



The Artist

Grant Wood was born on an Iowa farm in 1892, his father died when Grant was 10. They moved to Cedar Rapids. Grant always loved art. He drew all he saw around him. In 8th grade he entered a nationwide Crayola art contest and won. That gave him the encouragement to pursue a career in art. He sold paintings in high school, so he could buy supplies. After many trips to Europe, he changed his style. He painted farm life as it was in pioneer times and the early 1900's. His style was called **Regionalism** – depicting the American Midwest from the 1920's and 30's showing rural life, local landscapes and people. He showed subjects realistically but also poked fun at the same time. He wasn't known outside of Iowa until 1930 when his painting was shown in Chicago. It won an award and was bought by the Art Institute of Chicago and that's where it remains today.

The Art

Sample Guided Questions

- What colors are used? Are they bright or muted pastels? Hint: drab, muted, dull colors.
- How has Wood used perspective? Remember big is near, far is small, color and texture are less with distance. The people are almost larger than life compared to the buildings and trees in the background. The people are the first level of the painting; they overlap everything else in the work, becoming the most important.
- What do you think the pitch fork symbolizes? Hint: Hard work. Midwestern rural farm life was hard, people were stern, strict, and unbending with each other and themselves.
- What do you see when you look at the lady? She is looking away and seems to be a little upset. She has a soft pattern on her dress with an old brooch perhaps given to her by her mother or someone special. On her shoulder are flower pots full of plants that she cares about. Her hair is pulled back softly from her face. She does not look stern. She seems to be questioning the sternness of life.

This is his most famous painting. Done in 1930. The real painting is about the same size as the copy we're looking at today. Why do you think he named it American Gothic? Has to do with the architectural style of the small house shown in the background, with its "gothic" pointed arch window. Gothic is an art and architectural style in Western Europe

from the 1200's-1400's. Buildings that are gothic have high arches and lots of vaults inside. Wood wanted the people in the painting to look like a farmer and his daughter. Does the woman look like a daughter to you? Wood had his sister and his dentist pose dressed in older clothes. The three-pronged pitchfork is echoed in the stitching of the man's overalls, the Gothic window of the house, and the structure of the man's face. Although the man and woman are seen together in this painting, they actually posed separately. The house is real and actually still stands in Eldon, Iowa. People still live in it...currently the town postmaster. Why do you think he included the pitchfork? (most memorable part) Wanted painting to look older, symbol of farming, pitchfork repeated in overalls, ovals of faces. American Gothic has become incredibly popular – they even have a Grant Wood festival every year in Stone city, IA. This painting is the most parodied artwork in the world (copied in funny and serious ways)

Art Project: American Gothic Interpretation

Art Materials: crayons, colored pencils, markers, American Gothic outline from supply closet, white paper

Option 1: Have kids redo this famous painting in a funny or serious way using the outline in 5th grade specific bin in the supply closet. Draw new clothing, hairstyles and backgrounds.

Option 2: Free draw a parody of American Gothic on white paper. Think of famous pairs or objects that go together in a pair. Include the gothic house and landscape background or different building and landscape to go with the pair that you chose.



**The Artist**

Claude Monet was a French artist. He is considered to be one of the great French artists of all time. He was born on November 14, 1840 and lived until December 5, 1926. He loved to draw as a child. When he was a young teenager, it became apparent that he had artistic ability. Claude would draw caricatures of his teachers on his schoolwork. By the time he was 15 he had developed a reputation as a caricature artist, and his caricatures were displayed in the window of a local frame maker's shop where people began to recognize their fellow villagers in the drawings. Claude soon began to charge people to draw their caricatures and was able to make a steady income.

Monet was one of the founders of a style of painting called French **Impressionism**.

Impressionism was very different from traditional European art. These artists drew and painted landscapes and scenes of everyday life, like cooking, sleeping, and taking a bath. These may seem normal things to see in art now, but in the 1860s and 1870s, most of the art that was made in Europe had much grander things such as battle scenes from history, stories from ancient Greece and Rome, or religious scenes. The **impressionists** often painted in thick layers and used quick (and quite messy) brush strokes. Most of the paintings before **impressionism** have a much flatter, neater surface, and you can't really see the brushstrokes at all. Also, before **impressionism**, landscapes in art were often imaginary and these perfect landscapes were painted in a studio. The **impressionists** changed all that. They painted outdoors, at the scene. As they were outside, they looked at how light and color changed the scenes.

