Skills: Picture analysis – putting somebody into the picture about a painting

1. The three steps of analysis

Step 1:
- List the facts: the painter, the year it was painted in,
  its size, who commissioned it
- Say what it shows.

Step 2:
- Describe the important details in the picture (using the present tense): *In the centre there is …* The description must
  be good enough for somebody who has not seen the painting to be able to imagine it.

The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth (1914) by Jennie A. Brownscombe
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/Thanksgiving-Brownscombe.jpg

Step 3
- Say what the effect the picture creates and say what its message might be. Make sure you always give the reasons for what you are saying e.g.: *Because of the dark colours there is an atmosphere of fear, but there is also some sign of hope because there is a little rainbow in the background.*

2. What you should remember about historical paintings:

Historical paintings ….
- were often painted many years after the historic event had taken place.
- might not represent how it really was but more how it could / should have been.
- carry a certain message → e. g. that the event was heroic.
- often tell us more about the time when it was made rather than about the event they present.

3. Vocabulary:

Localizations:	
- at the top - in the top left-hand corner - on the left - in the lower part - in the centre - in the foreground - at the bottom - in the bottom right-hand corner - on the right - in the upper part - in the background **Assessing the picture:** - The picture shows … - The picture refers to …	- The picture was commissioned by … - The character stands for / represents … - The character is shown in a realistic way / unrealistic way / in an exaggerated manner. - The picture is favourable / unfavourable. - The picture is a good example of what life was like in the 17th century. - The picture was painted two centuries after the event it depicts. - What we see is actually only pretence / make-believe. - What actually happened was very different from what the picture shows. - the picture is a fabrication / fraud / fake. - This picture is a good historical source that helps us understand what the city looked like back then.