

E D U C A T I O N

SCHOOL GROUP
SELF-GUIDE

19TH
CENTURY
EUROPEAN
PAINTING

Use this guide to prepare for your self-guided visit to the Metropolitan Museum with your students.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



This guide will help you prepare for your self-guided visit to the Metropolitan Museum with your students. Use the links to the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History on the Museum's website to access descriptions of works of art, thematic essays, and further relevant content.

Introduction

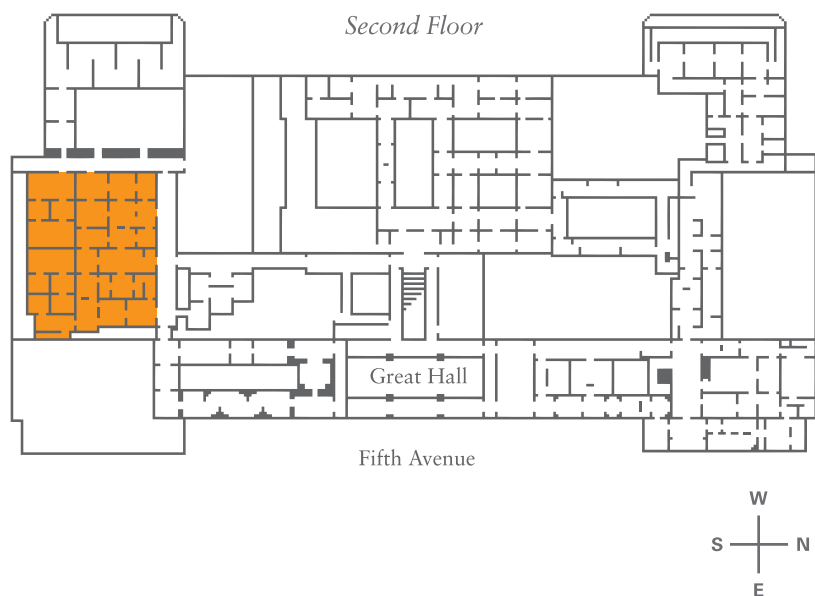
The nineteenth century was a period of profound social, political, and cultural transformation. The Museum's galleries for Nineteenth-Century European Painting and Sculpture reflect the range of artistic styles that developed in response to a rapidly changing world.

Around 1800, Neoclassicism, a product of the previous century's renewed interest in classical antiquity, remained the dominant style in French painting. The emerging Romantic aesthetic engaged the next generation of artists who, by the beginning of the 1820s, were seeking new sources of inspiration from contemporary literature as well as history and the natural world, infusing their paintings with heightened levels of emotion. The genre of landscape rose to new prominence as artists flocked to Italy, lured by the Mediterranean light and the remains of its classical past. Similarly, the Fontainebleau forest of France became a destination for painters as well as the first generation of photographers. By mid-century, revolutions and class struggles throughout Europe gave rise to challenges to the artistic establishment, such as in France, where artists rejected the style and subject matter propagated by the Academy and sought alternatives to exhibiting at the state-sponsored art exhibition, known as the Salon.

In 1874, the group of artists who would become known as the Impressionists held its first independent exhibition. Their embrace of landscapes, painted outdoors rather than in the studio, and scenes from modern life, signaled a radical departure from the dominant Academic ideal, as did their looser and freer style of painting. By the final decades of the century, however, artists rejected the objective naturalism of Impressionism in order to exploit the formal qualities of art, such as line and color, for increasingly subjective and expressive ends.

The Galleries

The Museum's collection of nineteenth-century European painting is located on the second floor of the building's south side. The collection, comprised predominantly of works by French artists, is organized chronologically by style—Romanticism, Barbizon, Realism, Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism. A gallery running the length of these rooms displays sculpture and paintings by Academic artists in a nod to the nineteenth-century Salon. For younger students, you may choose to focus on subject matter, or themes like city and country. Art students may enjoy looking at the paintings of a single artist, such as Manet, Degas, or Cézanne, or thinking about the use of different media (sculpture, pastel, and oil painting). Literature and French language students can explore the connections between literary and artistic movements, from Romanticism to Realism to Symbolism. Because the galleries are always crowded, and paintings are sometimes removed from view for special exhibitions or other projects, it is strongly advised that you come to the Museum to plan your visit before your class trip.



