

Hang the art card of each focus piece in your room during the week of the study. When the week is over, keep the art cards in a book.

Students enjoy further review of selections learned. The completed book will give opportunities for further study and enjoyment of the artwork.

Primary School Summary of Major Art Movements

It would prove a difficult task to produce a timeline of art history including major periods, movements and dates that all historians agreed upon. Each century produced multiple styles and movements within the art culture; each of which could be studied for a lifetime. The list below details 10 major art movements that will serve as a foundation for a study of art in primary school.

1. Renaissance (1400-1520)
2. Baroque (1600-1700)
3. Rococo (1700-1775)
4. Neoclassicism (1765-1820)
5. Romanticism (1790-1850)
6. Realism (1850-1900)
7. Impressionism (1870-1900)
8. Post Impressionism (1880-1905)
9. Art Nouveau (1890-1914)
10. Modern Art (including but not limited to Fauvism, Cubism, Naïve Painting, Expressionism) (1900-present)

Renaissance (1400-1520)

The Renaissance (meaning “rebirth”) began in Italy in the 15th century. A resurgence of ancient Greek and Roman cultural standards and a new attitude of scientific observation produced more realistic, three-dimensional portrayal of objects and figures using perspective. Oil paints became available and provided the opportunity for artists to experiment with color and detail.

Common characteristics:

- three-dimensional perspective – (appearance of distant objects to observer)
- realistic portrayal of subject
- use of oil paint
- attention to detail
- frequent subject matter - religious or mythological scenes
- Well-known Renaissance artists: da Vinci, Raphael, Durer, Bruegel

Baroque (1600-1700)

The Baroque style began in Rome with ties to contemporary religious events. The Baroque style was encouraged by the Catholic Church in support of the Counter-Reformation, serving as propaganda against the Protestant Reformation. Baroque art in its purest form was produced only in Catholic countries. However, elements of the style appeared in Protestant countries as well.

Common characteristics:

- portrayal of intense emotion
- sense of movement
- dramatic lighting
- ornate, grandiose paintings
- frequent subject matter – religious or mythological scenes, portraits, scenes of “everyday life”, landscape
- Well-known Baroque artists: Carravaggio, Vermeer, Rembrandt

Rococo (1700-1775)

The Baroque style melded into Rococo in the early 18th century. Rococo began in France and superseded Baroque in its lavish adornment and decorative elements. The term Rococo, derived from a French term for ornamentation with rocks and pebbles, was first used as a humorous barb mocking the perceived triviality of the style.

Common characteristics:

- emphasis on elegance
- ornamental, decorative approach to subject
- similar themes as Baroque period but in a more lighthearted manner
- frequent subject matter – mythological scenes, scenes focused on love and romance, lush park-like settings
- Well-known Rococo artists: Gainsborough, Watteau, Tiepolo

Neoclassicism (1765-1820)

The Neoclassical style was inspired by the classical art of Greece and Rome. Archeological discoveries in Rome and Pompeii helped birth and spread this movement. Neoclassicism can be described as a reaction to the frivolous tone popular in art during the Rococo period, however the styles overlap somewhat.

Common characteristics:

- emphasis on order and clarity
- elements of noble grandeur
- used as a vehicle to promote political ideals, rational thought
- frequent subject matter – Greek and Roman history/literature/myth, portraits, landscapes, political and social events of the time
- Well-known Neoclassical artist: J.L. David

Romanticism (1790-1850)

Romanticism was, in part, a reaction to the Neoclassical movement. The Romantic period began in France and was marked by a spirit of rebellion, growing from seeds planted by the French Revolution. It focused on the imagination and the emotions. A distinctive creation of the Romantic period was landscape paintings in which forces of nature were given supernatural significance.

Common characteristics:

- themes tied to supernatural, mystical ideas
- distinctive form of landscape painting
- frequent subject matter – chivalrous tales, historical/legendary scenes, subjects with political overtones
- Well-known Romantic artists: Goya, Constable, Delacroix, J.M.W. Turner

Realism (1850-1900)

Realism also began in France and indicated a distinct break from artistic tradition. Though hardly revolutionary by today's standards, realist painters received much scorn and contempt for their work. Scenes depicting common life, unexciting figures and the hardship of labor were in sharp contrast to idealized forms and grandiose scenes of academic art.

Common characteristics:

- naturalistic depictions, accurate reproductions rather than interpretations
- nearly photographic clarity
- common subject matter – peasants, labor, rural life
- Well-known Realist artists: Courbet, Millet

Impressionism (1870-1900)

The Impressionist movement originated and reached its fullest point in France. The Impressionists drew inspiration from Realist painters in their rejection of the influence of academic art. Other sources of inspiration were Japanese art (bold colors) and the development of the camera (with its casual approach to composition of a picture). The Impressionists began with the aim of capturing the effects of light. To this end, they worked quickly - employing short, choppy brushstrokes and condensing items to their simplest visual form. Critics of the time said the works looked unfinished and the subject matter was meaningless.

Common characteristics:

- visible brushstrokes, bold colors
- subject matter viewed as less important, only a vehicle for displaying effects of light and shadow
- plein-air (outdoor) painting – completing entire pictures on the spot
- frequent subject matter – daily life in and around Paris
- Well-known Impressionists: Monet, Pissarro, Renior, Cassatt

Postimpressionism (1885-1905)

The Postimpressionist movement was an extension of Impressionism. The term postimpressionism refers to a period of artistic originality rather than any particular group of artists. They pushed beyond the simple focus on surface appearance and sought to express emotion, personal and spiritual ideas.

Common characteristics:

- artistic experimentation
- emphasis on geometric shapes
- radical use of color, brushstroke
- varied style and subject matter
- Well-known Postimpressionists: Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh, Cezanne

Art Nouveau (1890-1914)

Art Nouveau was an international art movement that served a decorative function in the final decades of the 19th century. The name comes from a shop in Paris, so the movement was consequently know by other names in other parts of Europe. Art Nouveau made its biggest mark in the applied arts (glassware, ironworks, posters). It was the first artistic style to be promoted by mass communications.

Common characteristics:

- highly stylized, flowing lines
- organic, plant-inspired motifs
- Well-known Art Nouveau artists: L.C. Tiffany, Toulouse-Lautrec

Modern Art (1900-present)

The 20th century brought complete change in the art world. A flurry of movements followed the turn of the century – movements that rejected naturalism and classical traditions – including (but not limited to) fauvism, cubism, naïve painting and expressionism.

Fauvism

- From the French word fauves meaning wild beasts
- Use of non-naturalistic color
- Short, energetic brushstrokes
- Well-known Fauvist artists: Matisse, Dufy

Cubism

- Less concerned with the illusion of depth and volume
- Limited range of color
- Analysis of form from several angles combined in one art piece
- Well-known Cubist artists: Picasso, Braque, Gris

Naïve

- The work of artists with little or no formal training
- Artist's lack of training seen as a strength and thought to bring freshness to the work
- Awkwardly drawn figures
- Bright, unnatural colors
- Compositions crowded with detail
- Well-known naïve artists: Rousseau, Grandma Moses

Expressionism

- Emphasis on highly personal psychological/emotional response of the artist to the subject
- Pioneers of abstract art
- Fought against modernization of the art process
- Well-known Expressionist artists: Kirchner, Marc