

# Protecting Art for Future Generations

**Grades/Level:**

Lower Elementary (K-2), Upper Elementary (3-5), Middle School (6-8), High School (9-12)

**Subject:** Visual Arts**Time Required:** Short activity no more than 20 minutes**Author:** J. Paul Getty Education Staff**Website:** [The Getty](#)**Activity Overview**

It's only natural for visitors to want to touch works of art. Usually, they don't realize that damage results when many individuals touch objects, even if they do it very gently.

**Learning Objectives**

Students repeatedly touch a piece of paper, and then examine it for evidence of dirt and damage to learn they should not touch works of art.

**Materials**

Two ordinary pieces of white paper, about 4"x5". You may add the student handout: "Please Don't Touch!"

**Activity Steps**

1. Take two pieces of ordinary white paper and pass one of them around the classroom. Ask each student to rub the piece of paper between their fingers for a moment before passing it along.
2. After everyone touches the paper, have students compare it to the piece that was not passed around.
3. Discuss how much dirt and oil are on the sheet that students touched, and how these residues can damage works of art. Tell students that thousands of people visit art centers and art galleries and art museums every day. Speculate on what the paper might look like if thousands of people had touched it. Use their comments as a springboard to discuss the importance of preserving art for future generations. Question them as to why it is important to preserve works of art?
4. Ask students if they can think of other important rules when visiting an art center an art center, an art gallery or an art museums. Be sure to address the following rules during the discussion:
  - No food, gum or drinks
  - Pencils are allowed but no pens
  - No cameras are allowed during the Guided Visit but cameras without flash are OK after the tour. Flash damages the fragile materials in works of art much like the sun can discolor an item if it is left outside too long.
  - Stay with your group
  - Use indoor voices inside the galleries
  - Have fun!