Planning a Tour

When visiting the Metropolitan Museum with your students, prepare your tour with the following in mind:

- Less is more. Select five or six works of art to discuss over the course of an hour in the galleries.
- Choose works that are located away from doorways and areas that are heavily traversed by visitors.
- Include works that are visible to all students in your group for purposes of discussion and viewing.
- Make sure that there are enough chaperones in your group to divide the students into smaller groups for gallery discussions.
- While touring the galleries, please give priority to lecturers wearing Museum IDs who are guiding groups. If they are discussing a work that you would like your students to see, please select another work to view and discuss in the interim.

Please Note: Although most of the suggested works in this guide will be on view when you visit the Museum, some gallery installations may be subject to change. We recommend that you use [Search the Collections](#) online or come to the Museum to verify that the objects you want to discuss are on display prior to bringing your group.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's school tour program is made possible by the generosity of Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman.

Suggested Works of Art to Explore

Please note that titles, dates, and other object information on the website and on gallery signage may vary as the result of ongoing research.



[Madame Jacques-Louis Leblanc \(née Françoise Poncelle, 1788–1839\)](#), 1823

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (French, 1780–1867)

Oil on canvas; 47 x 36 1/2 in. (119.4 x 92.7 cm)

Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund, 1918 (19.77.2)

Questions: What elements in this portrait indicate Madame Leblanc's wealth/social status? Compare hers with the painting of her husband hanging nearby (the paintings form a pair). In what ways are they similar?



[The Abduction of Rebecca](#), 1846

Eugène Delacroix (French, 1798–1863)

Oil on canvas; 39 1/2 x 32 1/4 in. (100.3 x 81.9 cm)

Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund, 1903 (03.30)

Questions: What is happening in this painting, which illustrates a scene from Sir Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe*? What elements in the composition, or arrangement, indicate that the novel was set in the Middle Ages? How does Delacroix convey the drama of the scene?



[Young Ladies of the Village](#), 1852

Gustave Courbet (French, 1819–1877)

Oil on canvas; 76 3/4 x 102 3/4 in. (194.9 x 261 cm)

Gift of Harry Payne Bingham, 1940 (40.175)

Questions: What are the “young ladies” doing in this scene? Do you notice anything unusual about the scale of the cattle in relation to the figures? Is it clear where the cattle are in relation to the figure group? Why do you think Courbet painted a scene from everyday life on such a large canvas?

Learn more about [Gustave Courbet \(1819–1877\)](#).



The Horse Fair, 1853–55

Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–1899)
Oil on canvas; 96 1/4 x 199 1/2 in. (244.5 x 506.7 cm)
Gift of Cornelius Vanderbilt, 1887 (87.25)

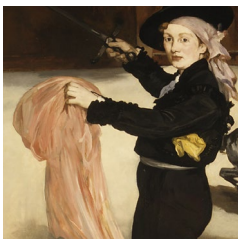
Questions: What do you see going on in this view of a horse market? How does the artist show movement in this scene? What are the horses doing? Do you see any women at the horse fair? Do you think it would have been difficult for a woman artist to paint this subject? Why?



Oedipus and the Sphinx, 1864

Gustave Moreau (French, 1826–1898)
Oil on canvas; 81 1/4 x 41 1/4 in. (206.4 x 104.8 cm)
Bequest of William H. Herriman, 1920 (21.134.1)

Questions: What elements in the painting suggest that it depicts a Greek myth? See if you can answer the riddle that the Sphinx is posing to Oedipus: “What creature goes on four feet in the morning, two feet at noon, and three in the evening?” (Answer: Man.) What happened to those who failed to answer the riddle of the Sphinx? (Hint: Look for clues in the painting.)



