



## The Ambassadors

by Hans Holbein the Younger

This painting, done in 1533, depicts two French ambassadors to England who were present at the court of Henry VIII. The man on the left is Jean de Dintville, a wealthy landowner. The man on the right is Georges de Selve, the Bishop of Lavaur.

Some say this painting represents the discord between the religious and secular authorities. The lute, which has a broken string, represents discord and sits next to a hymnal by Luther, another emphasis on the strife in Europe.

The other fascinating element of this painting is the strange shape at the bottom. If you tilt the image to the left until you are looking at it at a sharp angle you can see it is an anamorphic human skull. No one knows why Holbein did this, but it is accepted that the skull represents vanitas, death comes to all, a common theme in the late middle ages.



## Portrait of Desiderius Erasmus

by Hans Holbein the Younger

This is one of three portraits of Erasmus painted in 1523 by Holbein. Of the three, this one is the most famous. Erasmus was a Catholic, but his philosophies often bordered on the rebellious. Erasmus commissioned this painting and others because he needed portraits to send across Europe to his many admirers. Behind Erasmus a book leans on a shelf. On the cover is inscribed "I am Hans Holbein, whom it is easier to denigrate than emulate," in Latin.



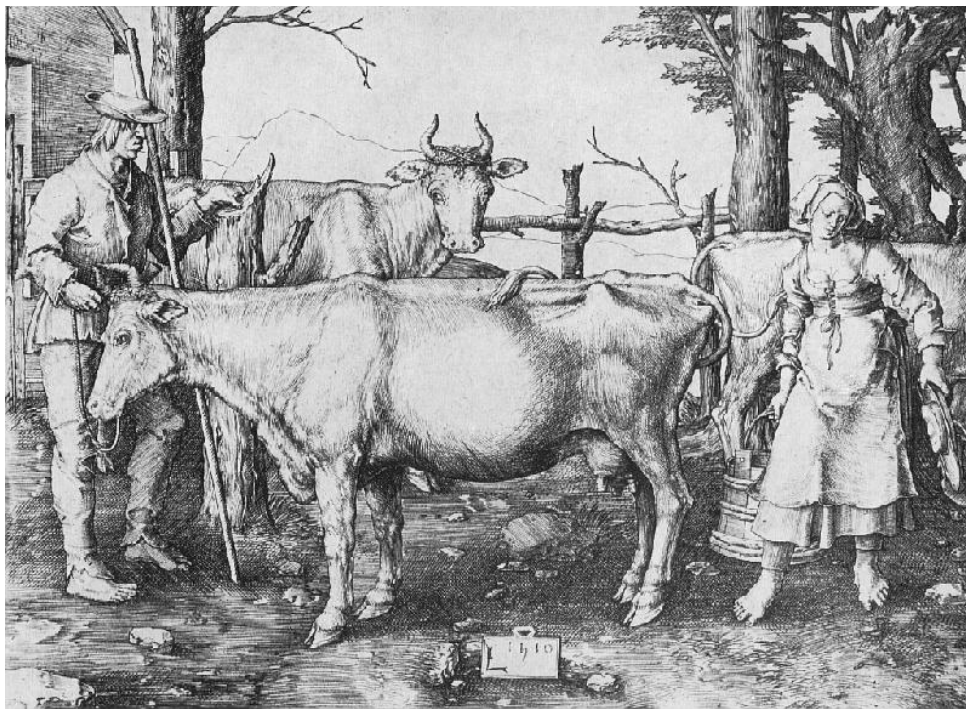


## The Dutch Proverbs

By Pieter Bruegel the Elder

This is a peasant village where the people are acting out proverbs literally. You see a man "beating his head against a brick wall", a man who is "armed to the teeth", and a man "casting roses before swine" along with about 110 other idioms and proverbs. Many of them are still known today and others are out of use or were never known in English.

Bruegel painted this in 1559 in oil on a wood panel. He liked to show the foolishness, frailties, and insanity of mankind in his paintings. He is showcasing all the behaviors these proverbs warn against. Of course, if humans didn't behave in precisely these ways, there would be no sayings to put us on guard.



