



### ***The Impression of Impressionism***

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
Elementary Art

**Keywords:** Impressionism, Painting, Plein Air, Landscape, Claude Monet, Art History, Perseverance, Individualism

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:** While studying Impressionist painters from Monet to Pissarro students will learn that all art is created with context (4.CX.1.4 Explain how place and time influence ideas, issues, and themes found in art). By dissecting one time period and one art movement, students will start to understand that the events of the time influence the artist and the masterpieces that they create. The setting, the time period, the politics, and the past all come together to create one reality that inspires artistic response to these specific parameters. This is even happening today within our lives. All the factors around us that help us to be who we are also help to form the art that we make as artists. Students will be asked to face this reality within their studies, by making their art relevant to their own personal history. Students will use the Impressionists as a jumping off point to help them examine their world in new ways and capture its essence.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 130 students in fourth grade art.*

*I give permission for the institute to publish my curriculum unit and synopsis in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.*

## The Impression of Impressionism

*Mary Tew*

### Introduction

Anna, my sister-in-law, and I went to the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh. Somehow we were there for hours and had not yet seen the Impressionist art. “We can’t leave without seeing the Impressionist room.” We abandoned the Rodin sculptures in search of Monet. When we found the art we sat down for a long time contemplating the colors, the reflection of light on water, and the sheer beauty of the brushstrokes. No matter what museum I go to the main draw for me, and typically for whomever I am with, is to see the Impressionist paintings. The Impressionists created paintings that showed the reflection of light bouncing off of carefree subject matter. The bourgeois French lifestyle, scenic life by the water, or people dancing and at parties helps to combine the lighter sides of life with the physical lightness of the world that the artists were constantly trying to capture. Some of the Impressionists focused on the lighter side of life for their subject matter while others captured the darkness of life by illuminating it and placing it on display for the world to see. As the artists tried to capture light they also illuminated a type of lifestyle that was rooted in joy. In the children’s book *Linnea in Monet’s Garden*, the author states. “All his life, Monet tried to paint his own true impression of light”<sup>1</sup> and was never satisfied with his attempts. “The impressionists painted what they saw, and how they saw it at first glance. Their paintings, too, reflected an interest in science, particularly in the effects of light.”<sup>2</sup> How does one capture the suggestion of an intangible object such as light? Within the classroom my students will draw upon their own histories, time period, and technology to assist them with their project. In my unit, fourth graders will give us their impressions of Impressionism by doing research about a specific Impressionist or Post-Impressionist artist and then creating an Impressionistic painting that is not a replication of what they have studied, but a response. In their response, students will use all the information that they learn about the time period, the artists, and the art work to create a piece of art that emulates the artist in either style or subject matter. Students will not be copying the artists’ work, but using their own creativity to come up with an imaginative solution to this assignment. Through studying the masters the students will learn that the circumstances that surrounded the artists influenced their choices. The students, as artists, should also include their own circumstances within their painting, thus creating a painting that combines their personal lives via subject matter and their famous artist’s life via style.

The first lesson is the research component. Student will work with the librarian and the computer teacher to use the big six research model while searching for information. This model walks students through the steps necessary to find and utilize information.

Students will be utilizing the information to make a power point and a group timeline while citing their sources.

The second lesson of this unit will be a problem solving task for students to capture a fleeting moment. Students will be asked to create an object on a flat surface that looks like it is in motion. Within this lesson students will use the Impressionistic brushstrokes to help them create the illusion of movement on a still surface.

The third lesson of this unit will be a *plein air* painting festival. Students will have an hour and a half to paint outside on the school field. Students will create sketches and scout out their location ahead of time. On the day of the festival students will use a canvas, palette, and easel to paint outside just like Monet. Students will capture their school campus, a reflection of their place and time, just as all artists' use what is around them as inspiration.

The final culminating lesson will be an individual lesson based on their research. Students will have a great deal of choice in the materials that they use as well as the techniques that they will use to create artwork that is a response to the Impressionist artists that they are studying. Within the unit each student's project might take a divergent path. Some might choose to use technology to create the painting while others might stick with the traditional painting methods. All will be utilizing their paintings to capture a fleeting moment of time within their daily lives.

This unit is beneficial to my students in many ways. Through the focus of geography, time period, artistic style, rebellious history, and perseverance, students will be exposed to many of the reasons that the Impressionist art movement was so strong and has remained so popular. Students will be pushed to understand that not all art fits a specific mold and that breaking the norm can be a great endeavor. Nothing can compare to the refreshing brushstrokes and light that the French masters of Impressionism gave to the world. The art world has changed because of them but, in my opinion, has yet to produce such an enchanting period since. From this unit, students will grow in the ways that they see the world and find creative ways to capture their world's essence just as the impressionists found new ways to capture their world while rejecting and rebelling against the standard art world of their time.

## **Background**

Davidson Elementary is a small community school located on the edge of the town of Davidson, North Carolina. This town has become very popular among the well educated population of Mecklenburg County for its quaint downtown and old fashioned small town feel. Davidson College has a huge impact on driving the academics of our public school. Many students have professor parents and college students can gain community hours at our school by volunteering to work with students who need extra assistance. We have a large population of students that walk to school or are picked up by parents. Many of our

families have one working parent and one stay at home parent. We have a very strong and involved PTO that helps to create many extra activities and funds for our student population. Students in this community are often well to do with culturally rich childhoods that include going to museums and traveling the world. Parents are highly involved and focused on the education of their children. Our students are very knowledgeable and encouraged to spend time focusing on the arts. We have a small percentage of low income students and the disparities between the rich and poor are very apparent. The school community and local organizations embrace this disparity and help to provide services for these children and their families. Services include an afterschool tutoring program, weekly groceries, and technology grants to ensure that all the students in the school have access to the internet at home.

