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# Activity Guide

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## Art Dog

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### ABOUT THE STORY

Arthur Dog is a guard at the Dogopolis Art Museum. By day he guards famous paintings, but at night he becomes Art Dog, painter, creating masterpieces on walls and fences all over town. One night, a painting is stolen from the museum. At first, Art Dog is a suspect, but he escapes from jail, zooms off in his Brushmobile, and offers him a show of his own work at the museum, but instead, Art Dog paints a masterpiece in the sky.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Thatcher Hurd is the son of two well-known children's book writers and illustrators. He has written more than fifteen books, one of which, *Mama Don't Allow*, won the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for illustration. He lives in Berkeley, California with his wife, where they run a children's greeting card publishing company.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they have ever been to an art museum. Have those who have describe the experience and any paintings they especially liked. Explain that this book is about a dog that works at an art museum.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### **Comprehension/Thinking Skills**

- "What does Arthur do when the moon is full?"
- "What name does Arthur use to sign his paintings?"
- "Which painting do the art thieves steal?"
- "How does Art Dog escape from jail?"
- "What does Art Dog do for his show?"
- "Why do you think that Arthur doesn't want people to know he is Art Dog?" (Draw conclusions)
- "What did you like best about Art Dog's paintings?" (Respond)

### Vocabulary

Have the children match each vocabulary word with its definitions.

_____ seldom	a. a place where ships dock
_____ glisten	b. a building to store items
_____ alley	c. not often
_____ port	d. to glow or glitter
_____ warehouse	e. people who commit crimes
_____ crooks	f. a narrow, dead-end road

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### **Art: The Real Thing**

Find reproductions of some of the paintings on the art museum's walls, such as the *Mona Lisa*, *American Gothic*, and paintings by Picasso, Vermeer, and Seurat. Encourage children to compare them to the paintings at Arthur's museum. Discuss how the artist changes at Arthur's museum. Discuss how the art changes them and why the paintings in the book are funny.

#### **Language Arts: News Flash**

Have children write a newspaper article about the theft at the museum. Encourage them to include answer to these questions: What happened? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Who did it? How was it done?

#### **Social Studies: Life of da Vinci**

Divide children into groups, and provide them with information about the life of Leonardo da Vinci, the artist who painted the *Mona Lisa*. Groups can find out about and report on aspects of da Vinci's life: where he lived, his education, and the art he produced.

#### **Art: Create a Painting**

Have children choose a famous painting to copy. They can make their copies funny as the illustrator did, by changing the painting's subjects into a dog. Hang the finished paintings in a Dog Gallery.

### INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

#### **Art on the Net**

Encourage children to visit the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy, to view paintings by master painters at <http://www.arca.net/uffizi/index/htm>. Students can view paintings by the artist Vermeer at <http://www.ccsf.caltech.edu/~roy/vermeer>.