Mademoiselle V. . in the Costume of an Espada, 1862

Édouard Manet (French, 1832–1883)
Oil on canvas; 65 x 50 1/4 in. (165.1 x 127.6 cm)
H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.53)

Questions: Do you think this woman is a real bullfighter? Why or why not? Why do you think Manet painted this cape a pale pink and not the traditional red color?

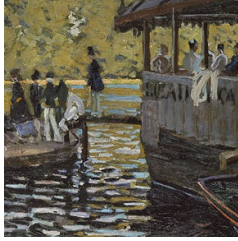
Learn more about [Édouard Manet \(1832–1883\)](#).



The Third-Class Carriage, ca. 1862–64

Honoré Daumier (French, 1808–1879)
Oil on canvas; 25 3/4 x 35 1/2 in. (65.4 x 90.2 cm)
H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.129)

Questions: Daumier depicted many images of railway travel. Why was this subject significant in mid-nineteenth-century France? What does this painting tell us about the travel conditions for this family seated in the third-class car?



La Grenouillère, 1869

Claude Monet (French, 1840–1926)

Oil on canvas; 29 3/8 x 39 1/4 in. (74.6 x 99.7 cm)

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.112)

Questions: What is the subject of Monet's picture? Describe his brushwork; does the work appear to have been painted quickly? Why did he use so many different colors to paint the water?

Learn more about [Claude Monet \(1840–1926\)](#).

Learn more about [Impressionism: Art and Modernity](#).



Dancers Practicing at the Barre, 1877

Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917)

Mixed media on canvas; 29 3/4 x 32 in. (75.6 x 81.3 cm)

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.34)

Questions: How does Degas lead us to look at the dancers in the upper right corner? Do you think the dancers are posing for the artist? Why or why not?

Learn more about [Edgar Degas \(1834–1917\): Painting and Drawing](#).



Madame Georges Charpentier (n e Margu rite-Louise Lemonnier, 1848–1904) and Her Children, Georgette-Berthe (1872–1945) and Paul- mile-Charles (1875–1895), 1878

Auguste Renoir (French, 1841–1919)

Oil on canvas; 60 1/2 x 74 7/8 in. (153.7 x 190.2 cm)

Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund, 1907 (07.122)

Questions: How does Renoir show that this is a family portrait? Do the figures seem to be posing for the artist or does the scene appear more informal? Explain.



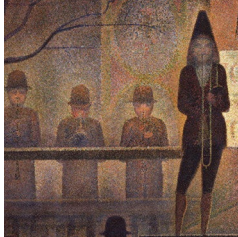
Rouen Cathedral: The Portal (Sunlight), 1894

Claude Monet (French, 1840–1926)

Oil on canvas; 39 1/4 x 25 7/8 in. (99.7 x 65.7 cm)

Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915 (30.95.250)

Questions: Monet painted more than thirty views of Rouen Cathedral at different times of day and in different weather conditions. How can you tell the time of day and weather in this picture? Describe the surface of the painting—is it smooth or textured? Why did Monet paint it this way?



Circus Sideshow, 1887–88

Georges Seurat (French, 1859–1891)

Oil on canvas; 39 1/4 x 59 in. (99.7 x 149.9 cm)

Bequest of Stephen C. Clark, 1960 (61.101.17)

Questions: Seurat painted in a style known as Pointillism or Neo-Impressionism. Describe his brushstrokes. How does Seurat show that this scene takes place at night? Do the figures look realistic? Why or why not?

Learn more about [Georges Seurat \(1859–1891\)](#) and Neo-Impressionism.



Cypresses, 1889

Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853–1890)

Oil on canvas; 36 3/4 x 29 1/8 in. (93.4 x 74 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1949 (49.30)

Questions: Identify the different elements of the landscape. How can you tell that Van Gogh painted this scene in the summer? Describe Van Gogh's brushstrokes: are they the same throughout the painting? Where does he apply paint most thickly?

Learn more about [Vincent van Gogh \(1853–1890\)](#).