There are currently about 700 kindergarten through fifth grade students enrolled in our school. Due to the fact that many of our families have the means to move to any school that they like, we have a multitude of private and charter schools within the area. To try and keep our students and families within the public school we are on the path to creating an extension through middle school in the year 2020. Many parents take their children out in fifth grade so that they do not have to go to the large middle school in the next town. We are hopeful that this change will help to keep families at our small community school.

With students who are so focused on academics, the introduction of a project like this sparks a fire of learning in many of our students. With parent means and focus on learning, some students will ignite with interest and captivation that families embrace by seeking out more non-fiction reading and sources to encourage their child's growth and interest. I have had many students who seek the public library or Amazon after a new subject is revealed to absorb the most information of a given topic. This type of student is common at our school and makes teaching here tons of fun. I am constantly learning about great books or interesting facts from my students. I know that I am truly teaching the next leaders of our country. Their interest and growth is of utmost importance.

The connect team made up of six classes, science, music, physical education, visual art, media studies, and computer lab, operates on a six day rotation (A-F days) for fifty minute intervals. Students rotate through Media Center, Computer, Art, Science, Music and Physical Education. We also have a flex rotation schedule for guidance instead of Media Center. When this happens the library is open for classes to sign up for research slots. Due to the rotating schedule some classes have a ten day span from one rotation to the next. The difficulty of this is seen in information retention and just a general challenge with keeping track of the rotation schedule. We also have six less classes a year than a traditional Monday through Friday schedule. The positive of this is that in a tradition Monday through Friday schedule you can miss one group over and over again due to school holiday, but with an A-F schedule we don't miss the same classes over and over again, so all the classes are getting the same lesson without having to pick and

choose what to eliminate from the yearly curriculum. We have a strong and dedicated staff that has a multitude of experience and longevity. Teachers do not move away from this school because the community and coworker support is deeply rooted with time.

Through our supportive PTO I applied for and received a grant to purchase a class set of table top easels. I opted for the smaller easels because they are more durable than the tall easels that are of comparable price. They are also easier to store and more useful as a long term piece of equipment for the art room. We purchased Martin Universal Angelina aluminum table easels. With the grant I also purchased paper palettes which are not necessary but more convenient for my students while painting outside. This lesson unit can also take place with much simpler equipment such as clipboards and cardboard.

Within the art room at Davidson I have two distinct areas. The first area is a small book and lecture area at the front entrance. Students can come in and sit on the carpet while we discuss the day's activities, play games, look at art using Bloom's taxonomy, and read books. Within the second area, the studio, students are able to easily access supplies that are stored in labeled bins. Students are surrounded by the supplies, and tools that they need to be successful in the studio. This is also where videos and teacher demonstrations occur.

At Davidson there are five fourth grade classes with an average of 26 students per class. Because I only see my students every sixth school day, I will be seeking to collaborate with the computer teacher and the librarian for this unit. They will be helping to give the students time to work on research needed to complete the lesson. Our library does not have a large selection of print material on Impressionist artists but adapted that by pulling personal books and using the internet. Directing students to the many art museum sites available (see Bibliography for Student Reading below).

## **Rationale**

Each grade level at Davidson Elementary has a specific continent that they are assigned to study. Then in April we have an international Artfest which highlights the students' talents by including three artistic endeavors: a school wide art show, a musical concert, and poetry which showcases the continent that they have been studying throughout the year. The fourth graders at Davidson study Europe and apply it to all the subjects that they learn throughout the year. Therefore this unit which focuses on the European history is naturally a conducive fit with the fourth grade class.

When students get to fourth grade they become rigid in their approach to art. In general they prefer realistic and precise art. They have difficulty when the skill set that they have doesn't match their vision. My goal in teaching this more fluid style of art is to teach students that different styles have value and that their personal artwork doesn't have to fit a specific mold to be valuable. The style of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism helps students to break out of this perfectionist attitude that they develop

at this stage of life. This unit is also filled with life lessons for my students. The rebellion of the Impressionist artists against the art world and their perseverance in the face of adversity and hatred is a great lesson for all children. Students will not only learn to be kind to themselves and loosen their approach toward painting, but they will also be reminded that confidence comes from within not from others.

## **Content**

Impressionistic art is categorized by an effort to capture light on canvas. Capturing the way the light reflects at different times of day off the forms of the world was a new concept. Before the Impressionist movement many artists and institutions, including the French Art Academy, believed in capturing a realistic view of the world. The Impressionist movement took this realistic view to a whole new level when they expressed the ideas of trying to capture a single moment in time. This radical idea is a very conceptual approach to art. Artists capturing movement and form on a flat surface are challenging concepts that are much more similar to the realities of life than that of realism.

Through painting everyday life instead of mythology or historical accounts, the Impressionists rejected the realistic art that was popular at the time. Impressionist artists used their surroundings and the bourgeoisie as inspiration in their textural paintings that included unmixed paints, short brushstrokes, and a general unblended roughness that turned off many viewers who were more accustomed to the smooth, high contrast, and precise painting of the realistic historical figures and scenes that were seen by the Salons and the art world as high art.

The impressionistic vision transforms nature into a process of growth and decay. Everything stable and coherent is dissolved into metamorphoses and assumes the character of the unfinished and fragmentary.<sup>3</sup>

The representation of light, air and atmosphere, the dissolution of the evenly coloured surface into spots and dabs of colour, the decomposition of the local colour into *valeurs*, into values of perspective and aspect, the play of reflected light and illuminated shadows, the quivering trembling dots and the hasty, loose and abrupt strokes of the brush, the whole improvised technique with its rapid and rough sketching, the fleeting, seemingly careless perception of the object and the brilliant casualness of the execution merely express, in the final analysis, that feeling of a stirring, dynamic constantly changing reality...<sup>4</sup>

In this unit I chose to focus on Claude Monet due to his popularity and accessibility to elementary age students. His artwork is easily identifiable stylistically and his subject matter, light on landscapes (lily pads, haystacks, water), is appropriate for young students. Many other artists will also be discussed and a list of artists is available in Appendix 3.

