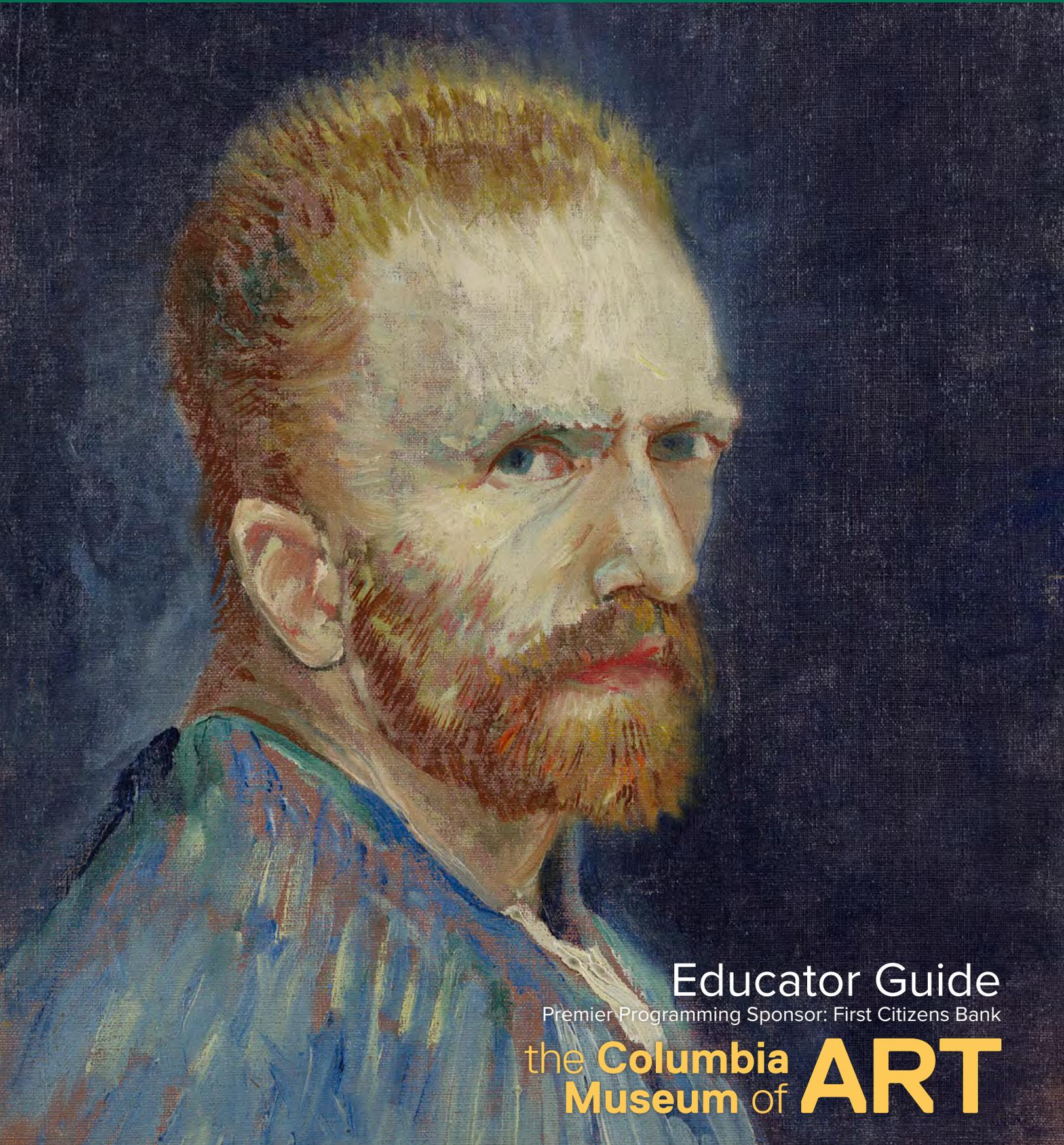


Van Gogh and His Inspirations

Presented by The Blanchard Family



Educator Guide

Premier Programming Sponsor: First Citizens Bank

the **Columbia**
Museum of **ART**

Van Gogh and His Inspirations

October 4, 2019 – January 12, 2020



Greetings, educators!

