LIVING PICTURES

Slowing down to closely study and describe a work of art can produce surprising results. Translated from French, tableaux vivant means 'living pictures.'

This activity can be done with several students. Pick one "model" and the rest can be "artists." Find objects around your house that can be used as props.

Ask the model to stand facing the group. The artists will describe in detail how the fencer is posed, starting with the feet and moving up to the facial expression. Give the model directions on how to achieve a similar pose.

Ask the model to freeze in the final pose for one minute. Ask him or her how they feel in that pose.

What did everyone discover through this exercise?

Fun Fact: One of the foils, a single glove, and the face mask shown in the painting are in the museum's collection.
WHICH VERSION DO YOU LIKE AND WHY?

The Fencing Master, 1895, Detroit Institute of Arts

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