

Lesson #14 Painting the Impressionistic Landscape

Grade Level: 1-12



Description/Objective

Students draw landscapes from photographs. Using cotton swabs, the landscape is painted with tempera paint in the style of the impressionistic painters. Students can use this technique to draw or paint from nature on field trips or vacations. This process will help students become more sensitive to their own surroundings.

Time

1 hour 15 minutes

Materials

Landscape photographs (Arizona Highways and Sunset magazines are a good source)
8-1/2" x 11" exact vellum bristol paper or 9" x 12" white construction paper (1 per student)
#2 pencils (1 per student)
Erasers (1 per student)
Book about impressionistic painters (Monet, Renoir or Van Gogh - available at public library.)
Tempera paint, landscape colors (sky blue, sage green, earth colors, etc.)
Cotton swabs or Q-tips (5 per student)
Small plastic restaurant cups
3/4" drafting tape (1-2 rolls, 60 yd.) OPTIONAL

Procedure

1. Optional - Teacher or older students use drafting tape to make a border on the edges of paper before start of activity. Slowly and carefully remove the tape after work is dry to create a white border.
2. Tell students they are going to be Impressionist painters like Monet, Pissarro or Renoir.

3. Choose a landscape photograph to discuss with the class. Find the horizon line. Explain this is where the sky and land meet. If the horizon is high, there is more land than sky. A low horizon has more sky than land. Explain foreground, middle ground and background. In the foreground, objects will be brighter, larger, and contain more detail. In the background plants, land formations, etc. will be duller, smaller, and be drawn with less detail.

4. Have students select a landscape to interpret (from a photo, painting, or imagination). Decide if the horizon line is above or below the center of the paper. Draw the horizon line lightly with your pencil. Draw the "easiest lines" first.

5. Discuss the Impressionist painters and display pictures of their landscape work. Choose a painting from the impressionist period to discuss. Look for vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and curved brush strokes. The paint was applied thickly in bold strokes (strong, thick, solid). Make your paint strokes match what you are painting.

6. Set out jars of premixed landscape colors. Try to match colors to the landscape photographs. Pour a small amount of paint into small plastic cups. Use cotton swabs to paint each area. Remember to make the foreground brighter, larger in scale, and with more detail. Notice how the impressionists used several shades of the same color.

Subject Matter Integration

ART: Read *Come Look with Me, Exploring Landscape Art with Students* by Gladys S. Blizzard.

GEOGRAPHY: Show on map where Impressionist painters lived.

"Edgar Degas lived in France."

"Jean Baptiste Armand Guillaumin lived in Italy."

"Berthe Morisot lived in France."

HISTORY: Discuss the political arena and culture of the times when the impressionist painters began expressing themselves in this relatively new way. What factors in their environment might have effected their impressions, ideas, and art form?

Variations/Extensions

1. Have students draw the landscape shapes with a pencil. Give them a black permanent marker to add texture and detail. Reproduce finished drawings on 8-1/2" x 11" exact vellum bristol paper and paint with watercolors. Copying the marker drawing allows students to experiment with techniques and color, while keeping the original black and white drawing.