



THE EUROPEAN WAY

Template for a CLIL lesson

Subject : History of Art

Topic: Impressionism

Addressee: 5th class of Secondary School (age 18-19)

Timing: 3 60-minutes-lessons

Type of activities: working in pair, reading and comprehension, watching a video and comprehension, production

Key Vocabulary/ Useful language : brushstroke, tin-tube, palette, canvas, easel, landscape, portrait, outdoors, fugitive light, moving light, fleeting, daily life, dash, perception

Teacher's Notes

Warming Up

- Students have to work in pairs and answer the following questions:

- 1) What do you think "Impressionism" means.
- 2) Where did it start?
- 3) Can you name any Impressionist artists?

Presentation

- Students watch a documentary (1) about general features of Impressionism and the most important artists of the movement and then do a listening task, answering some questions (2).

-Learners read a text (3) and notice the key vocabulary which the teacher has recorded on the board. In pairs, learners answer some questions (4)

Practice/ Follow- up

- Learners look at two pictures, "*Olympia*" by Manet and "*Venus of Urbino*" by Tiziano. The subject is similar but there are differences in its rendering. In pairs, compare and contrast the two paintings focussing on:

- position and facial expressions of the two women
- placing and features of other figures
- use of colours and light

Production

Prepare a brief presentation about Impressionism mentioning:

- main features of the movement
- main artists (specify who did not paint outdoors and who did not truly work in an Impressionist style)

Lesson Material

(1) <https://youtu.be/kuOonogw-TM>

(2) Questions:

- a) When was Impressionism born? And where?
- b) In which way did the work of Impressionist painter differ from the work of previous artists?
- c) What does Impressionism mean?
- d) Who are the most important Impressionist artists?

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(3) Text from: M.Stokstad and M.W.Cothren, *Windows on Art, Mondadori-Pearson*

Manet and the Appeal of Modern Life

By the mid-1860s Parisian painter Édouard Manet (1832-1883) had become the unofficial leader of a group of progressive artists and writers who gathered at the Café Guerbois in the Montmartre district of Paris. These artists, who matured around 1870, pushed the French Realist tradition into new territory. Instead of continuing themes that had engaged Courbet, Millet, and Bonheur – the working classes and rural life – they generally moved to what they thought were more modern subjects: the city, the bourgeois (» upper-middle class), and » leisure. And although many of them also painted the countryside, their point of view was usually that of a » city dweller on holiday. Frustration among progressive artists with the exclusionary practices of the juries that decided which painting would hang in grand, official Salon exhibitions reached a » fever pitch in 1863 when the jury » turned down nearly 3,000 submitted works. A storm of protest erupted, » prompting French emperor Napoleon III to order an exhibition of the rejected work called the *Salon des Refusés* ("Salon of the Rejected"). » Featured in it was Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (*The Luncheon on the Grass*) 1, which scandalized viewers and helped establish Manet as a radical artist by provoking a critical avalanche that mixed shock with » bewilderment.

Manet's strong » commitment to Realism was » fuelled by his friendship with poet Charles Baudelaire. In his 1863 article "The Painter of Modern Life," Baudelaire » called for an artist to be the painter of contemporary manners, "the painter of the passing moment and of all

the suggestions of eternity that it contains." In *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* Manet rose to that challenge. To viewers accustomed to the traditional use of controlled gradations of shadow to model » smoothly rounded forms, which were then » nestled within spaces logically mapped by illusionistic perspective, this painting seemed a » jarring rejection of the basic » tenets of painting. Manet offered flat, sharply outlined and starkly lit figures who, rather than being integrated with their natural setting, seem to stand out sharply against it, like » silhouetted cut-outs » propped up before a painted backdrop. The fact that Manet based his composition on Renaissance works, such as Titian's *Pastoral Concert*, a copy of which was hanging in his studio, and an » engraving of a deeply Classical work by Raphael – the source for the pose of the naked woman's right arm as well as the broad gesture of the reclining man on the right – only made Manet's painting more » unsettling by underlining his subversiveness.

Most disturbing to contemporary viewers, however, was the "immorality" of Manet's subject: a suburban picnic featuring a » scantily clad bathing woman in the background and – even worse – in the foreground, a completely naked woman seated alongside two fully clothed bourgeois men. Manet's scandalized audience assumed that these women were prostitutes and the well-dressed men their clients. But what was fundamentally shocking was the work's modernity, presenting » frank nudity not as part of historical or mythological narrative, but within the context of contemporary life. The underlying meanings of this radical painting are still the subject of art-historical debate. Some see it as a commentary on the alienation of modern life, » for the figures do not connect with one another psychologically. Even if the man on the right gestures toward his companions, the other man looks off absently, while the nude turns her attention » boldly toward the viewer, making us quite aware of our own estrangement from what is going on in the painting. Shortly after completing *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, Manet painted *Olympia* (see fig. 8, p. 85), the title of which alluded to a socially ambitious prostitute of the same name in a novel and play by Alexandre Dumas fils ("the son," that is "the younger"). Like *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, *Olympia* was based on a painting by Titian, the "Venus" of Urbino (see fig. 9, p. 85).

(4) Questions:

- a) What prompted their protest in 1863?
- b) On which works of art did Manet base "*The luncheon on the grass*"?
- c) What was unusual about his rendering of figures in this painting?
- d) Why were viewers shocked by the painting?