Throughout Monet's life as an artist he was fully committed to the concepts that categorize Impressionist artists'. He believed that painting outside *plein air* style was the best way to capture light's effects on the world. While Monet started out as an Academy artist he soon realized that the constant rejection from the Academy sponsored shows meant that he needed to leave the established system in order to have his artwork seen.

Yet many of the rejection of his more ambitious works, notably the large-scale *Women in the Garden* (1866; Musée d'Orsay, Paris), inspired Monet to join with Edgar Degas, Édouard Manet, Camille Pissarro, Renoir, and others in establishing an independent exhibition in 1874. *Impression: Sunrise* (1873; Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris), one of Monet's contributions to this exhibition, drew particular scorn for the unfinished appearance of its loose handling and indistinct forms. Yet the artists saw the criticism as a badge of honor, and subsequently called themselves "Impressionists" after the painting's title, even though the name was first used derisively.<sup>5</sup>

The Impressionists were born in a specific setting and time. Europe's art world during this time period was immersed in realism and the art world was devoted to its Salon system.

The most significant professional art societies in Europe in the nineteenth century were the Royal Academies of Art in France and England, established in 1648 and 1768 respectively. They ran schools of instruction, held annual or semi-annual exhibitions, and provided venues where artists could display their work and cultivate critical notice. Here, young artists could find themselves promoted to prominence through patronage connections and collectively seek protection of artistic interests.<sup>6</sup>

The Academy and ultimately the Salon were held in great esteem because for centuries any aspiring artist who wanted to be a successful professional artist had to go to the Academy for training. The Academy would exhibit artist's work through annual juried shows. The Salon was the most well known and coveted of the juried shows. The Impressionists, who were often rejected from the Salon for their seemingly unfinished works, felt that the Academy should not dictate all the art that is seen and critiqued. That art should be open to any and all. This was a new concept and it went against the grain of the accepted practice. The Impressionists were willing to rebel against this system in order to have their artwork seen and eventually loved by others. The Impressionists banded together to put their artwork on display in a gallery. This is the first time that the systematic world of art was threatened by an outside gallery.

The Salon "held a virtual monopoly of exhibitions".<sup>7</sup> Edouard Manet was one of the few Impressionist artists who had his foot in both worlds, that of the Salon and that of the Impressionists. He would win entrance into a show through a piece that fit with realism,

and then once he guaranteed his place in the exhibit, he would hang a piece that was scandalous to the Salon society.

... by the mid-nineteenth century, academies across Europe were undercut by what would later be seen as avant-garde movements. Some artists sought change from within, exhibiting their radical works at these official venues<sup>8</sup>

Edouard Manet was one such radical. His paintings of prostitutes and everyday nudes on display were seen as shocking. “He nevertheless offended contemporary morality by juxtaposing the nude and nattily attired figures in an outdoor setting without allegorical intent.”<sup>9</sup> Manet’s work evolved but never stopped pushing the boundaries of the time. In *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere*, Manet shows an amazing party scene of acrobats and socialites enjoying their lavish lifestyle through the haze of a mirror at the back of the bar. The barmaid at the center of the painting is a juxtaposition to all that is around her. “The barmaid’s attitude, detached and touched with melancholy, contrasts poignantly with the liveliness of her setting, which she is not permitted to share.”<sup>10</sup> This rawness and sharp social and political voice is clear within the painting. This painting is relevant to life today with our wide range of social and economic classes that we witness on a daily basis within our own lives. This is one of many reasons that their work is still so appealing today. They were willing to push boundaries and break the mold.

The Impressionist artists accepted that they were not part of the mainstream art movement and embraced their lot in the art world. They persevered through all the negative criticism and continued to paint using their sketchy brush strokes that evoked such controversy.

In addition to their radical technique, the bright colors of Impressionist canvases were shocking for eyes accustomed to the more sober colors of Academic painting. Many of the independent artists chose not to apply the thick golden varnish that painters customarily used to tone down their works. The paints themselves were more vivid as well. The nineteenth century saw the development of synthetic pigments for artists' paints, providing vibrant shades of blue, green, and yellow that painters had never used before. Édouard Manet's 1874 *Boating* for example, features an expanse of the new Cerulean blue and synthetic ultramarine. Depicted in a radically cropped, Japanese-inspired composition, the fashionable boater and his companion embody modernity in their form, their subject matter, and the very materials used to paint them.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the Impressionist rejection of the Salon, the artists still wanted to capture the world that was surrounding them and amongst the world was the very carefree lifestyle of bourgeoisie society. France was not at war and life was good. The advancement of the French middle class was exhibited through luxurious parties, flowing alcohol, and the vacation lifestyle as seen in many paintings by Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. The party lifestyle continued into the Post-Impressionist world with Henri Toulouse-

Lautrec capturing many carefree spirits among the dance floor. While Impressionism sought to capture the beauty of these scenes (the dancers by Renior) Toulouse-Lautrec tried to follow in Degas' footsteps and capture the rawness and under belly side of life.

Edgar Degas obviously loved to capture movement. His fascination with horses and then that of ballerinas both exemplify athletes and the motion of the body. He explored drawing images from every view point to capture movement "After having done portraits seen from above, I will do them seen from below- sitting very close to a woman and looking at her from a low viewpoint, I will see her head in the chandelier, surrounded by crystals".<sup>12</sup> Degas' paintings might seem quite simple and beautiful at first glance, but the objectification of women and the unethical approach of men lurking in the wings waiting for their ballerinas hark of deeper darker secrets of the time. This is seen clearly in the painting *Prima Ballerina*, where all we can see is the lower half of a man waiting in the wings for his star to come off the stage. This subculture is captured through the Post-Impressionistic era.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec continued this dark side of the party lifestyle by portraying dancers and entertainers not only on the music hall dance floor but behind the scenes. One of the paintings that exemplify this is the *La Visite: Rue Des Moulins*. In this painting you see two women half naked waiting for a medical examination. Not the typical beautiful women surrounded by nature that is seen in many of Monet's paintings. Toulouse's troubled life helped him to see the world in a more emotional way. Within Post-Impressionism the emphasis become more about color symbolism and emotion. Artist like Vincent Van Gogh, and Georges Seurat were invested in the emotions that colors symbolize and elicit.

