

Exploring Impressionism: Art of Claude Monet Teaching Resources



Overview: Immerse your students in the MFA's collection of French Impressionist paintings by Claude Monet (1840–1926). Students will learn to identify elements such as the study of light and weather, depictions of everyday life, and a new style of painting that made Impressionist art unique.

Curriculum: The Arts, Visual Arts

Grade Range: 1–5

Program Artworks:

- [Boulevard Saint-Denis, Argenteuil, in Winter](#), Claude Monet, 1875 (1978.633)
- [Grainstack \(Sunset\)](#), Claude Monet, 1891 (25.112)
- [Water Lilies](#), Claude Monet, 1907 (19.170)

Teaching Resources

[Inspired by Gardens: Monet in Giverny, 1915](#)

This clip from the 1915 silent film *Ceux de Chez Nous* (Those of Our Land) captures Claude Monet painting beside his famed water lily pond in Giverny. (1:32 video)

[Impressionism & Beyond: Spotlights](#)

Collection of ten short videos highlighting Impressionist artists in the MFA's collection, including behind-the-scenes videos about the care and conservation of the artworks.

MFA Boston

[Cleaning Monet's Canvases](#) by Harvard Art Museums

Take a close look (through the microscope!) at Monet's [House of the Customs Officer](#) as a conservation fellow at the Harvard Art Museums shows the cleaning treatment for this 1882 artwork. (2:52 video)

What the Artist Saw: Claude Monet

Written by Amy Guglielmo and Illustrated by Ginnie Hsu

Meet famous French painter Claude Monet in this illustrated book, created in collaboration with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Step into his life and learn how he pioneered the Impressionist movement. Learn all about his love of nature and how he was inspired to paint light, water, and water lilies.

ISBN: 9780744054705 | 56 pages | DK, a Division of Penguin Random House | 2022

Monet: Paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston

This book reproduces all thirty-five oil paintings by Monet in the MFA's permanent collection, representing nearly the full span of Monet's long career. An introductory essay presents a brief account of his acclaim in Boston during his lifetime, and entries for the paintings provide an overview of his life and work.

ISBN: 9780878468737 | 87 pages | MFA Publications | 2020

Available through the [MFA Shop](#).

[MFA Playdates at Home: In the Meadow](#) (recommended for 1st grade or younger)

In this video, read *My Heart Fills with Happiness* and then head outside to learn more about Monet and make a sidewalk chalk drawing of flowers, beautifying your neighborhood along the way! (9:21 video)

Classroom Activity: Letters to Monet

The American artist John Singer Sargent was interested in Impressionism and he met Claude Monet in Paris around 1876. At the MFA, there is an [archive](#) of correspondence written by Sargent, including letters he sent to Monet. Tell students about the friendship between these two artists and how they would have kept in touch from long distances.

1. Read aloud some of the following short letters from the archive:
 - [Letter from Sargent to Monet, July 1888](#)
 - [Letter from Sargent to Monet, 1894](#)
 - [Letter from Sargent to Monet, December 28, 1894](#)
2. Ask students what topics they noticed Sargent writing about in his letters to Monet (the weather, their artwork, etc).
3. Next, introduce (or review) the basic components of a letter and ask students to write a short letter to Claude Monet. What would they want to tell Monet? What would they ask this artist?

Classroom Activity: Create a Series

Claude Monet often created painting series – numerous paintings of the same subject at various times of day, in changing weather conditions, or in different seasons. Less concerned with accurate depictions of nature, Monet's paintings attempted to capture the fleeting, instantaneous sensations he experienced under varied visual conditions.

1. Begin by looking at an example of a Monet series in the classroom:
 - [Grainstack \(Sunset\)](#) & [Grainstack \(Snow Effect\)](#) (both 1891)
 - [Water Lilies](#) (1905) & [Water Lilies](#) (1907)
2. Gather materials. You will need paper and crayons, colored pencils, markers, or paint (choose one).
3. Have students select a specific object (tree, bench, street sign, etc.) or view outside your school that they can draw or paint over and over again.
4. Plan two different times of the day for students to paint or draw their selection.
5. Ask students to think about what colors would help show the time of day, the weather, and the season.
6. After both artworks are complete, have students turn-and-talk with a classmate. Can their partner identify what time of day, weather, or season each artwork depicts? What clues did they see in each other's artwork that helped them reach their conclusion?