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## Activity Guide for *Impressionists for Kids* By Margaret Hyde



**This activity guide includes:**

**Critical thinking skill builders ☞ Storytelling exercises**  
**Imagination builders ☞ Investigating the geometry of fine art**  
**Elements of art ☞ Art history**  
**Memory game ☞ Word search**

**Activity guide co-created by**  
**\*Virginia Walton Pilegard and Pamela Albers**

**☞ Work sheets are fully reproducible ☞**

**\* Visit our web site to find out about the many fine children's books that  
Margaret Hyde and Virginia Walton Pilegard have written for Pelican  
<http://www.pelicanpub.com>**

## **EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY**

“The work of art is a part of nature seen through a temperament.” André Gide, 1903.

Every painting tells a story. We can only guess what inspired the artist, what story he is telling, but each one of us can tell how a painting makes us feel and the story it brings to our minds.

Encourage children to spend time looking at each painting and then chose a special way to tell the story they imagine for each one. Teacher or parent may copy down stories, poems or songs younger children create. More advanced students may record their own. Questions provided for the following paintings will help children to get started.

### **Eiffel Tower, by Georges Seurat**

Put your face close to the book. What do you see when you look at this painting up close? Hold the page away. What do you see now? You may pull your paintbrush across the paper to draw lines when you paint. Impressionist painter Seurat made lines using dabs of paint. This painting is made up of many colors fit together like a puzzle of light and shadow—dark and light colors.

1. How do you think Seurat felt about the Eiffel Tower and Paris the city around it?
2. Does the picture make you want to go to Paris? Why or why not?
3. What are some of the exciting things that might happen if you were a little mouse hiding in the Eiffel Tower? Base your story on how this painting makes you feel.

### **Waterlilies and Japanese Bridge, by Claude Monet**

Impressionist painter Monet used colors to help people understand how he felt when he painted a picture.

1. How do the colors of blue and green make you feel? Would you like to walk across the bridge? Why or why not?
2. What is it about this painting that makes you feel the sunlight?
3. Please imagine a wonderful story about you and two of your friends stepping into this painting and walking across the bridge.

### **In the Woods at Giverny, by Claude Monet**

1. What is the first thing you feel when you look at this painting?
2. What are the two women doing?
3. Do you think they are having a nice day?
4. What if a time machine dropped you in the center of the Giverny Woods with these two women? Would you want the lady sitting on the ground to read part of her story to you? Would you like to paint beside the lady standing with her easel? Perhaps you would like to play hide-and-seek in the woods. Think about the fun you could have; then tell the story.

### **Woman with a Parasol, by Claude Monet**

A parasol is like an umbrella, but it is not for rainy days. It is to shade someone from the sun.

1. How does the painter Monet help you feel that this is a sunny day with a brisk wind blowing?
2. Why do you think only one person has a parasol?
3. Why is the other person sitting down?
5. Can you tell from the artist's colors if the people are happy or sad? Which colors make you happy? Which colors make you sad? Guess what the women are waiting for. You may want to write the story as a poem. What rhymes with "breeze"?

### **Dancers in Blue, by Edgar Degas**

In this painting artist Degas catches the moving dancers for a moment on his canvas.

1. Look at the dancers' faces and their bodies. Think about the colors Degas used to tell the story. Are the dancers nervous or self-confident?
2. Do you think Degas liked to watch them dance?
3. What story do you guess he is telling about them?
4. What song would you sing to tell about this painting? You might make up a song yourself if none of the songs you know fit.

### **Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grand Jatte, by Georges Seurat**

Seurat spent two years making this painting with thousands of tiny, tiny dots of color.

5. What different kinds of things are the people in this painting doing?
6. Do you think the artist used happy colors?
7. What would you choose to do if you could play on the "Island of La Grand Jatte" some Sunday afternoon?
8. Tell a story about what the people are doing. Put yourself into the story if you wish. You may even make your own painting for the story.