Seurat's bold style, "pointillism," influenced by the development of photography, left his figures appearing strangely mechanical and separate from each other. This may suggest that alienation, social division, and isolation of modern urban life. His greatest and still most controversial work, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* (1884), may be seen in this way. Yet it also may be that Seurat sought to portray social cohesion through the social mix of bourgeois and workers enjoying a Sunday afternoon along the Seine River, all part of the same colorful matrix of light.<sup>13</sup>

The Impressionist artists themselves were sometimes from very different social classes. Monet was very poor and wrote letters begging for money from family. On the other hand it was money and a supportive husband that allowed Berthe Morisot to paint and become one of the members of the Impressionist group. At that time women were not encouraged to become professional artists. The Academy would not allow women to take the same anatomy classes deeming it improper for women to see the nude form. With the Impressionists' rebellion against the established method, Morisot was able to become part of a professional art group and exhibit her work alongside her male counterparts. Her ability to join the Impressionist group is huge accomplishment for a woman at that time.

While it is hard to see these paintings as shocking today, all of the Impressionist artists and Post-Impressionist artists were breaking the mold and charting new paths. Their stylistic choices and rebellion against the established system have captured audiences for centuries and helped to form the art world that exists today.

## **Objective**

During this unit, the North Carolina Visual Arts Essential Standards will align with the lessons of this unit to ensure that students will meet the state mandates. Students will hit upon many of the essential standards. Students will have time to share their thoughts and ideas using appropriate art vocabulary in whole group and partner sharing activities. In the second lesson of this unit students will take part in a whole group critical response to *Impression Sunrise* by Monet. They will also think-pair-share their personal impressions of Impressionism. We will do this twice, once near the beginning of the unit and once at the end, to see if opinions have changed after the students have spent time researching the lives of Impressionist artists. Think-pair-share is a great way for every student to share their opinion with another peer without it taking up much class time. Students partner up and share their opinion, supported by visual evidence, with another student in the class. Students will infer meaning from visual clues while looking at the painting.

To accomplish this huge research based art project with limited time in the schedule some of the work will be completed at home, in the computer lab, the library, and the art room. Students will have a picture log (see attached document) where they will need to be able to read an image caption and fill out specific information including artist, title, description, response, and a small drawing of the image. Students will be responsible for completing one image log every night and returning to class with their image list. This will help them to get to know the artist that they are studying and start to find themes within the art. The image log can later be used to help create a power point in technology class. If you choose to work alone, instead of in collaboration, more time will be needed to complete a broad understanding of the artwork and time period.

While it might seem silly to read aloud to fourth graders, they actually really enjoy it and can learn a lot about an artist from a few carefully selected, well written, precise children's books. Within their library time students will be reading books like *Linea in Monet's Garden* by Christina Bjork . In this book a small girl travels to Paris and Monet's Garden in Giverny to learn all about the famous artist Claude Monet. In art we will be reading the book *Monet Paints a Day* by Julie Danneberg. This book follows a day in the life of Monet that is based on a true story. Monet is so focused on painting that he does not realize that high tide is rolling in until it is too late. To assist students in connecting themselves to Monet they will partner share a time that they got so engrossed in an activity that they were surprised or caught off guard. By sharing these experiences students start to see that when they are passionate about an activity it can become all engrossing.

In this unit there are three studio lessons. At the beginning of every studio lesson there will be a corresponding demonstration to model the appropriate methods and techniques for the creation of art. While freedom of choice and differentiation are encouraged, students are still responsible for their continued growth of the curriculum. During the *Plein Air* Painting Festival, I will model the steps for students so that they are not overwhelmed by the endless possibilities. Elements and Principles of art will be continually discussed during these demonstrations to ensure a successful outcome.

Students will emulate their chosen artist but with a modern day spin. Within the unit students will learn about a specific European artist and how the previous art movement of realism and the Salon helped to drive the Impressionists' rejection of the art world and start a new approach to creating and presenting art. Through the combination of the image log, the artist background information, and the historical research done in the library students will have a greater scope of how place and time influence the ways in which artwork is created. Students will interpret this into understanding their own personal place and time and how that effects what they create as artists. Their culminating artwork will be a combination of their artists' subject matter and/or style while applying it to their personal everyday modern life. One example of this might be if a student is studying Manet's *A bar at the Folies-Bergere*, they might decide to create a piece of art that showcases modern everyday servers. Perhaps the student would pull from their memory and personal history to create a pastel or a watercolor painting of the baristas at our local Summit Coffee house.

All of the lessons will include differentiation. Within the culminating lesson, the art work will truly reflect the multitude of possibilities of choice that each student will have. While this project will take place in the art room, some students might choose to use photography to complete the piece on their own time outside of school. Students will have to use critical thinking to combine all the different aspects of this problem into their personal artistic solution. Student self-reflection will take place continually as well as at the end of the unit with a self-assessment rubric.

### **Preparing for the Unit**

In order to better prepare my students for the difficulties of painting from observation I will give the students some practice with observational drawing as well as painting. Our lesson before this unit is on one point perspective. Students will draw the hallways of our school from observation. This pre-lesson will help the students in many ways including learning about creating distance within their painting. Students working through the timeline of history must first understand realism, perspective, and mathematical drawing in order to reject these ideals of painting. We will follow in the Impressionists' footsteps to feel what it is like to be an Impressionist. Because art education uses a spiral curriculum, in previous years we have spent time working on space and discussing the techniques, including overlapping, size, detail, and placement, for creating depth on a flat surface. Students will add onto this prior knowledge by utilizing the mathematical steps

of one point perspective. This mathematical technique works well in fourth grade because they are developmentally ready for this. Our one point perspective hallway drawings will get the students thinking of drawing in a mathematical and calculated way. When we start the Impressionist unit some students will have a hard time breaking away from this method to a more relaxed emotional capturing of a setting. While the perspective is a good lesson to help them build their knowledge of seeing and creating space, it is also very precise. Students will need to break from the rigidity of the line drawing when using their paint in open air. Something the Impressionists were also faced with when they broke from the traditional methods for their own creative style.