## The Milkmaid

by Lucas Van Leyden

In this engraving done in 1510, we see a realistic country scene. A barefooted young man watches a shy milkmaid.

The attraction between the two is obvious. It is a purely secular and every day sort of scene. Van Leyden's realistic style and portrayal of every day scenes would influence northern artists of the next two centuries.





## Martin Luther

by Lucas Cranach the Elder

The artist was a personal friend of Martin Luther and painted many portraits of him and of sympathetic German princes. This portrait was done in 1529. The background is completely plain, unornamented, as are Luther's clothes. This is a philosophical statement about simplicity in religion as well as simplicity in every day life.



## Christ and the Adulteress

by Lucas Cranach the Elder

In this story from the Bible the Jewish leaders had caught a woman in adultery, for which the punishment was stoning.

They asked Jesus to judge her, trying to trap him. Jesus answered by saying, "He that is among you without sin, first cast a stone at her." Guilty, the accusers slunk away. It is a story of forgiveness and emphasizes grace, a key tenet of Lutheranism and a subject not attempted among Catholic artists, but which became popular among Reformation artists.

The painting was done in 1532 and is oil paint on a wood panel.





## Virgin and Child With Saint Anne

by Albrecht Dürer

The veneration of Saint Anne, the mother of Mary, was very popular in late medieval Germany where Dürer lived and worked. This painting shows the mother and grandmother of Jesus with him as an infant. Jesus is sleeping, which is a foreshadowing of his death. Anne's hand rests on Mary's shoulder and her gaze is one of consolation for the future which Anne can foresee.

The painting is oil on wood and was painted in 1519, around the same time that Dürer became a supporter and follower of Martin Luther. It is currently on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



## Last Supper

by Lucas Cranach the Younger

In the beginning of the Reformation years Martin Luther and especially John Calvin disapproved of art that depicted religious scenes. They were reacting to what they saw as worship of objects in Catholic churches (Catholics deny they ever worshiped the art). But in his later years Luther softened his stance and protestant religious art became popular again.

This was painted as an altar piece in 1565, and installed after Luther's death. It depicts many of the great reformers, including Luther, and local leaders as the apostles at the Last Supper with Christ.





## Peasant Wedding

by Pieter Bruegel the Elder

A scene of everyday life, this was painted in 1566, in oil on a wood panel. Bruegel was known as the peasant painter because he often depicted scenes from the lives of ordinary people. These sorts of paintings become common because of the Protestant Reformation. The church was no longer commissioning art and so art now had to appeal to the ordinary, though wealthy, man instead.

In this painting you can see the back wall is actually made of bales of straw. This feast is taking place inside a barn, probably the only space large enough for all the people. The bride is seated directly below the green banner with her family crowded around the table near her.



## The Calling of Saint Matthew

from the workshop of Jan Sanders van Hemessen

Hemessen was an early Reformation artist. Many of the early works depicted Biblical scenes that were moralizing. This scene warns against the lure of money, which distracts people from higher religious things.

Hemessen was one of the earliest painters of non-religious scenes as well. This painting was done in about 1540 and is a copy of an earlier work by Hemessen. This was produced by artists in Hemessen's Antwerp studio. The figures are lifelike and dramatic. The style reminds one of Italian painting.

# Reformation Art Cards

Print these art cards and descriptions onto white card stock. Cut the cards out on the solid lines.

Help your kids become familiar with these paintings and artists by playing matching games, sorting the cards, and quizzing over them.

1. Place the cards face down, with images in one group and description cards in another group. Choose one card from each group. Determine if they match. You can read the description of the painting to see if they do.
2. Arrange the paintings in order of date. Which were painted first? Can you see a progression of techniques or style in the cards?
3. Hold up an image card and see if your child can remember the title of the painting. After these are mastered, use the image cards to memorize the titles and artists together. Finally master the titles, artists, and a little information about the painting.
4. Go online and find more art by the same artists. Can you tell which artist painted the piece just by looking at the style?