## **SEARCH FOR GEOMETRIC FIGURES IN WORKS OF ART**

Mathematicians find many geometric figures in the world around us. Artists use these basic shapes in their paintings. Rectangles, triangles, rhomboid parallelograms, circles, and arcs (parts of circles) may be found in paintings in this book. You will find both parallel lines and perpendicular lines.

Using the following paintings, see if you can find these shapes. Can you find other shapes too?

**\*\*Note to teachers and parents**

To show the concept more clearly, make a copy of the painting; then, using tracing paper and a marker, outline the shapes mentioned.



## **DOTS ARE DOTS — RIGHT?**

Well, yes and no. A dot is just a dot all by itself, but if a lot of dots are used to compose a painting or drawing that technique is called “pointilism.” Georges Seurat was an impressionist painter (1859-1891) who used this technique of tiny brushstrokes in contrasting colors to compose his many beautiful works of art.

Study the painting of The Eiffel Tower and you will notice the many small dots of paint laid very close together. THAT is pointilism.

Now, how about trying it on your own. Sound like fun?

You can either do it with paint and paper or you can visit this website

**[www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint](http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint)**. This web site gives students the opportunity to do a pointilism style painting online and then print it out.

**\*To see more of Seurat’s work visit [www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/seurat](http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/seurat).**

**\*To learn more about the Eiffel Tower go to the official Eiffel Tower web site [www.tour-eiffel.fr/teiffel/uk](http://www.tour-eiffel.fr/teiffel/uk)**

## **The Elements of Art**

There are typically six elements of art that can be found in most artwork. Artists use these elements as a "visual alphabet" to produce all kinds of art forms. The way in which elements are organized is referred to as the *Principles of Design*.

**Line** is the most basic element of art; a continuous mark made on a surface can vary in appearance (length, width, texture, direction, curve). Five varieties of lines are vertical, horizontal, diagonal, curved, and zigzag

**Color** is produced when light strikes an object and reflects back in your eyes. This element of art has three properties:

- Hue -the name of a color (ex. - red, yellow. blue)
- Intensity -the purity and strength of a color (ex- bright red or dull red)
- Value -the lightness or darkness of a color

**Shape** is two-dimensional (circle, square, triangle, rectangle) and encloses space-- geometric, man-made or free form.

**Form** is three-dimensional and encloses space and takes up space -geometric, man-made or free form.

**Space** is defined and determined by shapes and forms. Positive space is where shapes and forms exist; negative space is the empty space around shapes and forms.

**Texture** refers to the surface quality or "feel" of an object - smooth, rough, soft, etc. Textures may be actual (felt with touch - tactile) or implied (suggested by the way an artist has created the work of art -visual).

### **So, what *is* Impressionism anyway?**

Impressionism and the impressionist style of painting is really just the general impression of an object (like a bowl of fruit or a tree) and the use of unmixed, primary colors (red, yellow, green, or blue) laid very close together using small brush strokes. The small brush strokes and the unmixed primary colors enabled the artists to render a quality of realism and light that had never been seen before in the popular art of the time. The Impressionist period was developed in France during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (1860-1900). Impressionist artists of the time include Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Cezanne, and Georges Seurat to name a few. For a complete list, and to view works by these and other Impressionist artists visit [www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/theme/impressionism](http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/theme/impressionism)

## A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE ARTISTS MENTIONED IN THIS BOOK

### Georges Seurat

Born on December 2, 1859, Georges Seurat was a painter and the founder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century school of Neo (new)-Impressionism who was most famous for his technique called *pointilism*\*.

Georges Seurat was a fine example of the artist as a scientist. He spent his life studying color theory and the effects of light and shadow on the way that we perceive an object. His 500 drawings alone establish him as a great master, but he is most known for his pointilist method of art.



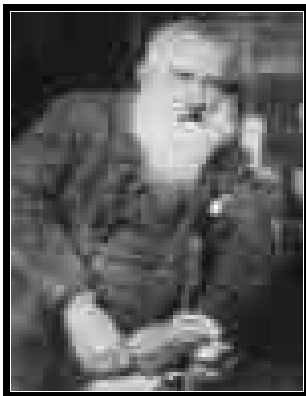
Strongly influenced by Rembrandt and Francisco de Goya, he produced 7 very large paintings, 60 smaller ones, drawings, and sketchbooks throughout his lifetime. His most famous canvas, Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte, was the centerpiece of an exhibition in France in 1886.