Using collaboration with this lesson makes a lot of sense. Students learn a subject better when they see how it is important across many areas of study. Using this method I will be meeting with the Computer teacher, the Music teacher, and the Librarian to create a cross curricular unit. The Music teacher will showcase the Impressionistic style of music with a Quaver video on Impressionism. Within the video it shows images of Impressionist painting while Impressionistic music is being played. The Computer teacher will be using Microsoft paint to help students create an Impressionistic digital image as well as giving the students time to do research on their artist. Lastly she will use the image log as a way for students to create a power point of their artists. The Librarian will assist students in their research of the subject while connecting her read aloud stories to the subject. Her culminating project will be a historical timeline of art history and France during that time.

I will also meet with the fourth grade classroom teachers to discuss utilizing a historic art criticism article as a writing prompt for their classroom. I will create a packet of information listed with the appendixes for them to use within their classrooms. They will also help me to implement the homework image log by maintaining it within the students' agenda. Their ideas to further the unit will only strengthen the learning across the curriculum. Using STEAM there are many other subjects that could be including in the unit, in particular geography and math. Geography of where their artists are painting along the French Coast, the Seine River and in Paris could easily correspond with the habitat seen in the paintings that the students are studying. Math is easily integrated with Art in many ways. In particular for this unit, I would suggest implementing the prior knowledge of one point perspective. It could also be integrated by discussing the current monetary value of many impressionist works.

### **Lesson Activities- Art Perspective**

Cross Curriculum Group Teaching.

The first lesson of this unit can be taught in a group setting with combined classes. We used the library and asked the students to select their artists as well as begin the research component during the same class. We utilized this time to clarify questions about what students needed to do at home (the image log) and what would be completed at school

(the second sheet of our handout that includes personal information about the artist and their source information). If it is not conducive to team teach this part of the lesson, it could easily be completed in the art room by collecting research materials and utilizing the information on the back of the Impressionist reproduction that you have in your print collection.

Due to a collaborative approach to this unit, different parts of the unit will be carried out simultaneously by a multitude of different teachers throughout the school.

### Lesson 1 Research

Goal: Students will investigate and become familiar with an impressionist artist of their choice. They will keep an image log. Every night for a week students will look up one piece of art that their artist painted and fill out information about the artwork. Included will be the title, a short description of the subject matter, a response, and a quick sketch of the piece. Students will use their information to help them get to know their Impressionist artist. They will start to see a pattern emerge; each artist has a specific style and subject matter that they prefer to capture.

This lesson will be taught in the library with double classes. Then students can continue researching their artist on the computer and investigating the resources the library has to offer on this time period.

#### *Introduction:*

Have student read the article "Two Minor Exhibitions."<sup>14</sup> to help students empathize and understand what the impressionist artists felt during the time they were creating this new art movement. *Impression-Sunrise* by Monet will be on the board so students can see where the impressionist got their name and what the critic was looking at when he wrote his article for the times of London. I will show students the image log and we will fill in one image together using Monet's *Impression-Sunrise*.

Brainpop.com offers short video clips, online quizzes, and interesting facts about all sorts of different topics. I find this website useful in an elementary school level as an introduction to art concepts and art history. The Brain Pop video on Impressionism is short, to the point, and age appropriate. It highlights their rebellion against the standard art of the time and gives students a quick background of understanding. This video will be shown to give context to students prior to researching their individual artists.

#### *Process*

I will place all the different reproductions of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art (big and small) on the center table (See appendix 3 for a list of artists). Students will select one piece that they like and complete one log on this artist while in class using the reproduction. Whatever artwork they choose will be the artist they will research. This

handout (located under appendix 2) will ask about the artist's life including questions such as: What country they are from? When they lived how long they lived? Tell us one interesting fact about your artist? Etcetera. To help create a connection to the artist, opinion questions such as why they picked their artist and their personal opinion of the art are included in the handouts. After they finish their first log they will use the resources of the library to fill in the rest of the information on their artist.

### *Closure*

Students will share one fact that surprised them about their artist.

### Lesson 2 Painting Movement

Goal: Students will gain a sense of what it was like to be Monet and practice painting using a limited palette to create a painting of an object in motion.(i.e. a birds in flight) This will give students a hands-on experience of what it is like to capture a fleeting moment in time. While Monet was trying to capture the different ways that light effected buildings, the ever spinning rotation of the earth around the sun makes it impossible for light to be the same for more than a brief moment. The essence of motion will be the trick in this painting. This lesson will take two art periods to complete.

### *List of Materials*

12"x18" white drawing paper, acrylic paint, paint brushes, palettes

### *Introduction*

Students will look at *Impression-Sunrise* by Monet. We will have a brief discussion of the art using Blooms taxonomy of questioning. Understanding: Description: What is this a painting of? What time of day is it? Applying: Interpret: Why are there bright orange lines through the middle of the painting? What was the artist trying to capture? Analyze: This painting was very important. Why do you think people hated this painting? Evaluate: Does this painting make you upset. Why or why not? Could you capture this in a different way? Create: Students will be given the opportunity to create their own version of an impressionist painting

I will read *Monet Paints a Day* to the students. We will discuss what they know about Monet and what he was trying to capture with his painting. We will think-pair-share our impressions of Monet and a time that they were so involved in something that they were caught off guard or surprised.

### *Process*

After writing the definition of impression on the board, students will be asked to read it out loud. While the students work I will play a video clip of a bird flying ( I used wings of Paradise on Youtube). We will attempt to capture the impression of movement while being inspired by the birds in flight. I will give a demonstration on how to begin our bird paintings and everyone's paintings will be unique. Students will layout the basics with pencil on paper.

