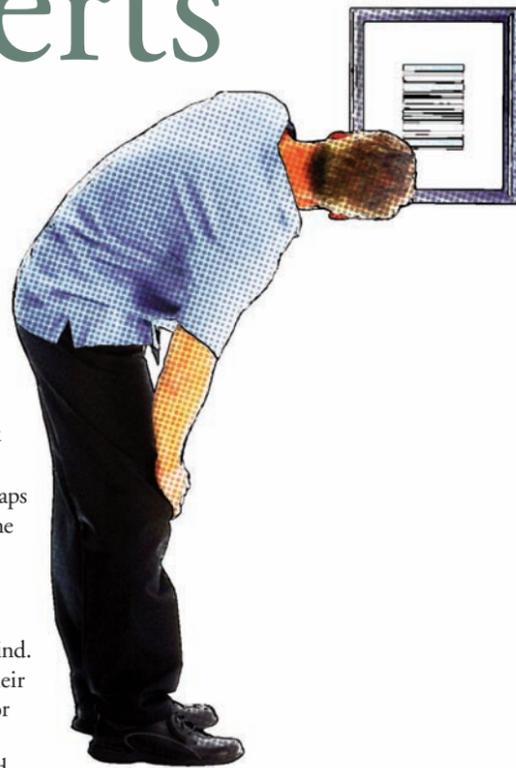


Ask the Experts

In a recent survey of randomly selected alumni, we learned readers want to hear from University experts in the pages of the magazine. So we asked a variety of faculty and staff from throughout the University to offer five tips of practical advice based on their areas of expertise. And there's more to come. Starting in the fall issue, "Ask the Experts" will be a regular item in the news section of the magazine.

Looking at Paintings in a Museum

- **Have a Plan of Action.** Check the museum's website before you go. Many museums have downloadable maps and lots of online information about the artists and artworks you plan to see.
- **Travel Light.** Wear comfortable shoes, and leave whatever you can behind. (Many museums don't let you into their galleries with a backpack, a big purse, or an umbrella. Some don't allow strollers, either). If possible, check your coat and any heavy objects.
- **Avoid Crowds by Going Early or Late.** Museums are usually quietest at the very beginning of the day and at the very end. When museums have evening hours, that is usually the very best time to go. Even when shows are popular and packed with visitors, you can often slip in during the last 30 to 45 minutes of the day. Such quick, focused visits can be practical and fun.
- **Take Your Time and Make Yourself Comfortable.** Even when you do have a large block of time, don't try to see the whole museum in one visit. Pick a room of works. A painting can take months, even years, to make; looking at a single work for at least 15 minutes allows you to see the technical skill that went into it, and to discern the subtle images and ideas the artist worked to convey. If there is a chair or bench nearby, grab a seat. You can even sit on the floor.



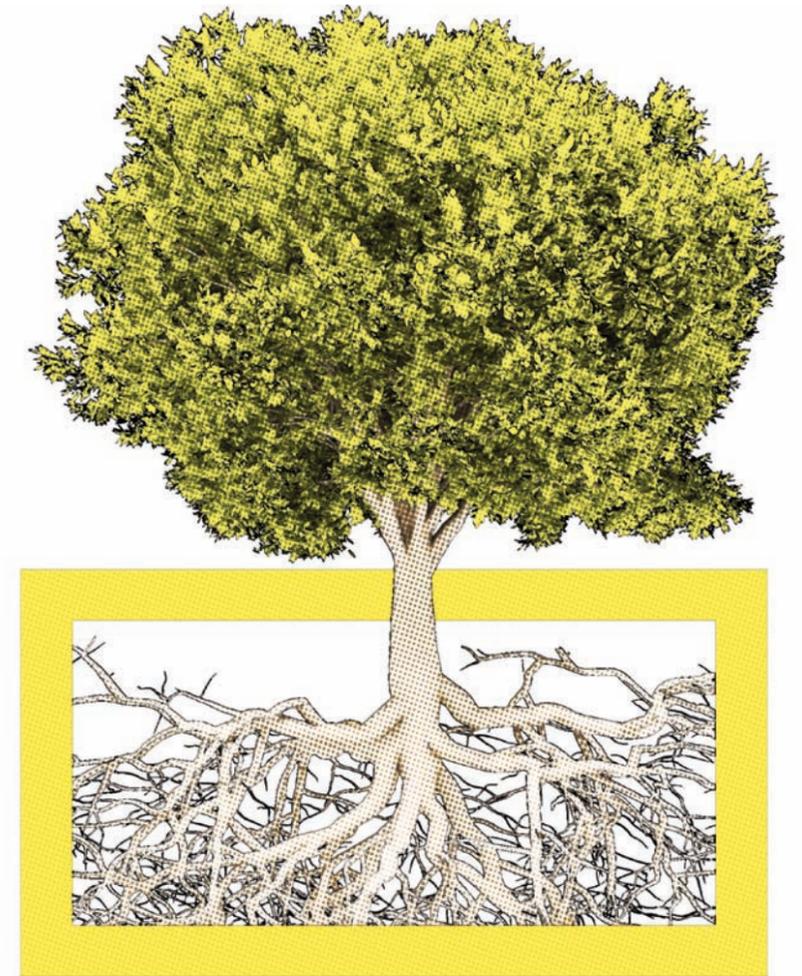
- **Change Your Point of View.** Look at your chosen paintings up close, from a distance, and from every angle that you can. From a distance, notice the most prominent elements in the composition, the use of color in general terms, and the sense of spatial recession. Then get as close as you can without making the guards nervous. Consider how the artist put the paint on the surface. Observe whether the brush strokes are thick or thin, if they look like they were applied quickly or slowly, expressively or in a delicate way. In looking at a picture from the side (a "raking angle"), you can see whether or not the paint is built-up thickly, like toothpaste. The technical term for this is "impasto." Viewing from different perspectives can give you a sense of the artist's actual touch on the painting's surface, and can reveal the sensitivity, spontaneity, and deliberation of the artist's hand at work.

