



MONET

and the Impressionists

EDUCATION KIT FRENCH LANGUAGE SUPPLEMENT (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

As a painter I've done what I can, and to me that seems sufficient. I don't want to be compared to the great masters of the past, and my painting belongs to the critics. That is enough.

Claude Monet, letter to G or J Berheim-Jeune, 24 Nov 1918 in Daniel Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: biographie et catalogue raisonné*, vol 4, La bibliothèque des arts, Lausanne 1985, p 401

- How many Impressionist painters can you name, other than Claude Monet?
- Do you know what the word 'impression' means?
- Compare Impressionist paintings to artworks that came before them.
- What colour is missing from the Impressionists' palette?
- What do you like about the paintings in this exhibition?
- Look carefully at the sky in each painting. Do you notice anything unusual or striking?
- Few people appear in these paintings. Can you suggest what each person is doing in *Rue de la Bavole*, *Honfleur* by Monet, *The pond* by Paul Cézanne and *Kai Province: Monkey Bridge* by Utagawa Hiroshige. Would people still do these things today? Would they dress differently?
- On a map of France find the different towns and villages where the artworks were painted.
- In which town was Monet born?
- Find out which countries Monet visited in his lifetime. Create a timeline of key events in his life.
- Monet lived in a century that brought many changes to life. Can you name a few? How would these changes affect a person's life? In your opinion, is it better that these changes happened? Do you feel that change today is happening quickly or slowly?
- Would artists today use the same tools the Impressionist artists used?
- This style of painting has influenced some painters in Australia. Research Australian Impressionism, also known as the Heidelberg school, and compare the approach to the French Impressionists.
- Create a plein-air painting. Go outside with your painting materials, observe the environment, select a view and paint a composition in the Impressionist style.

Art Gallery of New South Wales
11 October 08 – 26 January 09
www.monet.org.au

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MONET'S EARLY YEARS: SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Claude Monet

Rue de la Bavole, Honfleur c1864

oil on canvas, 55.9 x 61 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of John T Spaulding 48.580

- Does this painting appeal to you? Why or why not?
- Can you guess the time of day by the shadows cast by the buildings? Give reasons for your choice.
- Would there be more people in the street at different times of the day? Give some examples.
- Have a close look at what the people in this painting are wearing. Do you think it is summer or winter?
- What do you think might be around the corner? Where might the woman in the blue skirt and the child be going?
- Where is the town of Honfleur? On what do you base your judgement? Locate this town on a map.
- What might you hear if you were the man with the brown jacket? Choose one of the following or imagine the sound yourself:

<i>music</i>	<i>voices</i>	<i>children playing</i>
<i>bicycles</i>	<i>cars</i>	<i>aeroplanes</i>
- What might people buy from the shop on the right that has the sign 'denrées' (look up the word in a dictionary)? What would a shop like it be called today?
- Draw the inside of the shop. Would it be like a supermarket? Would it be like a country general store? Would there be a lot of light? Would there be many people working in the shop?
- Imagine a family living inside one of the houses. Draw and label a floor plan showing the rooms in which they live.



MONET AND EARLY IMPRESSIONIST

Paul Cézanne

The pond c1877-79

oil on canvas, 47 x 56.2 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Tompkins Collection – Arthur Gordon Tompkins Fund 48.244

- What do you know about Cézanne? Research the artist and look at examples of his work.
- Make up a short dialogue between the man and the woman sitting on the left of the picture talking about the day.
- There is a man sleeping under a tree. Why is he tired? Write an account of what happened in his life the day before.
- All the men have hats. Why are the women not wearing hats?
- Would it be easy for the women to participate in an outdoor activity such as a game of pétanque, towing a boat or fishing?
- The picnickers have finished their meal. What do think they have eaten?
- If you were having a picnic on the grass today, what would you bring?
- The picnickers are beside a pond. What things might they see around them? What might they smell?
- Be very quiet, close your eyes and imagine yourself in this scene. What sounds (if any) can you hear?



