell Bodhisattva?

Can anyone pronounce Jingdezhen?

Why is this type of art called *plein air*?

Appropriate examples:

Do any of you know where porcelain originated or why we call it china?

What color usually comes to mind when you think of jade?

What is the first thing you notice about this object?

How does this object make you feel?

COMPARISONS

- Help to keep the audience actively involved.
- Help the audience retain information.

Poor example:

Can anyone tell me how the Ming Dynasty was different from the Qing Dynasty?

Appropriate examples:

Does anybody remember the shape of the *bi*? Do you see the same shape in this mirror?

This food bowl was used only for special ceremonies. Does your family have a bowl or plate that you use for special occasions?

OBSERVATIONS

- Help direct visitors' attention to specific details of the artifacts.
- Involve the audience in looking, thinking, responding.

Poor example:

Can anyone tell me the difference between a Bactrian camel and a Dromedary camel?

Appropriate examples:

What kind of animal is depicted in this burial piece? How many humps do you see?

What do you think is happening in this painting?

Both of these works of art represent a wooded landscape. In what ways are they different?