— Nora Heimann, associate professor and chair, Department of Art

Taking Better Photographs

- **Be Aware of the Light.** Whether you are using a cell phone or an expensive digital camera, lighting is key. Keep the sun at your back outside, and bright window light behind you inside. Early-morning and late-afternoon sunlight is always best for outdoor shots.
- **Get Closer.** A major mistake amateur photographers make is being too far from what they want to photograph. Fill the frame with the subject. Busy backgrounds distract from the purpose of your picture. When using a flash, remember it will only travel about 10 feet effectively.
- **Change Angles.** Don't be afraid to bend those knees. If taking pictures of kids and pets, get on their level. If taking a large group photo, elevate yourself to see everybody clearly. For outdoor landscapes, angles can give you dramatic differences.
- **Be Patient.** If you stumble upon an inspiring scene with nice lighting, wait for something great to happen. Moments happen quickly so you have to be prepared. If you don't like the lighting at a given moment, you may be surprised at how quickly it can change.
- **Practice.** The best camera is the one you have with you. You can't take too many shots of an important event. Memory cards are cheap. Remember to save all those pictures on your computer, burn a CD, or, better yet, make a few prints or a book. The next generation will thank you.

— Ed Pfueller, University photographer



Researching Your Family Tree

- **Have Specific Goals.** What do you want to find out? Are you trying to determine health risks based on ancestry, prove a connection to a notable person, seek a detailed pedigree, or locate a particular geographic or ethnic origin?
- **Talk to Your Family.** Consulting immediate family members, especially grandparents or great aunts and uncles, can be very rewarding. Ask them about their parents and grandparents. See if there is a family Bible with information recorded therein. Note any family traditions or notable stories.
- **Document Your Sources.** View original sources like census records and newspaper obituaries by visiting a public library or historical society and consider

joining an online genealogy provider like Ancestry.com. Some services are free while many require payment for access or hiring of a professional genealogist.

- **Allow Yourself Sufficient Time.** Research can be both time consuming and addictive, which is the reason many wait until retirement to do it. Consider working in stages, with periods of intensive research followed by an adequate review to ensure the information gathered so far is consistent and accurate.
- **Expect the Unexpected.** Family members often get their "facts" wrong or obfuscate matters to avoid a real or potential family scandal. Sometimes, the original records have mistaken names or dates. Be patient and don't be surprised by anything. You may find or even solve a family mystery.

— W. J. Shepherd, associate archivist

Finding the Right Music Teacher for Your Child

- **Ask about Credentials and**

Qualifications. A well qualified teacher has a love of teaching and not just a love of musical performance. A degree in music or certification from a professional organization can be good indicators of an instructor's commitment to teaching. Certification in Orff Schulwerk, Kodaly, Suzuki, or Gordon's Music Learning Theory approach can all indicate a teacher with knowledge of learning theory and varied learning styles.