Monet wanted to paint a picture of light shining on objects. He liked to paint the images of the French countryside, and this led him to adopt a method of painting the same scene many times, over and over again, in order to show the changing of light and the passing of the seasons. He used a wide range of vibrant colors and painted quickly using short brushstrokes. If you go very close to one of his pictures it is hard to see what it shows, but if you stand back everything becomes clear. Monet painted en plein air (outdoors), as most of the **impressionists** did, leaving the studio and the familiarity of indoor scenes. He spent many hours painting directly from nature.

Lots of people didn't like **impressionism** as they thought it was a bit messy and that the paintings looked unfinished. They thought art should be neater and that subjects in art should be more important than just everyday scenes. At the first public exhibition of

these works, the artists were called mere “impressionists” by an art critic. This was supposed to be an insult, but the name stuck.

Although today Monet is regarded as the most well-known **Impressionist** artist, he spent many years of his career living in dire poverty.

The Art

Sample guided questions

- What is the subject of this painting?
- What time of day do they think the painting is showing: morning, afternoon, or night?
- What is the weather like in the painting?
- What time of year do you think it is?

This is just one of a series of famous views of London created by Monet during the later Impressionist period. This one can be found at the Art Institute in Chicago. Like many Impressionists, Monet was drawn to scenes and elements of everyday life, so it's not surprising that he was interested in the modern parts of London. Although Monet concentrated mainly on rural landscapes, his London paintings were very urban—the only urban subjects he painted after the 1870s. His interest in London was the light-filtering fog. By the 1890s, paintings of the London fog were a popular subject among artists. While other painters would depict London as a drab, gray, urban space, Monet observed how the fog changed colors depending on the light. Even in these subjects dulled by fog and coal dust, he perceived color in every form. Drifting mists are painted with delicate shades of lilac and pink, and the sky is tinged with pale olive. The shaded arches of the bridge are darkened with blues, not black, and its traffic is highlighted with brilliant flecks of scarlet.

Art Project: Outdoor sketch and pastel artwork

Materials needed: Pencil (students have in classroom), pastels, 2-3 sheets of construction paper per student

- 1) Walk to the window of your classroom with pencil and paper on hard surface.
- 2) Using a variety of light strokes and shading, very quickly sketch the scene you see out your window.
- 3) Go back to your desk, take a new sheet of paper and use pastels to re-draw the same picture.
- 4) Remember to use strokes that capture the movement. For example, choppy grass close to the foreground or wispy circular motions for clouds or trees in the distance.

**The Artist**

Mary Cassatt was an American painter and printmaker. She was born on May 22, 1844, in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania (which is now part of Pittsburgh), but she spent most of her adult life in France. Her paintings often showed women with children in everyday scenes.

Mary was the daughter of a wealthy Pittsburgh businessman. As a child, she traveled a lot. Her family thought travel was an important part of education. She had some of her first drawing and music lessons in Europe where she also learned German and French. She saw paintings by many famous French artists at the Paris World's Fair in 1855.

Although Mary's parents did not want her to be a professional artist, she began to study art seriously at the age of fifteen at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. She continued her studies while the United States was torn apart by the Civil War. In 1866, she returned to Europe to study. She worked hard to study painting. Women could not attend the art school in Paris, L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, so she asked one of masters from the school to tutor her privately. She got a permit to copy art in the Louvre Museum so she could improve her artistic techniques, and she traveled in Europe studying and copying old master paintings.

In 1874, she finally settled in Paris. Her work was shown at the annual government-sponsored exhibition called the Salon. In 1875, she discovered the pastel work of Edgar Degas in a gallery window. Mary later said, "I used to go and flatten my nose against the window and absorb all I could of his art. It changed my life. I saw art then as I wanted to see it." She and Degas became friends and worked side by side. She learned a lot from his knowledge of art, especially his techniques with pastels, copper engraving, and draftsmanship. She developed a talent for working with pastels and used them to create many of her most important works. She experimented with different printmaking techniques like etching, aquatint, and drypoint.