The students will each get their own pallet of acrylic paints. We will paint quickly to capture the bird in flight. I will place the video of the birds in flight on again to remind the students of what they are trying to capture.

### *Closure*

Students will think-pair-share again by telling a neighbor one impression that they discovered today about impressionism.

One technique that I use at the end of many lessons is the merry go round of compliments. Students will walk around the tables to see how other students solved this problem. They will then share their compliments with the class.

### *Lesson 3 Plein Air*

Goal: Students will paint outside from observation in the same manor that the impressionists painted. This lesson will take 2-3 class periods. The first day will be an introduction to *plein air* painting. The second day will be an extended time outside. An hour and a half seemed like an appropriate amount for set up, paint time, and cleaning time. The third day will be contingent on what is accomplished outside. Some students may need more time to finish up and add details to their paintings. This can be done inside with photos of the location.

### *List of Materials*

12"x18" white drawing paper, 11"x14" canvas board, easels, acrylic paint, paint brushes, palettes

### *Introduction*

I will show the students two videos, one is on painting *plein air* style and the other is video shot in 1915 of Monet painting in his garden. Both these videos can be found on YouTube. Students really enjoy seeing the video of Monet. It helps to make him more real when they see him using his palette and painting the water lilies of his garden.

On the *plein air* painting day I will set up a table with paints, stacked covered palettes (preloaded with paint), paint brushes, easels, canvas boards, or thick paper on clip

boards, baby wipes, cups, old shirt aprons, table easels, and a bucket of water. This day works really well if you get a couple of volunteers to help set up, fill palettes with paint, and tear down. Students will get a quick demonstration to remind them to capture the light while painting like Monet. I will give a demonstration of how to lay the paint on the canvas, mix colors, and use your pallet to your advantage. During this demonstration I will remind students of light and dark color contrast and color mixing theory. This should be review not a new concept. Due to the spiraling curriculum of the art department students go over color theory every year. The additions of new ideas in color theory are built upon previous knowledge.

### *Process*

Students will take their board and their papers outside to select the perfect spot. They will sit down and do a sketch to layout where the different objects will be placed in the picture. Students will use their prior knowledge of space and observational drawing to create an accurate landscape.

Student will work quickly to lay in the landscape and capture the light on the grass, field, building, and anything else within their view. Students will not worry too much with creating an exact replica of the landscape but instead capturing the light and essence of the space.

### *Closure*

After we clean up we will gather in a group and discuss how the painting is similar to that of the artist that they researched.

At this point you can assess if a third day is required. Some students may have a finished piece and other might need to add more value to create the landscape.

## Lesson 4 Capturing the Artist

Goal: In this culminating lesson students will be asked to create a piece of art that is a response to all the research they have done on their artist. Students will choose to capture either the style or subject matter of their artists in a personal way.

### *List of Materials*

For the final project a variety of materials may be needed, including but not limited to watercolors, tempera, oil pastels, chalk pastels, and charcoal.

### *Introduction*

Show a sample of an artist response to a famous piece of artwork. Sevan Melikyan's version of *Impressionist Sunrise* is a great example of a modern interpretation on a classic painting. Melikyan's process includes creating color field versions of famous paintings. I created a drawing based on the painting by Berthe Morrisot titled *le Berceau (the cradle)*. My interpretation is a self-portrait that shows my child on a modern changing table with my daughter pulling my hair. I will share with the students the process I used to create the drawing and answer the list of questions that I will ask them at the end of this lesson (see closer).

### *Process*

Students will sketch out and plan what they will be doing to combine their personal life with the style of subject matter of the Impressionist painter that they are studying.

After laying out their ideas students will need to decide on a medium. This choice is important in helping them to come up with a creative solution to this task. Students will work in a variety of media from paint to chalk to help create a reflection of their own life with that of the artist they are studying.

### *Closer*

Think Pair Share our impressions of Impressionism to see if our class idea and thoughts about the artwork have changed or been altered in anyway.

Students will share their artwork with the class and answer a few questions to help explain their ideas and process. Questions will include: What medium did you use? Did you choose to emulate your artist in style, subject matter, or both? How is this piece a representation of you and the artist you studied? How is your life reflected in your art?

Students will also fill out a rubric to self-assess what they have learned throughout this lesson (See appendix 4 for rubric).

## **Lesson Activities- Technology Perspective**

Within the technology classes, students are asked to learn many programs. One of the programs that we teach in the fourth grade is an introduction to power point. Students will use their image log that they completed at home to create a power point that showcases the information that they learned about their artists. Students will also use their time in the computer to lab to create a digital representation of an Impressionist piece.

## **Lesson Activities- Media Center**

Students in the Media Center will be utilizing their time to learn the Big Six method of research while researching their Impressionist artists. Their collaborative group project will result in a poster that later becomes part of a large hallway timeline.

While working collaboratively with your coworkers is not necessary for this project, it is useful in helping kids to connect all the pieces of the project to exemplify their learning and take them to a higher cognitive level. Working with others also helps to smooth out some of the problems that arise as well as foster an environment for creative solutions and model positive working relationships.

## **Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards**

4.v.1 Use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively.

4.v.1.1 Use appropriate art vocabulary to compare artists' styles.

4.v.1.2 Apply personal choices while creating art.

4.v.1.3 Infer meaning from art.

4.v.2 Apply creative and critical thinking skills to artistic expression.

4.v.2.1 Identify different successful solutions to artistic problems.

4.v.3 Create art using a variety of tools, media, and processes, safely and appropriately.

4.v.3.3 Create art using the processes of drawing, painting, weaving, printing, stitchery, collage, mixed media, sculpture, ceramics, and current technology.

4.cx.1 Understand the global, historical, societal, and cultural contexts of the visual arts.

4.cx.1.4 Explain how place and time influence ideas, issues, and themes found in art.

4.cr.1 Use critical analysis to generate responses to a variety of prompts.

4.cr.1.1 Use visual clues to interpret the content of art.