Georges Seurat was a very private person and it was not until his sudden death in 1891 that friends learned that the model for Young Woman Holding a Powder Puff was his long-time friend.

**\*Pointilism** - A method of painting developed by Seurat and Paul Signac in the 1880s. It used dabs of pure color that were intended to mix in the eyes of viewers rather than on the canvas. It is also called divisionism or neoimpressionism.

**\*Grand Jatte** - This area is located along the Seine River in France.

### Claude Monet



Born on November 14, 1840, this French painter, leader and unswerving advocate of the Impressionist style dedicated his life to the pursuit of excellence in his craft. In fact, his painting titled Impression: Sunrise ( Musee Marmottan, Paris; 1872) gave the group its name.

In 1859 he went to study in Paris, and it is there that he met Pissarro\* with whom he formed a fast friendship.

After returning from his time in the military service (1859-1862), he entered the studio of Gleyre in Paris and there met Renoir\*, Sisley\*, and Bazille\* with whom he was to form the core group of Impressionist painters.

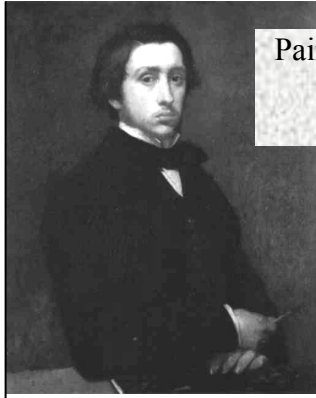
From 1871-1878 Monet lived in the small village of Argenteuil on the Seine near Paris. It was here that he and many of his friends and contemporaries painted some of their most famous works – among them Sunday Afternoon on the Island of Grand Jatte.

Monet was troubled by failing eyesight late in life but painted until the end.

He had an enormously prolific career and his works hang in museums around the world.

**\*Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Frédéric Bazille, and Alfred Sisley were all Impressionist painters. To read more about them and other artists from this same school go to [www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/theme/impressionism](http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/theme/impressionism).**

## Edgar Degas



Painting is easy when you don't know how, but very difficult when you do.”  
-- *Hilaire Germain Edgar Degas*

Born on July 19, 1834, Degas was a French artist, acknowledged as the master of drawing the human figure in motion. Degas worked in many mediums, preferring pastel to all others. He is perhaps best known for his paintings, drawings, and bronzes of ballerinas and of racehorses.

As he grew up, his idol was the painter Jean Auguste Ingres whose example pointed him in the direction of a classical draftsmanship, stressing balance and clarity of outline. After beginning his artistic studies with Louis Lamothes, a pupil of Ingres, he started classes at the Ecole des Beaux Arts but left in 1854 and went to Italy. He stayed there for 5 years, studying Italian art.

Returning to Paris in 1859, he painted portraits of his family and friends and a number of historical subjects, in which he combined classical and romantic styles. In Paris, Degas came to know Edouard Manet and in the late 1860s he turned to contemporary themes, painting both theatrical scenes and portraits with a strong emphasis on the social and intellectual implications of props and setting.

In the early 1870s the female ballet dancer became his favorite theme. He sketched from a live model in his studio and combined poses into groupings that depicted rehearsal and performance scenes in which dancers on stage, entering the stage, and resting or waiting to perform are shown simultaneously and in counterpoint, often from an oblique angle of vision. On a visit in 1872 to Louisiana, where he had relatives in the cotton business, he painted *The Cotton Exchange at New Orleans* (finished 1873; Musée Municipal, Pau, France), his only picture to be acquired by a museum in his lifetime. Other subjects from this period include the racetrack, the beach, and cafe interiors.

