U7 AMERICAN LANDSCAPES

1. *Thomas Cole , The Oxbow, 1836*



1. Thomas Cole , The Oxbow, 1836, oil on canvas, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, great artists aspired to complete large-scale historical compositions, paintings that often had an instructive moral message. Landscape paintings, in contrast, were often though more imitative than innovative. But in *The Course of Empire*, Cole was able to take the American landscape and imbue it with a moral message, as was often found in history paintings. Indeed, the landscapes Cole began to paint in the 1830s were not entirely about the land. In these works, Cole used the land as a way to say something important about the United States.

A wonderful illustration of this is Cole's 1836 masterwork, *A View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm*, a painting that is generally (and mercifully) known as *The Oxbow*. At first glance this painting may seem to be nothing more than an interesting view of a recognizable bend in the Connecticut River. But when viewed through the lens of nineteenth-century political ideology, this painting eloquently speaks about the widely discussed topic of westward expansion.

1. Read the text above and say

- when the style appeared:
- what landscape paintings have in common with historical paintings:
- what was Cole's aim while painting:

2. Describe this painting. What can you see?

3. What about its composition ? How is contrast emphasized ?

4. Find out some elements showing man has tamed nature.

5. Explain how Manifest Destiny is embodied in this painting?

6. Why 19th American landscape marks a spilt with European paintings?

2.Grant Wood , Stone City



2.Grant Wood , Stone City, 1930, Joslyn Museum, Omaha

More about this painting?

Style: Regionalism

Genre: landscape

Media: oil, wood

Dimensions: 77 x 101.5 cm

other famous artwork? American Gothic

More about the artist:

Born: Feb 13, 1891; Anamosa, Iowa, US

Died: Feb 12, 1942; Iowa City, Iowa, US

Nationality: American

Art Movement: Regionalism

Art institution: Académie Julian, Paris, France, School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), Chicago, IL, US

1. **How to introduce an artist artwork?**

a) Use the active or passive voice to put the verbs in brackets into the right tense.

*Stone City*_____ (paint) by Grant Wood in 1930 in Regionalism style. Grant Wood _____ (be) an American artist who _____ (bear) in 1891 in rural Iowa and who _____(die) in 1942. In 1913, he _____(enrol) at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and _____(perform) some work as a silversmith. Then from 1922 to 1928 he _____(study) Impressionism and post-Impressionism especially at Académie Julian, Paris, France. Back to the US, Wood _____(teach) painting at the University of Iowa's School of Art from 1934 to 1941.

This artwork entitled Stone City _____(depict) the former boom town of Stone City, Iowa, familiar to Grant Wood. It _____((be) 101 cm wide and 77cm high and _____(describe) a landscape that _____(have) fantastical curvy shapes, the trees _____(be) ornamental, and the bright surfaces _____(be) artificially patterned. The painting thus _____(illustrate) the transition from industrialization and back to rural community.

b) Tenses: explain the transition from the past to the present.

3. Edward Hopper

(1882-1967)

Born in Nyach, New York, Hopper, a trained etcher and illustrator, is best-know, for his paintings of everyday American life and portrays the isolation of resigned, lone figures. Light, shadows, and the rendering of shapes and structures particularly interest him.



3. Edward Hopper, Gas, 1940, Metropolitan Museum of Art

1. **Focus on the character who appears in the painting and answer the questions below for this character.**

   a) Where is this character now? What about the setting ?

   b) What is happening to him right now?

   c) What must have happened ?

   d) What must the character be doing?

   e) What must he be thinking about ?

⇒ Dans vos réponses must a servi à ...
- ☐ exprimer une nécessité
- ☐ émettre des hypothèses
- ☐ exprimer l'obligation
- ☐ recommander qque chose

⇒ Dans votre réponse à la question c) vous avez..
- ☐ exprimé une obligation, une nécessité ou recommandation dans le passé
- ☐ émis une hypothèse sur un fait qui a lieu dans le présent
- ☐ émis une hypothèse sur un fait qui a eu lieu dans le passé
- ☐ émis une hypothèse sur la description d'une action au présent
- ☐ émis une hypothèse sur la description d'une action s'étant déroulé dans le passé

⇒ Dans votre réponse aux questions d) et e) vous avez..
- ☐ exprimé une obligation, une nécessité ou recommandation dans le présent
- ☐ émis une hypothèse sur un fait qui a lieu dans le présent
- ☐ émis une hypothèse sur un fait qui a eu lieu dans le passé
- ☐ émis une hypothèse sur la description d'une action au présent
- ☐ émis une hypothèse sur la description d'une action s'étant déroulé dans le passé

⇒ Expliquez l'utilisation de l'aspect be V-ing avec le verbe « think » alors que ce dernier décrit une opération mentale

Jacob Lawrence (born 1917)

This visually striking painting shows Lawrence's depth of feelings regarding social issues.

The sharp, exaggerated poses of the characters and the stark bright colours bring out the pain and violence of the episode he portrays : The Boston Massacre.

At the same time the eye of the viewer runs up and down the straight lines of the straight lines of the composition, taking in all the action.



4. Jacob Lawrence, Boston Massacre, 1955, Private Collection of Harvey and Harvey-Ann Ross

1. In what sense is it satisfactory to label this painting as a landscape painting ?

2. Describe the setting in this painting. What function does it fulfil ?

3. What point of view is adopted by the painter ? How much does it differ from the other landscape paintings you studies ? Why ?

4. To what extent could you can this painting realistic ? Why is this term unsatisfactory ? What is unrealistic ?

5. Are colours as important as light and shadow ?

6. How important are human characters in these paintings ? What does it suggest about the painter's message or intentions ?

Wordbank:
figurative/ realistic/ romantic
Show / depict / illustrate
Draw / sketch / paint / outline
Look like / bear resemblance to
Represent / symbolize / embody
Emphasize / praise / underline / stress /
Find a hidden meaning
An artwork = a work of art a masterpiece ≠ a daub
A landscape ≠ a still life

REMEMBERING

Turn into English

1. Choose the most appropriate verb to turn thes sententences into English.

a) Je me souviens de cette peinture, je l'ai vue au Metropolitan Museum.

b) Elle me rappelle un paysage du Massachusetts.

c) J'ai oublié le nom du peintre mais je me souviens de la sensation qu'elle m'a provoqué.

d) Elle s'appelle The Oxbow et évoque clairement l'idéologie de Manifest Destiny.

e) Mais je ne me souviens plus de la salle dans laquelle elle était.

WORDBANK memories

recollect someone / something
recall someone / something
remember someone / something
I remember doing sthg / having done sthg
It reminds me of
it evokes the 19th century
forget something