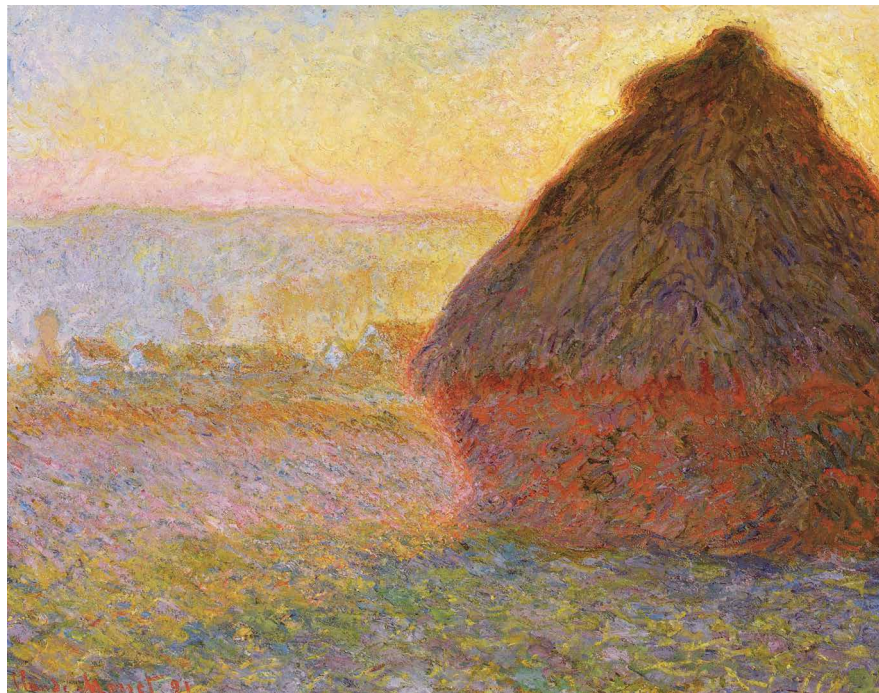




Impression, Sunrise by Claude Monet

This painting, done in 1872, gave the name to the Impressionist movement. It shows the port of Le Havre in France, the artists hometown. This painting is one of a series that showed the port at different times of day, in different qualities of light. The purpose of the painting was to capture the essence of the light, the colors, the mood of the scene, not to reproduce the details faithfully.

The two row boats in the center and the red sun are the focal points of the painting. The tall masted ships and the smokestacks in the hazy distance are less a focus, but contribute to the modern feeling of the painting. Completed just after the Franco-Prussia war, this was a statement of patriotism and optimism for a modern thriving France.



Haystacks (sunset) by Claude Monet

This is one of 25 paintings of haystacks done by Monet during the summer and fall of 1890 through the early spring of 1891. The haystacks were an ordinary feature of grain fields near Monet's home in Giverny during the fall harvest. They protected the heads of wheat until the threshing machines could be brought round to the various farms. Monet's purpose was to capture how the changing light and seasons affected the homey scene. He and his stepdaughter, Blanche, carted dozens of canvasses to and from the fields each day and Monet worked on them in turn, as the light most closely resembling a particular painting returned.



Water Lilies and the Japanese Bridge by Claude Monet

Painted in the artist's garden at Giverny, this painting was done in 1897-99 after the artist finally began to achieve some financial success as a painter. Monet crafted his garden to create beautiful scenes for his paintings.

When he did this painting, Monet set up several canvasses at a time, only working on one as long as the light was correct. He would then wait for the correct light before going back to the painting and continuing work.



Dance at Le moulin de la Galette by Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Painted in 1876, this is a scene from everyday Paris, where on a Sunday afternoon working class people would gather to dance, drink wine, and eat galette, a brown bread, in the courtyard in front of the mill where the grain was ground for the bread. The painting shows a snapshot of real life, painted as the artist saw it in that moment. In spite of this a few of the people in the painting were friends of Renoir's who posed for him as he worked, including the girl in the blue and pink striped dress in the center of the painting, the others seated directly around her and several of the dancing couples just behind them.



Luncheon of the Boating Party by Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Painted in 1882, this was shown in the Impressionist Exhibition of 1883 where several art critics declared it the best of the show. It is still one of the most famous of the Impressionist paintings. Many of the artist's friends are socializing on a balcony of a restaurant near the water. The woman with the dog is Renoir's future wife, Aline.

