



Painting

The way an artist uses paint can have a dramatic impact on the way we perceive their work. Discover some painting techniques and processes by looking at a range of art works and answering these questions.

Materials

- What materials have been used to create the work? Eg, oil paint, acrylic paint, watercolour, gouache, pencil, crayon, pastel, charcoal, ink, glitter, paper, wood, canvas.

Consistency

- How would you describe the consistency of the paint? Is it impasto (thick) or thin, or a mixture? Is the paint translucent (see-through) or opaque (solid), or a mixture?
- Are there layers of paint?
- Do you think other materials have been added to the paint? If so, which ones?

Technique

- Has the artist used a brush to apply the paint? If so, describe what type of brush and to what effect. Can you see any individual brush marks? Eg, has the paint been applied with a large brush in broad, long strokes and wet washes (can you see drips?), or with a small brush in short strokes with thick, dry layers?
- Is the brushwork gestural (expressive and physical) or mechanical (flat, hard edged)?
- Are areas of paint blended or hard edged, or a mixture of both? Has the artist used glazing, scumbling (softening or blending), or crackle effects?

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Effect

- Do you think the artist used a particular painting technique to reinforce a specific meaning? If the paint had been applied differently, what effect might this have had on your perception of the work?

Texture

- Is the surface of the work smooth or textured, or are there areas of both? Has the artist used a scratching and scraping technique (sgraffito) to reveal layers underneath?

Application tools

- Has the artist used any tools other than brushes to apply paint or construct the image? Eg, rollers, palette knife, spray paint, fingers, pencils. Describe what tools may have been used, where, and to what effect.

Style

- How would you describe the style of the painting (eg, expressionist, realistic, stylised)? How does the style affect your interpretation of the work?

Process

- By looking at the way the paint is applied, can you identify the process the artist used to create the work? Eg, can you predict where they would have started and finished? Did they work intuitively or did they plan? Were stencils, masking, or tracing used? How long do you think the art work took to make?