MONET AND THE TRIUMPH OF IMPRESSIONISM: THE 1880s

Claude Monet
Cap Martin, near Menton 1884

oil on canvas, 67.2 x 81.6 cm
 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Juliana Cheney Edwards Collection 25.128

- What do you see first when you look at this painting?
- How do you feel when you look at this painting?
- Discuss the techniques Monet has used in this painting, including brushstrokes, contrast, shapes and forms.
- Look at the colours in this painting. What colours has Monet used for the road? How many colours has Monet used to represent white? What atmosphere do the colours create?
- Menton is on the Cote d’Azur. Find out the name of the mountains you can see in the background through the clouds.
- Is the air still in this picture or is there a breeze blowing? Would it be warm enough to swim? What clues are there to the temperature?
- There are houses along the shore across the water. Imagine you are staying in one of them for a holiday. Write a postcard to your best friend telling him/her about the landscape, the weather and your activities.
- Compare *Rue de la Bavole, Honfleur* to this painting. What has changed in the way Monet paints? How has he conveyed the light in these pictures?



MONET AND JAPANESE ART

Utagawa Hiroshige I
 Publisher: Koshimuraya Heisuke

Kai Province: Monkey Bridge Japan, Edo period, 1853
 woodblock print, ink and colour on paper, 37 x 25.4 cm
 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, William Sturgis Bigelow Collection 11.26224

- What is the first thing you feel when you look at this Japanese woodblock print?
- Find out about the artist Utagawa Hiroshige I and collect images of his work.
- How many people can you count on the bridge? Imagine a conversation between two of the people: a child and an adult.
- What kind of trees do you think these are?
- Imagine you are walking with your family across this bridge. Who is with you? Does the bridge feel safe? Is anyone afraid of heights? What can you see down below?
- Write your own haiku in French about this print. Remember the number of syllables allowed. Use a dictionary or thesaurus to help you find the words you need.
- What did Monet like about Japanese prints? Would he have been influenced by any of the techniques/effects? Can you find a painting by Monet in this exhibition where the Japanese influence on his art is obvious?



MONET'S SERIES

Claude Monet

Charing Cross Bridge (overcast day) 1900

oil on canvas, 60.6 x 91.5 cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, given by Janet Hubbard Stevens
in memory of her mother, Janet Watson Hubbard 1978.465

- Where is Charing Cross Bridge? Over which river is it built? What can you see in the background on the right of the painting? Find a photograph of this bridge and the area around it today. What is different between then and now?
- What is your first impression of the bridge and the water? Do you think Monet painted this picture en plein air? Where would he have stood to paint it?
- What is the weather like? Did the weather influence the way Monet painted? How?
- Research Monet's visits to London. Did he go often? How long did he stay? How did he get there? Did he like the city? How did he capture its atmosphere in his paintings?
- Imagine you are Monet and write a letter to one of your Impressionist friends to describe how you feel about London, the river, the light and the weather.
- Monet's philosophy of painting was to paint what you really see, not what you think you ought to see. How true was he to this philosophy in painting *Charing Cross Bridge*?



MONET AND IMPRESSIONISM AFTER 1900

Edgar Degas

Dancer looking at the sole of her right foot 1900–10, cast 1919–21

bronze, cire perdue (lost wax), 48 cm height
Art Gallery of New South Wales, bequest of Paul Haefliger 1982 60.1983

- What is the dancer doing? Try to do it too. How long can you stand like the dancer? Time yourself and your friends.
- Describe this sculpture to someone who cannot see it. What size is it? What is it made of? What would it feel like if you could touch it? Would it be warm or cold, hard or soft, rough or smooth?
- Do you know how this sculpture was made? Find out the steps required.
- What music was popular at the time this sculpture was made? Listen to some examples. In a group, choreograph a dance to a piece of music you have selected.
- Find photographs of dancers today and compare them to this sculpture. What is different and what is the same? Describe the way each dancer looks.
- Why are Degas and Monet both called Impressionists? What do they have in common? Find examples in the exhibition to support your argument.

Cover: Monet in his house at Giverny.
Private collection. Photograph Roger-Viollet, Paris/The Bridgeman Art Library
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