The painting is split obliquely along the line of the railing with most of the figures to the right. The painting uses a masterful play of light, dancing across the faces of the figures and the white table lines and shirts of the men. It is at once a still life, landscape, and portrait.



Bridge at Villeneuve-la-Garenne by Alfred Sisley

This was painted in 1872. The artist often painted bridges, emblems of modernity and a connected world. In this painting the light plays on the water as people enjoy the boats and the summer sun. Large visible brush strokes are a common feature of Impressionism and Sisley's work.



Summer Scene (The Bathers) by Frederic Bazille

This painting, 1869, was probably begun in a studio and then finished later in the outdoors when the artist went on a trip to the south of France. It may have been inspired by a novel by Manette Salomon in which a brightly lit summer scene of bathers is described.

The artist was one of the first group of painters to begin the Impressionist movement but he died in the Franco-Prussian War just a few years after this was painted and before the first Impressionist exhibition.



The Fifer by Edouard Manet

Manet was considered a father-figure by many of the Impressionist artists. Not only was he a generation older, but he also was the first to push the limits and challenge the assumptions of the established art critics of the late 1800s.

This painting, completed in 1866, has a monochrome background, a flat style, and elevates an everyday ordinary boy into the spotlight. This painting was heavily influenced by the work of Diego Velázquez, whose work Manet viewed on a trip to Spain.



Hay Harvest by Camille Pissarro

Painted in 1901, this is typical of the artists' style. He paints an everyday scene, un-contrived, and of ordinary people doing ordinary things. The brush strokes are large and visible. A great deal of attention is paid to the light in the scene and variations in tone are shown with distinct blotches that combine to give the viewer an overall impression without any hard lines anywhere.

Pissarro, like Manet, was a role model and father figure for the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters.



The Boating Party by Mary Cassatt

Painted in 1893-4, this work uses a simplified palette, flat figures, and interesting angles, popularized by Japanese paintings in the late 1800s. The viewer is looking down into the boat at an unusual angle that pushes the horizon up to the top of the painting. The work is sharply geometrical with hard lines, and strong shapes. The colors are less naturalistic and flatter than most Impressionist paintings, helping the transition into Post-Impressionism.



The Rehearsal Onstage by Edgar Degas

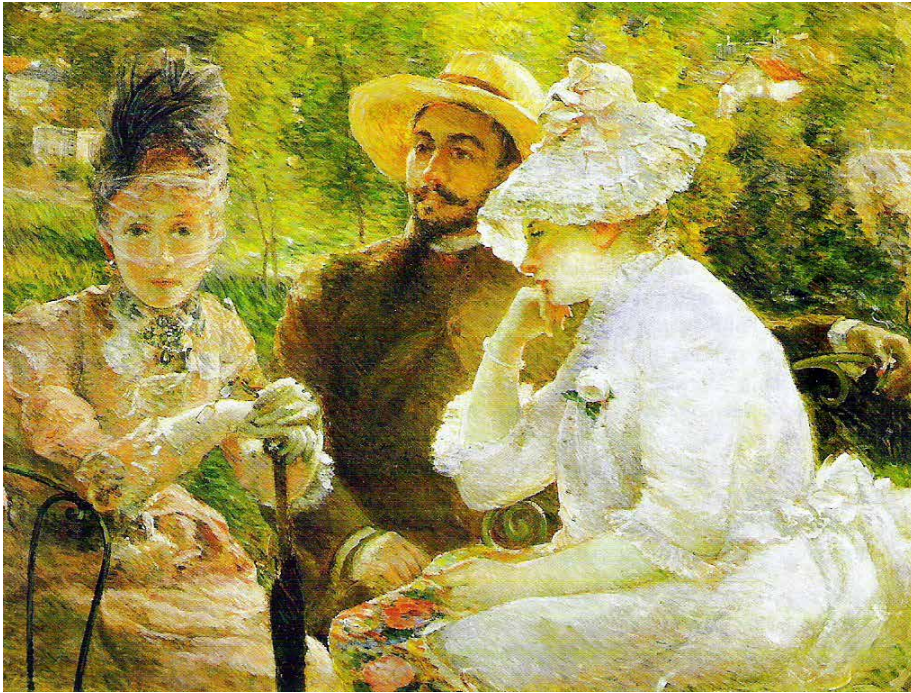
This artist is well known for his paintings of dancers, over half his works being on this subject. This one was painted in 1874. Usually Degas painted in oil on canvas, but this piece is done with pastels on paper and then mounted on canvas.