Mary was one of three women—and the only American—to join the group of artists later known as the Impressionists. She exhibited her work at **Impressionist** exhibitions in Paris and New York. She knew many other famous artists including Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, Claude Monet, Edouard Manet, Paul Cezanne, Berthe Morisot, and Camille Pissarro.

In recognition of her contributions to the arts, France awarded her the Légion d'honneur (Legion of Honor) in 1904. She died near Paris on June 14, 1926.

The Art

Sample Guided Questions:

- What is the first thing that you see? This is the focal point. The focal point is what first draws your eye, something that stands out.
- What is this picture about? How does bathtime now differ from bathtime then?
- How does this painting make you feel?
- Does it look like the adult and child have a special bond? Explain. Hint — The gentle touch, and their heads together.
- What other moments are special to us in our families?
- What patterns do you see in this painting?

In this picture of a woman bathing her young daughter, Cassatt combines some influences of Japanese art (her choice of female subjects and using the overhead **perspective** - the viewer is looking down at the scene in the painting) with the subject matter of her own setting (everyday activity). A number of patterns, including several floral designs and the bold stripes of the woman's dress, come together with a subtle palette of grays and mauves; the soft coloration allows the viewer to concentrate on the subject of the scene, which is the close relationship between mother and child. Their intimacy is demonstrated by their closely positioned faces gazing in the same direction, looking together at their paired reflection in the basin of water and by the circle of touch that extends from the woman's hand on the child's foot to the child's hand on the woman's knee.

The Art Institute of Chicago acquired the piece in 1910. It has since become one of the most popular pieces in the museum.

Art Project: Pastel Drawing

Materials: Pencils (students have in classroom), white paper, pastels

- Mary Cassatt was considered an Impressionist painter because she painted scenes from real life and took an interest in how light played on their surroundings.
- Her paintings are known for their bold, bright colors, and large shapes.
- She was fond of painting people in everyday activities, and made these ordinary scenes seem so important.
- Many of her paintings, including *The Child's Bath*, show loving moments between mother and child. Her paintings make you feel like you're looking in on someone during a special moment.

Instruct the kids to think about what they want to draw but to choose a design that includes people. They should draw the people in a way that anyone looking at their drawing could guess what relationship is represented.

1. They should draw two people...they can draw a mother and child, a father and child, a husband and wife, brothers, etc.
2. They should draw them doing everyday things like Cassatt did.

They should draw their pictures in pencil first, so they could erase mistakes as needed. Then they can add color with pastels. This project isn't about drawing perfectly, but instead should help teach the kids that art often has meaning and emotion and can tell a story.



5th Grade



4. Three Musicians by Picasso

The Artist

Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain in 1881. His father, Jose Ruiz Blasco, was an artist and art professor who gave Pablo art lessons. Pablo liked to draw from an early age. It soon became apparent that Pablo had little interest in school but was an extremely talented artist.

When he first started painting, he used a realistic style, but soon, he began to experiment with different techniques and styles. When he was 13, he was admitted to the School of Fine Arts in Barcelona, Spain. When he was 16, Picasso's father and uncle decided to send him to Madrid's Royal Academy of San Fernando. This was Spain's top art school. He loved Madrid and enjoyed going to The Prado Museum to see paintings by famous Spanish painters. However, Pablo was bored with the classic teachings of art school. He didn't want to paint like people hundreds of years ago. He wanted to create something new.

In 1900, Picasso went to Paris. He met many of the famous artists who lived in Paris. In 1905, American art collectors Leo and Gertrude Stein began to collect his work and helped to make him famous.

In 1907, Picasso began to experiment with a new style of painting. He worked with another artist named Georges Braque to create a completely new style of painting called **Cubism**. In **Cubism**, the subjects are analyzed and broken up into different sections. Then the sections are put back together and painted from different perspectives and angles.

He created oil paintings, sculpture, drawings, stage designs, tapestries, rugs, etchings, collage, and architecture. It is estimated that Picasso produced at least 50,000 works of art: 1,885 paintings; 1,228 sculptures; 2,880 ceramics, roughly 12,000 drawings, many thousands of prints, and numerous tapestries and rugs. He also wrote plays and poetry. He became very wealthy.