**\*\* Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867) French painter in the romantic style**

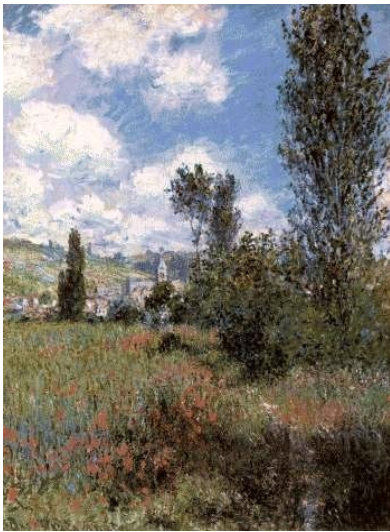


## MEMORY GAME

Let's see how good your memory is. Shuffle the cards and then lay them out in rows, face down. Turn one card up and then see if you can turn up a matching card. If you do, take both cards, if you don't, turn them both back over and the next person gets a turn. The winner has the most cards at the end of the game.

**\*\* Note to parents and teachers – to make the cards all the same size, cut out the graphics and glue to index cards. That way the students will not be able to pick out a match simply by looking at the size of the cut out graphic.**

**\*\*\*To make the cards more sturdy, place each card between two pieces of clear Contact paper.\*\*\***



Claude Monet  
*Path in the Ile Saint-Martin,  
Vetheuil*

Claude Monet  
*La Japonaise*  
1876; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Edgar Degas  
*Dance Class at the Opéra*  
1872; detail; Musée d'Orsay, Paris

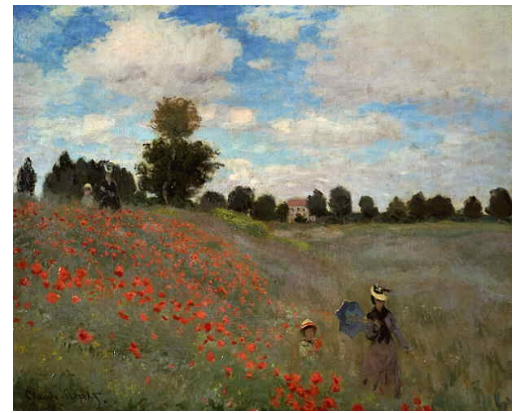




Claude Monet

*Le bateau atelier (The Boat Studio); 1876*

The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania



Edgar Degas

*Coquelicots (Poppies, Near Argenteuil)*

1873; Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Georges Seurat  
*Young Woman Powdering  
Herself; 1890*  
Courtauld Institute of Art,  
London

Claude Monet  
*La Promenade ;1875*

Edgar Degas

*Rehearsal of a Ballet on Stage*





# Find the Hidden Artist

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***IMPRESSIONISTS FOR KIDS***  
***The Great Art for Kids Series***  
***Second Edition***

**Edited by Margaret E. Hyde**

As seen in *Foreword Magazine* November/December 2004

Impressionism was one of the most important artistic movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Developed primarily in France, Impressionism encouraged painters to capture the “impression” of light and shadow, generally by using feathery dabs of color rather than outlining shapes on the canvas. Famous artists associated with this school include Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Paul Cézanne.

*Impressionists for Kids* contains eleven reproductions of famous works from this influential school, including Edgar Degas’s *Green Dancer* and Georges Pierre Seurat’s *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, in a toddler-friendly board-book format.

This second edition also features a two-page guide for parents to help foster their children’s interest in art.

**ABOUT THE EDITOR**

Margaret E. Hyde was inspired to create the Great Art for Kids books when she could not find age-appropriate art books for her own little girl. As an alternative to having her expensive coffee-table books drooled upon, Mrs. Hyde designed these durable board books to introduce young children to the great painters. A native of Memphis, Mrs. Hyde now lives in Santa Monica with her family.

Other titles in the Great Art for Kids Series are *Cassatt for Kids*, *Matisse for Kids*, *Picasso for Kids*, *Renoir for Kids*, and *Van Gogh for Kids* (\$8.95 each), all available from Pelican.

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**12 pp. 8½ x 9**

**11 color illus. Ages 3-5**

**ISBN: 1-58980-265-9 \$8.95 board**

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