Though he is usually grouped with the Impressionists, Degas himself considered himself a modern realist. He did not necessarily paint scenes directly from life and he strove for more perfection in stroke and composition than the Impressionists in general. Still his focus on everyday people and use of light makes his style feel impressionistic.



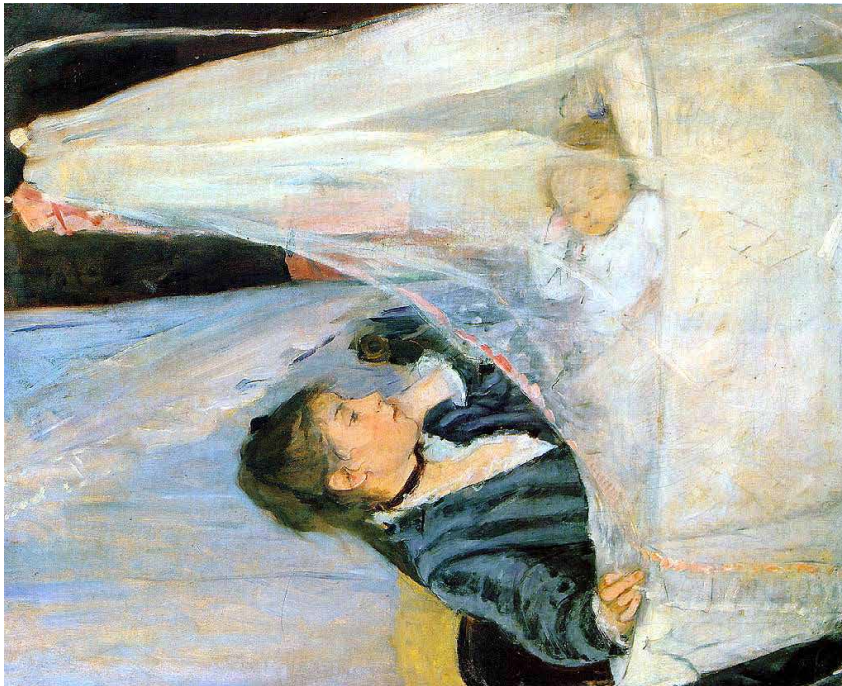
The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer by Edgar Degas

This is a sculpture of a girl first created by the artist in wax. Later, after his death, it was cast in bronze. Several versions exist, all with real bodice, skirt, slippers, and hair. The dancer is posed as though working through her dance routine, not in a natural stance. Her legs and arms are taut and her head is thrown back. The expression on her face is not relaxed or pleasant, but focused as though concentrating and probably not enjoying herself at the moment. The girl was a real dancer named Marie van Goethem who worked in the Paris Opera Ballet.



On the Terrace at Sèvres by Marie Bracquemond

This was painted in 1880. Unlike most Impressionists Bracquemond spent time preparing for her paintings by designing compositions and making sketches. But her style is definitely free, easy, filled with light, large brush strokes, and usually composed outdoors.



The Cradle by Berthe Morisot

This was done in 1872 and shows the artists sister, Edma, watching over her infant child. Morisot often did paintings of women and children, but this, her first on this subject, is the most famous. The mother's gaze and the baby's along with the angle of the curtain in the background create a diagonal line across the painting, linking the mother and child together. The curtains surrounding the pair give a feeling of intimacy and connection between the two.

Impressionist Art Cards

Impressionism began in France in the early 1860s. A group of young artists wanted to push the boundaries of art by painting quickly, in the outdoors, scenes that appealed to them because of the colors, the light, and the emotion of the scene. They rejected precise detail, painstaking composition, and deep symbolic meaning in favor of their impressions of the moment. The young artists wanted to paint landscapes and contemporary scenes instead of mythological or historical subjects.

The movement was rejected by the established art salons and the Impressionist painters struggled to find acceptance and money to pay the bills. Emperor Napoleon III got word of the rejections and declared the public ought to judge the works themselves and so a "Salon of the Refused" was set up and these artists displayed their work. The critics hated it, but the public loved it. This wasn't the end of the struggle though. The critics and old-school artists continually put roadblocks in the way. Eventually in 1874 the artists held their own salon. Most of the artist's work only sold well after their deaths. Today Impressionist paintings are highly desired art.

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?