

Discovering the Arts

Masters of Color

Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 9–12

Curriculum Focus: Fine Arts

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

Program Description

Henri Matisse's and Pablo Picasso's visionary interpretations of the visual arts changed our understanding of art and the world. Explore the lives and work of these two extraordinary masters of color.

Lesson Summary

Students create visual timelines of the art and lives of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. Each timeline will feature at least ten works of different media, and at least one work from each decade during the artist's life starting from the 1890s. Students will write a description about how one piece reflects the artist's life or times, the artistic movement of the period, or how it inspired a new movement. The lesson concludes with a comparison and contrasting of the styles and subjects of the artists during periods of their lives.

Onscreen Questions

- Why were Matisse's paintings considered innovative and shocking?
 - How did Matisse continue to produce art as his health declined?
 - What inspired Picasso to paint?
 - What are Picasso's contributions to Cubism?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Understand how the artwork of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso evolved throughout their lives.
- Describe how the work of the artists reflected their lives and times, and how they inspired new artistic movements.
- Compare and contrast the works of the two artists at different periods in their lives.

Materials

- *Masters of Color* video
- Computer with Internet access
- Color printer

Procedures

1. After watching the video, review important facts about Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. What country was each artist from? When did these artists begin to paint professionally? How would students describe their early works? What other artists or movements inspired them?
2. Show students the following works by Matisse and Picasso. What was unique, innovative, or shocking about these paintings? Ask students to compare and contrast the forms and colors in the paintings.
 - Henri Matisse: *Woman with a Hat* (1905)
<http://www.abcgallery.com/M/matisse/matisse80.html>
 - Pablo Picasso: *Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version O)* (1907)
http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3AAD%3AE%3A4609&page_number=19&template_id=1&sort_order=1

Explain that these works represent one phase in each artist's life. In fact, their artwork evolved throughout their lives as they experimented with styles, subjects, and media. Tell students that they'll work in two groups to explore the works and create a visual timeline of the art and life of Matisse or Picasso.

3. Each timeline should include at least ten works of different media. Talk about some of the different media these artists used. (A medium can refer to the materials artists use, as well as the type of art they create.) For example, Matisse and Picasso created paintings, drawings, sketches, collages, sculptures, cutouts, and stained glass.
4. Tell students that their outlines should include at least one work from each decade during the artist's lifetime, starting in the 1890s. The paintings they select should reflect the style that artist used during each period.

Students will find many images of the artwork by Matisse and Picasso at the following Web sites:

- Henri Matisse
<http://www.abcgallery.com/M/matisse/matisse.html>
- MoMA: Matisse
http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3AAD%3AE%3A3832&page_number=1&template_id=6&sort_order=1
- Metropolitan Museum of Art: Matisse
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mati/hd_mati.htm
- Pablo Picasso
<http://www.abcgallery.com/P/picasso/picasso.html>



- MoMA: Picasso
http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3AAD%3AE%3A4609&page_number=1&template_id=10&sort_order=1
 - Metropolitan Museum of Art: Picasso
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pica/hd_pica.htm
5. Once students find their selected works of art, have them print out the image in color. They should also create a label for each work that includes the artist name, title, date, and description. The description should answer at least one of these questions:
- How does this work reflect the places, people, or events in the artist's life at this time?
 - How does this work reflect artistic movements of the period, or how did this work reflect a new and different artistic style?
- Have students hang their timelines on a bulletin board, one above the other. Have each group present each work of art on the timeline to the rest of the class.
6. To conclude the lesson, have students compare and contrast the style and subjects of the works in the two timelines. How were their styles alike and different in each period?

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students demonstrated a strong understanding of how the work of Matisse or Picasso evolved throughout their lives; developed a clear, thoughtful description of how the work of an artist reflected his life and times and how he inspired new artistic movements; provided at least one similarity and one difference between the two artists.
- **2 points:** Students demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of how the work of Matisse or Picasso evolved throughout their lives; developed a complete description of how the work of an artist reflected his life and times and how he inspired new artistic movements; provided one similarity or one difference between the two artists.
- **1 point:** Students demonstrated a poor understanding of how the work of Matisse or Picasso evolved throughout their lives; developed an incomplete or unclear description of how the work of an artist reflected his life and times and how he inspired new artistic movements; did not provide any similarities or differences between the two artists.

Vocabulary

Abstract Expressionism

Definition: An artistic movement that first emerged in New York after World War II in which painters often created large canvases with abstract, nonrepresentational forms; paint was often applied quickly or forcefully to express feelings and emotions.

