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## Introduction

Art is a form of self-expression that has progressed and undergone change throughout the stages of human development. What began as a means of communicating by scratching out pictures on a cave wall has evolved into a complex system of design elements. Artists are no longer limited to chalk and slate for their tools; today there are any number of materials available to artists. These new raw materials have spawned whole movements in the art world and their influence is felt even today.

Not everyone appreciates a great piece of art nor does everyone agree on what constitutes “good” art. Our cultural differences generally condition us as to what is beautiful or pleasing to our eye. However, ideas about art can be changed and enlarged to encompass a broader spectrum of works. Young people can be taught how to judge an art piece according to a set of criteria. That does not mean they have to like a particular work but at least they will be armed with the proper tools necessary to understand and appreciate an art form for what it is—an artist’s expression of his or her inner self.

It is the purpose and intent of *Focus on Artists* to acquaint students with famous and not-so-famous artists and their styles. This will be accomplished through a biography of each artist followed by an art lesson which will help students explore some of the elements employed by that particular artist. Extension activities allow for further exploration of each artist.

A secondary purpose of this book is to enhance the students’ knowledge of art in history. To accomplish this end, artists have been grouped according to three distinct historical periods—Renaissance and Baroque, the Nineteenth Century, and the Twentieth Century—so that the changes in artistic formats can be seen in a continual time line.

This resource contains basic information on thirty-three different artists through the ages. Hopefully, the inspiring stories of these men and women and the accompanying activities will motivate students to explore the world of art on their own.

# Nineteenth Century Artists

The nineteenth century saw a dramatic change in civilization as the church lost its control and monarchies were toppled. New forces such as industrialization and urbanization brought about cities filled with dissatisfied poor. Science knowledge progressed at an amazing rate and brought numerous changes with it. In the meantime, the art world was experiencing some radical changes, too. While formerly one style of painting would dominate the scene for centuries, now smaller, short-term trends began to emerge.

At the beginning of the century, there were three major trends which competed with one another — Neoclassicism, Romanticism, and Realism. Later in the century, these were replaced with Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Symbolism. It is not surprising that this time period is known as the birth of the “isms”!

Below is a listing of the artists represented in this section. Following each name and country of origin is a brief statement indicating particularly noteworthy achievements.

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
<b>Rosa Bonheur</b> (1822-1899)	France	<i>one of the leading painters of animals of her time</i>
<b>Mary Cassatt</b> (1844-1926)	U.S.A./France	<i>known for her paintings of mothers and children</i>
<b>George Catlin</b> (1796-1872)	U.S.A.	<i>painter who documented the Native American</i>
<b>Edgar Degas</b> (1834-1917)	France	<i>specialized in capturing movement in a figure</i>
<b>Claude Monet</b> (1840-1926)	France	<i>developed the technique of using short dabs of paint</i>
<b>Edvard Munch</b> (1863-1944)	Norway	<i>forerunner of Expressionism; painted from his emotions</i>
<b>Henri Rousseau</b> (1844-1910)	Norway	<i>first and greatest of the primitive painters</i>
<b>Georges Seurat</b> (1859-1891)	France	<i>used technique of painting with dots of color (pointillism)</i>
<b>Vincent van Gogh</b> (1853-1890)	Holland	<i>probably the most reproduced painter in history</i>

# The Scream

**Focus:** A painting should evoke strong emotions in its viewers.

**Activity:** Painting a picture that portrays strong emotion

**Vocabulary:** Expressionism; modern art



## Materials

- ◆ colored crayons or marking pens
- ◆ white construction paper or drawing paper

## Directions

1. *The Scream* is Edvard Munch's most famous work. Ask students to describe the emotions the subject of the painting might be feeling. Talk about how the painting affects their own feelings.
2. Tell the students to think about a time when they had a strong feeling of joy or jealousy or fear (or any other emotion).
3. Using crayons or marking pens have them draw a picture of that event. Encourage the use of color to express emotion and distorted figures to convey their feelings.
4. Repeat this procedure using neon-colored crayons and markers. Compare the two completed pictures. Which one has more visual impact?
5. Extend the project by having students write about their drawings, if they would like.