

CREATIVE WRITING

Writing is a fun way to test your imagination, but finding something to write about can be challenging. To kickstart your creative process, let's take a look at *The Game of Knucklebones* by French painter Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin. This painting was made 286 years ago and features a young woman playing a game called knucklebones, which is very similar to the game we now call jacks.

In this activity, we will use visual clues in the painting to write a story about the young woman in it.

MATERIALS

pen or pencil, paper

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Look closely at the painting and write down five details that stand out to you. Use these to guess what kind of work the woman does.

HINT

The artist has painted some areas in a lighter shade than other areas. Use these as clues!



Watch this video to help find the hidden clues in the painting: artbma.org/chardin

- 2 After looking closely at the painting and watching the video, what did you notice? Can you guess what kind of work the woman does?

HINT

Did you notice the following clues?

- Her apron
- The two pins hidden in her apron on the right side
- The scissors and the red ribbon
- The knucklebones on top of the table
- The ball she's throwing into the air



Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin (French, 1699-1779). *The Game of Knucklebones*. c. 1734. Oil on canvas. 32 1/4 x 25 13/16 in. (81.9 x 65.6 cm.). The Baltimore Museum of Art: The Mary Frick Jacobs Collection, BMA 1938.193

- 3 Now that you have studied the painting and picked up on all the clues, use your imagination to write a story about the young woman and the game she is playing. Add the details from the list you made in Step 1 and keep the following questions in mind to develop the character while writing your story:

- Does the young woman have a name?
If so, what is it?
- How is she feeling: happy, excited, or sad?
- Is she having fun?
- Did she catch the ball in the air? Is she playing by herself or with someone else just out of view?
- Where do you think she is playing the game?
At home, a friend's house, or perhaps at work?

When you've finished writing your story, share it with a family member or friend!



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We'd love to see your work! Snap a picture of your final creation and share with us on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter using the hashtag #ArtBMAFromHome for a chance to be featured.

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