His revolutionary artistic accomplishments brought him universal recognition and immense fortune throughout his life. No other painter or sculptor was as famous while he was still alive. He is one of the best-known figures in twentieth century art. He was 90 years old when a number of his works were shown in an exhibition at the Louvre in Paris. He was the first living artist to have an exhibition at the Louvre. Picasso had four children with three women.

The Art

Sample Guided Questions

- What shapes do you see? What does three dimensional mean? What does two dimensional mean? Point out shapes in each dimension.
- What colors has Picasso used in this painting? (Red, yellow, and blue are primary color that define the focal point)
- Where do you see designs? How did he create these designs? (Lines create design and visual texture)
- Why do you think this painting is called Three Musicians? Where are the musicians in this painting? What instruments are they playing? (Violin (the French clown), clarinet (French clown), accordion (Monk))

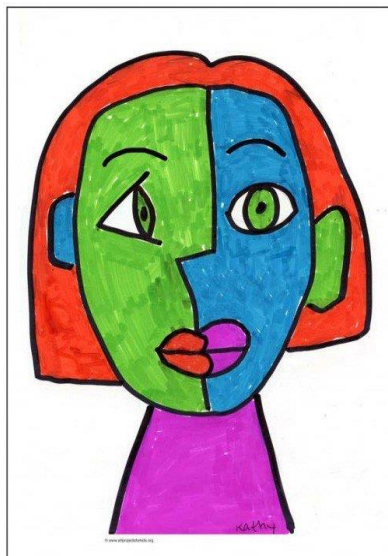
Picasso actually created two similar collage and oil paintings which exemplify the Synthetic **Cubist** style. **Cubist** art takes objects, analyzes and breaks them into clusters, and then reassembles them in an abstract manner that depicts the art from different viewpoints. **Cubism** revolutionized European painting, sculpture, and inspired related movements in architecture, music, and literature. It is considered the most influential art movement of the 20th century.

Both *Three Musicians* were completed in 1921 in Fontainebleau near Paris. One version is owned by New York City's MoMA (Museum of Modern Art). The other is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Each painting features a Harlequin (performing clown), a Pierrot (mime/comedian), and a Monk, who are believed to be based on Picasso and his two poet friends, Guillaume Apollinaire, and Max Jacob. Jacob actually entered a monastery in 1921.

Art Project: Cubism Artwork

Materials: White paper, Picasso Cubism Artwork Handout (in 5th grade specific bin), pencil (students have in classroom), markers

- 1) Fold your paper into quarter section for guidelines.
- 2) Draw head and neck.
- 3) On the left side, draw a face in profile view.
 - Start with the forehead and nose.
 - Then add the lips and chin.
 - Add an eye and eyebrow in profile view.
- 4) On the right side of the face, draw the eye and eyebrow and then the mouth as if the subject is facing forward.
- 5) Add different ears on each side in different locations on the side of the head.
- 6) Finish with the hair.
- 7) Fill in each section with different bright colors.



**The Artist**

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni (1475-1564), commonly known as Michelangelo, was an Italian Renaissance painter, sculptor, architect, poet, and engineer. His talents were so refined and versatile, that he is considered a Renaissance genius. His talents transcend time and continue to influence and inspire contemporary artists.

Though he was born Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarotti Simon, we know this artist today as simply “Michelangelo.” He lived in Italy almost 600 years ago; he was born in 1475 in Caprese, in the region of Tuscany. His ancestors were bankers, and his father had hoped he would continue this tradition. His mother was ill frequently and died when he was only 6 years old.

When he was sent to school at age 6, however, it became obvious that a life of numbers was not in his future. He showed no interest in academics; rather, he was fascinated by the paintings in local churches and spent his time trying to copy them. His father considered the pursuit of art below the family's social status and tried to discourage him.

Michelangelo met a student of painter Domenico Ghirlandaio, one of the most fashionable painters in Florence. At the age of 13, he became an apprentice of Domenico, who taught him to draw and paint. He was so talented that his father convinced Ghirlandio to pay Michelangelo when he was only 14; this was extremely rare!