Context: In Matisse's painting, the subject is barely recognizable. Still, there is a doorway, but his intention is to express a mood. Fifty years later the style would be called abstract expressionism.

Cubism

Definition: An artistic movement of the 20th century in which the subject matter is broken up and reassembled in abstracted, sometimes geometric form, often as if viewed from different angles

Context: Around 1910, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque set out to bring a new art into the 20th century – Cubism.

Impressionist

Definition: An artist from the artistic movement or style of painting called Impressionism, in which brushstrokes of bright colors are used to show the effects of reflected light

Context: Matisse's radically new style stunned the art critics of his day. Its shocking use of bright, non-descriptive color contrasted greatly from the style of the Impressionists of his day.

medium

Definition: The materials an artist uses to create a piece of work, or the method an artist uses to create the work

Context: After his surgery, Matisse cut shapes from plain white paper painted into bright colors. He no longer had to draw lines or use brushes or clay. He had found a new medium.

palette

Definition: The range of colors characteristic of an artist's work.

Context: In works from Picasso's blue period, his palette remained cold blue.

Academic Standards

National Arts Education Associations

The National Arts Education Associations have developed national guidelines for what students should know and be able to do in the arts. To view the standards online, go to artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
 - Using knowledge of structures and functions
 - Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
 - Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
 - Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
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DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How To Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into sections indicated by video thumbnail icons; brief descriptions are noted for each one. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. The Unconventional Matisse (22 min.)

Henri Matisse is considered one of the most innovative artists of the 20th century. Learn how this important artist challenged the classical style of painting.

II. Picasso Paints Picasso (26 min.)

Pablo Picasso used his art to depict his deepest desires and fears. Examine Picasso's art, and see how he creatively hid details about his life within his masterpieces.

Curriculum Units

1. Matisse's Formative Years as an Artist

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you know about the artist Henri Matisse?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How did Matisse's technique of showing character differ from that of other artists?

A: French portrait painters before Matisse used shadowing and light to show character. Matisse used color to show character.

2. Matisse Explores Color

Pre-viewing question

Q: What types of art do you like best?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What does the painting *The Red Studio* symbolize?

A: According to Matisse, dark red is the color of light seen through closed eyelids. *The Red Studio* symbolized an artist painting what he sees in his mind. The paintings on the walls are his hopes and memories. There is a clock with no hands on it because time has been suspended in his studio.

3. Matisse Paints Perspective and Mood

Pre-viewing question

Q: How do different colors affect your mood?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How did Matisse's use of color change according to what was happening in his life?

A: When Matisse was poor, he painted the outside world in rich colors. In contrast, his garret was painted in drab colors. During World War I, Matisse's colors changed. Paris outside was a thin, drab blue, and the model inside did not stimulate the eye. He used black in his paintings for the first time during the war. Later, when he was sick with cancer, he painted an outside tree in rich colors and the inside room in dark, somber colors.

4. Matisse's Writing, Illustration, and Cut-Out Work

Pre-viewing question

Q: Who has inspired you?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Why did Matisse write the book *Jazz*?

A: During World War II, canvas and paint became scarce in France. Matisse turned to illustrating books that honored France's past. Matisse enjoyed illustrating so much that he decided to write his own book, *Jazz*, which included drawings. The words were just decorations to Matisse. The illustrations were most important.

5. Picasso's Unique Style of Self-Expression

Pre-viewing question

Q: What are some ways that people express their feelings or emotions?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What was Picasso's favorite subject?

A: Picasso was his own favorite subject, though he often disguised himself in his paintings.

Almost every work he painted provided clues to his life. Picasso believed that no matter who or what the artist was painting, the artist was always painting himself.

6. From Picasso's Blue Period Into a New Style

Pre-viewing question

Q: How do artists inspire one another?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How did African art inspire Picasso?

A: When viewing the works of African artists, Picasso saw that they were not aiming for beauty. They were exorcising their fears by putting them on canvas. This inspired Picasso to do the same.

7. Bringing Cubism to Life

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you know about Cubism?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What did Picasso and Braque want to achieve with Cubism?

A: Picasso and Braque believed that impressionism had become too precious, too successful, and too imitated. Cubism, by contrast, was meant to be as spare as art could be. Picasso and Braque initially removed color and focused on straight lines.

8. Picasso Explores Painted Personalities, Becomes a Celebrity

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you like or dislike about abstract art?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How did fame treat Picasso?

A: Picasso was the richest painter in the 20th century. To Picasso, fame was a double-edged sword. His success and renown fueled his sense of pride. But it also led to isolation and depression.