Still Life with Apples and a Pot of Primroses, ca. 1890

Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906)

Oil on canvas; 28 3/4 x 36 3/8 in. (73 x 92.4 cm)

Bequest of Sam A. Lewisohn, 1951 (51.112.1)

Questions: Do all of the objects in this still life appear to have been painted from the same vantage point—why or why not? Do you think the apples, as painted by Cézanne, will stay on the table?

Learn more about [Paul Cézanne \(1839–1906\)](#).

Selected Thematic Essays: Art Movements

[Impressionism: Art and Modernity](#)

[The Legacy of Jacques-Louis David \(1748–1825\)](#)

[Nineteenth-Century French Realism](#)

[Romanticism](#)

[The Salon and The Royal Academy](#)

[Symbolism](#)

[Post-Impressionism](#)

More on The Metropolitan Museum of Art Website

[Cézanne's Astonishing Apples](#)

[The Dancers and Degas](#)

[How Van Gogh Made His Mark](#)

Selected Resources

These and many more resources are available in Nolen Library in the Museum's Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education.

General

Adams, Steven. *The Barbizon School & the Origins of Impressionism*. London: Phaidon, 1994.

Bailey, Colin B., et al. *Masterpieces of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism: The Annenberg Collection*. Rev. ed. New York: MMA; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009.

Clark, T. J. *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers*. Rev. ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Eitner, Lorenz. *19th-Century European Painting: David to Cézanne*. Rev. ed. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2002.

King, Ross. *The Judgment of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade that Gave the World Impressionism*. New York: Walker & Co., 2006.

Modern Europe. New York: MMA, 1987.

Noon, Patrick J. *Crossing the Channel: British and French Painting in the Age of Romanticism*. London: Tate Publishing, 2003.

Rosenblum, Robert, and H. W. Janson. *19th-Century Art*. Rev. ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005.

Tinterow, Gary, et al., *Masterpieces of European Painting, 1800–1920, in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: MMA; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007.

Welton, Jude. *Impressionism*. Eyewitness Art. New York: Dorling Kindersley with the Art Institute of Chicago, 1993.

Wiggins, Colin. *Post-Impressionism*. Eyewitness Art. New York: Dorling Kindersley with the Art Institute of Chicago, 1993.

Specific Artists

Boggs, Jean Sutherland, et al. *Degas*. New York: MMA, 1988.

Hulsker, Jan. *The New Complete Van Gogh: Paintings, Drawings, Sketches*. Rev. ed. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1996.

Klumpke, Anna. *Rosa Bonheur: The Artist's (Auto)biography*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

Thomson, Belinda. *Gauguin*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1987.

Verdi, Richard. *Cézanne*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1992.

Elementary Students

Mühlberger, Richard. *What Makes a Monet a Monet?* New York: MMA, 1993.
Other artists in this series include Cassatt, Degas, and Van Gogh.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *The Yellow House: Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin Side by Side*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Wenzel, Angela. *Edgar Degas: Dance Like a Butterfly*. Adventures in Art. Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2002.

_____. *Paul Cézanne: How He Amazed the World*. Adventures in Art. Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2004.

Middle School Students

Burleigh, Robert. *Paul Cézanne: A Painter's Journey*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2006.

Greenberg, Jan, and Sandra Jordan. *Vincent van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2001.

Knapp, Ruthie, and Janice Lehmborg. *Museum Guides for Kids: Impressionist Art*. Worcester, Mass.: Davis Publications, 1998.

Powell, Jillian. *Art in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Thomson Learning, 1995.

Rayfield, Susan. *Pierre-Auguste Renoir*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998.

Turner, Robyn Montana. *Rosa Bonheur*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1991.

High School Students

Reyero, Carlos. *The Key to Art: From Romanticism to Impressionism*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1990.

Welton, Jude. *Monet*. Eyewitness Art. New York: Dorling Kindersley with the Musée Marmottan, Paris, 1992.

Wright, Patricia. *Manet*. Eyewitness Art. New York: Dorling Kindersley with National Gallery Publications, 1993.