By approaching this unit from many angles with many different teachers, we are tackling the complexities of the time period in ways that are relatable to students. Students ability to explain how the world that the impressionists lived in directly influenced the art that they made and how they promoted their art through the creation of group gallery shows is a complex standard to try to tackle, but is easily manageable when we approach this from a more historical eye. Art criticism and creative thinking is a practiced skill that students in my art program are well versed in. Within that students are constantly searching for meaning through visual context clues.

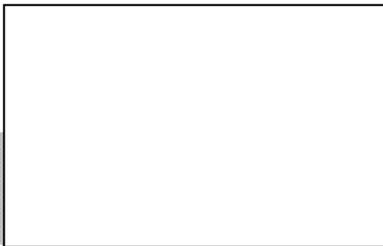
## Appendix 2: Image Log and Research Handout

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Choose a masterpiece created by your impressionist artist. Then fill in the areas below. Use the box to create a sketch of the picture you have selected. Please hand in your completed image log of 6 different pieces by one artist to Mrs. Tew.

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_



Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Opinion: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill in the answers below about the artist you are studying.

**Artist Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where is your artist from?**

**When did he/she live?**

**How old was the artist when he/she died?**

**What is one interesting fact about your artist?**

**Why did you select this artist?**

### **Appendix 3: List of Artists**

#### List of Impressionist Artists:

1. Manet, Edouard
2. Monet, Claude
3. Morisot, Berthe
4. Pissarro, Camille
5. Renoir, Pierre- Auguste
6. Sisley, Alfred
7. Caillebotte, Gustave
8. Cassatt, Mary (American)
9. Degas, Edgar
10. Boudin, Eugene
11. De Nittis, Giuseppe
12. Zandomenighi, Federico

#### Post Impressionist Artists:

1. Seurat, Georges
2. Gauguin, Paul
3. Signac, Paul
4. Van Gogh, Vincent
5. Cezanne, Paul
6. Toulouse- Lautrec, Henri

## Appendix 4: Rubric for Lesson 4

### Student Self-Assessment Rubric

Within the impressionist unit I did a great job...
My favorite part of this unit was when....
One thing I wish we would have done differently was...

Please select one box for each category and total your school. Be honest but don't forget you're awesome!!

	3	2	1	
Research	I completed all the research components including citing my sources and went above and beyond to seek out more interesting information about my artist while being reflective of his or her contribution to the Impressionist movement.	I completed all the research components including citing my sources while being reflective or the artists contribution to the movement	I completed all the research component including citing my sources.	
Creativity	I came up with and implemented an innovative way to solve a problem. I used the steps of generating ideas, selecting my best options, and implementing the idea into a finished product that is reflective of my life and the life of my chosen impressionist artist.	I came up with and implemented an innovative way to solve a problem. I used the steps of generating ideas, selecting and implementing the idea into a finished product.	I came up with and implemented a way to solve a problem.	
Style	I utilized the short brush stroke and unblended colors of the Impressionist style while painting my fleeting moment of movement and on my <i>plein air</i> landscape.	I utilized either the short brush stroke or the unblended color technique of the impressionist style on either my <i>plein air</i> landscape or my movement painting.	I painted a fleeting moment and a landscape.	
Total Points				

## List of Materials for Classroom Use

### Art Prints

Any variety of Impressionist Art Prints that you have available to you will work for this unit. I also have some museum pocket guides which can be useful bits of information for the students. I used Monet's *Impression-Sunrise*, Monet's *Garden at Sainte-Adresse*, Monet's *Waterlilies*, Degas' *Frieze of Dancers*, Cassatt's *Mother and Child*, Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere*.

Claude Monet - Filmed Painting Outdoors (1915)." YouTube. Accessed November 15, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJE4QUNgaeg&list>.

Monet comes to life on the black and white screen with this quick three minute video of him painting in his garden. I like to show a print of his water lilies on the board while we are watching this so the students can see an example of what he might have been painting.

Danneberg, Julie. *Monet Paints a Day*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2012

This book is based on a true day in the life of Monet. He is painting too close to high tide and is surprised by the ocean. Full of great facts and primary source material.

"How to Paint a Plein Air Landscape - The Art League School." YouTube. Accessed November 15, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9JsYEZJBWE&list>.

There are many different how to videos on the internet but I selected this one because it is short, concise and a great example of plein air technique.

"Impressionism." BrainPOP. Accessed November 15, 2014.

<http://www.brainpop.com/artsandmusic/artconcepts/impressionism>.

This short animated clip gives students a quick overview of who the impressionist were. It doesn't go into great detail but is a great introduction to the movement. There are also worksheets, quizzes, and FAQ's on this site. I didn't use these but some teachers might find it useful.

"Sevan Melikyan - New York Artist." Sevan Melikyan - New York Artist. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://offer.clicktech.net/sevanmelikyan/home.htm>.

Useful example of how artists can use famous works to create a contemporary twist. This is for use in conjunction with lesson four.

"Wings to Paradise 1 of 2 1080p HD." YouTube. Accessed November 15, 2014.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vv6Q\\_SW71zM&index=1&list](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vv6Q_SW71zM&index=1&list).

I used this video during lesson two to help my students think through different ways to paint a fleeting moment in time. Many students found this video

aesthetically inspiring.

### Reading list for Students

"Art Project - Google Cultural Institute." Art Project - Google Cultural Institute.

Accessed November 15, 2014.

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project>.

The google art project is an amazing site that connects artwork from museum collections around the world. This site allows viewers to take digital tours of a museum and zoom in and out of the artwork that is on the wall. You can also searching all the museums by artists and creating one list or save your own collection using your google account.

Bjork, Christina, and Lena Anderson. *Linnea in Monet's garden*. Stockholm: R. & S. Books , 1987.

A girl travels with her neighbor through Paris and to Monet's Garden in Giverny to learn all about Monet. A classic read for any student who is interested in travel and art.

Boutan, Mila. *Van Gogh: Art Activity Pack*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1995.