Lorenzo de Medici, the patron of Florence, requested that Ghirlandio send his two best students to study at his school, and Michelangelo was one of them. He was invited to live in the palace and be educated by the most brilliant scholars of the time. Michelangelo studied sculpture and anatomy at the school in the Medici gardens. During his studies, he was introduced to important scientists, and poets. Their impact is evident even in his earliest works. He was eventually apprenticed to Bertoldo di Giovanni who mentored him in sculpture.

By the age of 30, he sculpted David, which stands in Florence. He was picked to design the Pope's tomb, which he worked on for 40 years but never finished. In the meantime, he also painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, which is regarded as one of the greatest masterpieces of painting in history. He also carved tombs for the Medici family and designed a library. He was the chief architect of St. Peter's in Rome.

Michelangelo was the first artist to have his biography published during his lifetime. He excelled in poetry, sculpture, painting, and architecture. Many regard him as one of the greatest masters of European art.

The Art

Sample Guided Questions

- Has anyone ever seen this painting before?
- Does it look real?
- Who do the hands in the painting belong to? Does the hand on the left look young or old? Does the hand on the right look young or old?
- Does anyone know where you can find this painting?

Although he preferred sculpture, Michelangelo was also an amazing painter.

In May of 1508, Michelangelo accepted a commission from Pope Julius II to re-paint the Vatican's Sistine Chapel's 12,000 sq. ft ceiling. This feat took him four years of laying on his back on a scaffold, painting incredible details on a frescoed ceiling.

The Sistine Chapel is the official residence of the pope in Vatican City. It is famous for its design, after Solomon's Temple of the Old Testament and for being **frescoed** by many of the greatest Renaissance artists. A **fresco** is a painting that is painted directly onto the wall.

The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is considered the most influential work in **fresco** painting in the history of Western art. Using this centuries-old technique, Michelangelo worked at a feverish pace under exceptionally adverse conditions. He painted directly on the freshly laid plaster. He used bright colors that were easily visible from the floor. In contrast to artists who appreciated nature, his figures exude the anatomy and physical strength of man as he battles the forces of nature for his existence and longevity. The ceiling decoration devised by Michelangelo consisted of a series of illusionistic architectural elements that frame figures and narrative scenes derived from the Old Testament of the Bible. Completed four years later, his artistry on the ceiling sealed his reputation as the greatest painter of the High Renaissance.

In order to reach the chapel's ceiling, Michelangelo designed his own scaffold. A traditional scaffold would have been built from the floor up, calling for significant lumber costs, and would have prevented the use of the Chapel for services during the four-year duration of the project. Michelangelo's engineering ingenuity and creative mind provided this alternate solution. Many believe that he spent all four years of work on the ceiling lying on his back on the scaffolding. Did he really have to paint this ceiling lying flat on his back for all those years? Well, yes and no. The special scaffolding that he built curved at the top, but he did have to bend backwards and paint over his head.

The Creation of Adam is one of the most well-known and famous artworks of all time, and as such has been the subject of a number of references and parodies.

Art Project: *Creation of Adam* paintings under desks

Materials needed: Pencil (students have in classroom), a copy of *Creation of Adam* (hands detail) from 5th grade specific art bin, tape, tempera paint (red, yellow, blue, brown, white), paint brushes, cups of water for rinsing brushes between use of different colors

Tell the students, “Today we are going to experience what it might have been like to be Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel ceiling.”

- 1) Students will need to begin at their desks with pencils and the *Creation of Adam* handout from the 5th grade specific bin in the art enrichment supply area.
- 2) Students should complete the other half of the *Creation of Adam* painting, drawing in pencil.
- 3) In order to get a sense for how Michelangelo worked while painting the Sistine Chapel, tape the *Creation of Adam* handout to the bottom their desks when they complete the drawing.
- 4) Have students add paint to the drawings taped under their desks while lying on their backs as if they are painting on the ceiling of the chapel.
 - Begin by mixing the skin color. The students should use a combination of red and yellow until they reach their desired skin tone. A tiny touch of blue can add a greyish tone if desired.
 - They can paint the background as well using any of the colors provided.

* Some students may get discouraged if their pictures do not turn out how they wanted them to look. Tell them that this project is more about the process than the product. We really want them to gain an appreciation for Michelangelo and his work.

