

Capturing Light: The Art of Claude Monet

Learning objective: To analyse the Impressionist techniques of Claude Monet and apply the use of light, colour, and brushwork to create a natural landscape.

Use your knowledge of Impressionism to answer the questions below. Zara the Zebra is looking for artists who focus on fleeting moments of light and texture. Think carefully about how Monet used short, thick brushstrokes to build up a scene.

Claude Monet was a French painter who helped start the Impressionist movement. Instead of painting smooth, realistic images, he painted 'impressions' of what he saw. He often took his easel outside (en plein air) to capture how sunlight changed the colours of water, flowers, and buildings throughout the day. He used quick, visible brushstrokes rather than blending his paint perfectly, which made his paintings look full of movement and life.

Word bank: Impressionism · Brushstrokes · Atmosphere · Texture · Palette · En plein air · Vibrant · Reflection

1. Explain why Claude Monet preferred to paint 'en plein air' rather than inside a studio. How did this affect the way he captured light? (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast Monet's style with a traditional portrait painting. What happens to the details when you stand very close to a Monet painting compared to standing far away? (2 marks)

3. Monet often painted the same subject, such as a haystack or a lily pond, at different times of the day. Justify why he might have done this to show the 'atmosphere' of a scene. (2 marks)

4. Identify two features of Impressionist art that make a painting look like it has movement. Refer to the brushwork in your answer. (2 marks)

5. What might happen to the colours in a landscape painting if the artist decided to use only dark, muddy shades instead of vibrant, primary colours? Explain the effect this would have on the viewer. (2 marks)

6. If you were to paint a local park in the style of Monet, which time of day would you choose to paint it? Explain your choice. (2 marks)

Draw: Using a piece of paper and your favourite colouring pencils or paints, create a garden scene inspired by Monet. Focus on using short, choppy 'dabs' of colour rather than solid lines. Try to include a water feature and show how light reflects on the surface.



Extension challenge: Research Monet's 'Water Lilies' series. Write a short paragraph describing how his use of colour changes the mood of the room. If Monet were alive today, what modern invention might he use to capture light, and why?