- **Consider Personal Traits.**

Interpersonal skills, common sense, and emotional sensitivity are important for finding a music teacher who is the right fit for your child. Most good music teachers are happy to provide a trial lesson period to see how these important factors come into play.

- **Look for a Balance.** Ask about the teacher's preferred teaching methods and materials. Along with playing or singing, the lessons should also include time for exercises in reading and writing, composing, improvising, playing games, and simple movement in order to teach rhythm and other musical concepts.

- **Evaluate the Environment.** Many music teachers equip and maintain a teaching studio in their homes or schools. Other music teachers (often beginning teachers) travel to your home. Convenience, particularly for working parents, may be an attractive factor for selecting a traveling teacher. On the other hand, lack of distractions as well as access to enrichment materials (i.e., visual aids, computer programs, and the like) may make it worthwhile to travel to a music teacher's studio.

- **Think About Expectations.**

How much practice time is expected? Is recital participation an expectation and, if so, how often do recitals occur? Does your child want to just have fun with music, supplement a school program, or is there a desire to become a professional musician? Or perhaps all of the above? Find a music teacher who is willing to offer support in line with your desired outcomes.

— *Michael Smith,*
associate professor
and head of the Music
Education Division



Increasing Your Child's Safety on the Internet

- **Be Engaged.** Parents can be intimidated by the online world and resist it, thus letting their children surpass them in knowledge, ability, and risk. Alternatively, parents can so severely limit their children's online activity out of fear that their children don't have the opportunity to learn to use the Internet responsibly. Parents must be engaged in the online world — how it works, its risks, and its challenges — just as they are in all other aspects of their children's lives. Inquire into what they are doing online and join them in some of their online activities. When we respect their interests, they are more likely to respect our rules.

- **Keep Lines of Communication**

Open. Do not have one big lecture on Internet safety, but endless teachable moments on how to behave online. That way our children may be more secure coming to us when unsure how to respond to something uncomfortable that is unfolding online.

- **The "Rules" are the Same On and Offline.** Don't teach children "digital citizenship" separately from good

citizenship. Children do not separate their offline world from their online world and neither should we. They should be taught that the rules of how we treat others and expect to be treated emotionally, physically, reputationally, and romantically apply both offline and online. Help children recognize negative behaviors such as bullying (aimed at themselves or others) or grooming (when a predator nurtures a friendship to gain the child's trust and then breaks down the child's inhibitions) and know how to respond.

- **Take Charge and Monitor.**

Research devices that you bring into your home. Set some ground rules for your children such as when they can go online, where they can go, how many text messages they can send, etc. Supervise what they are doing online just as you would offline.

- **Understand the Risks.** There are many resources available to parents, such as:

www.netfamilynews.com
www.netsmartz.org
www.ikeepSAFE.org

A comprehensive list of resources can be found at www.connectsafely.com. These should be continually revisited to stay current on contemporary risks to children.

— *Mary Leary, associate professor of law*

Climbing the Ladder of Success

- **Be a Good Listener.**

Be patient, open minded, and don't jump to conclusions. Listen to a whole discussion. If you understand a matter from the other person's point of view, you will be better able to defend your point of view. Listening is a skill. Practice it.

- **Hone Your Social Skills.**

Remember names and details of people you meet. People are impressed when you remember details about their family. Maybe they mentioned their child is visiting colleges, so when you meet again, ask if they made a choice. Learn proper etiquette in social situations, particularly business meals and receptions.

- **Invest in Your Appearance.** It's

hard to justify a large clothes budget when you're starting out with bills and school loans to pay. Consider clothing an investment in your future. You spent tens of thousands of dollars on an education to get here, so capitalize on that investment. For Christmas or graduation, forgo the latest electronic gadget and ask friends and family to contribute to your "professional wardrobe fund."

- **Network, Network, and Network Some More.**

It is essential to create and nurture a lifelong network of contacts. It is so much easier today with social media tools like LinkedIn, Google +, and Facebook. But the handwritten note is a lost art. Rediscover it and set yourself miles apart from the email crowd. Invest in note cards with your name on them that are simple, elegant, and professional.

- **Develop Lifelong Mentors.**

We all need a guiding hand, an objective mirror, and a moral compass. When you outgrow mentors, you stop growing. Choose wisely and let them know how much you value their advice and guidance.

— *Stewart McHie, program director,*
Master of Science in Business Analysis