A simple book that walks students through the elements of art used in Van Gogh's paintings.

Cole, Kristin N, and Maryann Leffler. *Edgar Degas: Paintings That Dance*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 2001.

This book is fantastic. It is written as a school report by an elementary student on Degas. The student even includes a drawing that she creates based on Edgar Degas' ballerinas.

Flux, Paul. *Paul Gauguin*. Chicago, Ill.: Heinemann Library, 2002.

This is short book about Gauguin's life and all the places that he traveled.

"Impressionism." Impressionism. Accessed November 15, 2014.

<http://www.artcyclopedia.com/history/impressionism.html>.

"Kimbell Art Museum." Kimbell Art Museum. Accessed November 15, 2014.

<http://www.kimbellart.org/>.

"National Gallery of Art." National Gallery of Art. Accessed November 15, 2014.

<http://www.nga.gov/>.

"The Metropolitan Museum of Art - Home." Home. Accessed November 15, 2014.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/>.

"The National Gallery, London." The National Gallery, London. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/>.

Raboff, Ernest. *Paul Gauguin: Art for Children*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

This series is a bit outdated in style of layout but still has some pertinent information about the artists' life.

Raboff, Ernest Lloyd. *Henri De Toulouse-Lautrec*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

This series is a bit outdated in style of layout but still has some pertinent information about the artists' life.

Raboff, Ernest Lloyd. *Pierre-Auguste Renoir*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

This series is a bit outdated in style of layout but still has some pertinent information about the artists' life.

Roalf, Peggy. *Dancers*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1992.

This book is focused on Dancers in Art not just the impressionist, but it has works by Degas, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, Seurat

Waldron, Ann. *Who Was Claude Monet?* New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 2009.

This is a great chapter book about Claude Monet. Some of my students who wanted to learn more turned to this book for more in depth look at Monet.

"Welcome to Artble." Artble: The Home of Passionate Art Lovers. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.artble.com/>.

### **Bibliography for Teachers**

"Art Project - Google Cultural Institute." Art Project - Google Cultural Institute.

Accessed November 15, 2014.

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project>.

The google art project is an amazing site that connects artwork from museum collections around the world. This site allows viewers to take digital tours of a museum and zoom in and out of the artwork that is on the wall. You can also searching all the museums by artists and creating one list or save your own collection using your google account.

"Bloom's Taxonomy." Bloom's Taxonomy. Accessed November 15, 2014.

[http://ww2.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms\\_taxonomy.htm](http://ww2.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm).

A good resource for the steps of Bloom's revised taxonomy.

Butler, Adam, Claire Van Cleave, and Susan Stirling. *The Art Book*. London: Phaidon, 1994.

This is a great pocket reference of artists across time.

Hauser, Arnold. "Impressionism." in *The Social History of Art Volume Four*. Translated by Stanley Godman. New York: Vintage Books, 1985.

This comprehensive book is a very interesting and enlightened read.

Unfortunately because of its publishing date the prints are all in black and white.

Janson, H. W., and Anthony F. Janson. "Realism and Impressionism." in *History of Art*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

This book is the bible of art history and widely used in college art programs across the country.

Merriman, John M. *A History of Modern Europe*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.

This book has a complete history of Europe and is very useful in understanding the many intricacies of events that help to mold the outcomes of history.

Plazy, Gilles. *The History of Art in Pictures: Western Art from Prehistory to the Present*. New York: MetroBooks, 2001.

This book is filled with large reproductions and a brief synopsis of the different art movements. This would be a great book for middle school and young high school students.

Rosenfeld, Ph.D., Jason. "The Salon and The Royal Academy in the Nineteenth Century". *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, Accessed October 10, 2014, [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd\\_sara.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd_sara.htm)

Great quick read that explains the art world of the time.

Samu, Margaret. "Impressionism: Art and Modernity". *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, Accessed October 10, 2014,

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd\\_imml.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd_imml.htm)

Great quick overview of the impressionist art movement

"Two Minor Exhibitions," *The Times* (London), April 24, 1883.

This primary source is a critique of one of the impressionist group shows.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Christina Bjork, and Lena Anderson, *Linnea in Monet's garden*. (Stockholm: R. & S. Books, 1987). 16.

<sup>2</sup> John M Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 879.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold Hauser, "Impressionism." *The Social History of Art Volume Four* (London: Routledge, 1985), 169.

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- <sup>4</sup> Arnold Hauser, "Impressionism." *The Social History of Art. Volume Four* (London: Routledge, 1985), 169.
- <sup>5</sup> Laura Auricchio, "Claude Monet (1840–1926)". In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: Accessed November 18, 2014, [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cmon/hd\\_cmon.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cmon/hd_cmon.htm)
- <sup>6</sup> Jason Rosenfeld, Ph.D, "The Salon and The Royal Academy in the Nineteenth Century". *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, Accessed October 10, 2014, [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd\\_sara.ht](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd_sara.ht)
- <sup>7</sup> Gilles Plazy, *The History of Art in Pictures: Western Art from Prehistory to the Present*. (New York: MetroBooks, 2001), 143.
- <sup>8</sup> Jason Rosenfeld, Ph.D, "The Salon and The Royal Academy in the Nineteenth Century". *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, Accessed October 10, 2014, [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd\\_sara.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd_sara.htm)
- <sup>9</sup> H. W Janson, and Anthony F. Janson "Realism and Impresionism." in *History of Art*,. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 709.
- <sup>10</sup> H. W Janson, and Anthony F. Janson "Realism and Impresionism." in *History of Art*,. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 713.
- <sup>11</sup> Margaret Samu, "Impressionism: Art and Modernity". *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, Accessed October 10, 2014, [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd\\_imml.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd_imml.htm)
- <sup>12</sup> Katharine J. Lualdi, 2012. *Sources of The making of the West: peoples and cultures : a concise history, Volume II: Since 1500*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins.
- <sup>13</sup> John M Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 893.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Times* (London), "Two Minor Exhibitions," April 24, 1883.