The Columbia Museum of Art is excited to offer you this Educator Guide as a teaching tool and resource supplementing *Van Gogh and His Inspirations*. We hope that you and your students find lots of creative and inspiring ways to learn about Van Gogh's life and art through history, English language arts, visual arts, and beyond. We also invite you to experience the

exhibition through a CMA field trip for an opportunity to enrich students' creative, critical, sensorial, and academic learning. Join us!

Keep your brushes wet,
Jackie Adams
Director of Education and Engagement

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Book Your School Trip!

Don't miss your chance to see Van Gogh in Columbia! Reserve a tour for your students to experience *Van Gogh and His Inspirations*. School programs include an hour-long guided gallery tour and an hour-long studio session. Please complete an online booking form at least one month before your anticipated visit.

Van Gogh school tours are free courtesy of Premier Programming Sponsor First Citizens Bank. Quantities are limited so book early.

www.columbiamuseum.org/school-tours



Major Themes in the Exhibition

Spirituality

Van Gogh was deeply religious

Raised as a Christian, he studied theology and even served briefly as a preacher. Though he ultimately turned to art rather than the ministry, his deeply held beliefs shaped his worldview, particularly when it came to his sympathy for those who were in impoverished communities.

Realism

The plight of those in poverty

In artistic terms Realism refers to artists like Corot and Millet who were interested in depicting the plight of peasant people and laborers rather than idealized images. Van Gogh was heavily influenced by their work and continued to sketch and paint the working class.

The Natural World

Divine creation embodied in nature

Van Gogh, as many artists before him, was enamored with nature. He often sketched and painted outside (made easier with new technology like synthetic paints in tubes) and saw nature itself as spiritual, a visual expression of God's creation.

Experimentation

Using bright colors and bold brushstrokes

Van Gogh studied the work of the Old Masters and was classically trained, but he was also looking to experiment with new ideas. Van Gogh collected Japanese prints and tried to emulate their depiction of space. Eventually he hit on what would become his signature style by incorporating vivid colors with expressive, gestural brushstrokes.

Weaver, 1884. Oil on canvas. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Tompkins Collection—Arthur Gordon Tompkins Fund, 58.356. Photograph ©2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Orchard with Arles in Background, 1888. Reed pen, pen, ink, and graphite on laid paper. The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York. Bequest of Charlotte Pruyt Hyde, 1971.81. Photograph by Joseph Levy



Pre-Visit Activities

The lessons in this guide are all designed to enhance your students' experience at the CMA. Don't have time for a full lesson? Try one of these quick activities!

Elementary School

- Select a number of Van Gogh works that illustrate a sense of touch. Discuss objects that appear in the images and gather touchable materials to examine and explore. Compare the two-dimensional and real-life versions of texture. If time permits, have students try to sketch some of the textured objects themselves.
- Look at a map and identify places that were important in Van Gogh's life—particularly France, England, and the Netherlands.
- Look at images of Van Gogh's landscapes and have a discussion about nature, weather, and seasons. Ask students directed questions about these topics, encouraging them to draw conclusions based on what they can see.
- Ask students to think about Van Gogh's lifetime (the second half of the 1800s) and discuss other events were going on during this time. (e.g. the American Civil War).

Middle/High School

- Take your students outside to sketch from nature. (Or use a window if the weather isn't cooperating.) Do five-minute sketching with just one color focusing on lines and form. Then try a quick sketch emphasizing perspective and pattern. Examine some of Van Gogh's sketches and drawings of nature and ask them to notice what stands out to them in those images.
- Look at high-resolution images of Van Gogh's paintings and examine details of his brushwork up close. Have students experiment with various ways of applying paint. Ask them to reflect on how each technique could be used to convey a particular texture, object, feeling, or idea.
- Look at a map to identify places that were important in Van Gogh's life and examine their human geography.

Timeline

Here are just a few key events that impacted Van Gogh's life and career

The artist was born in 1853 in Zundert in the southern part of the Netherlands.

1877
Van Gogh moves to Amsterdam to study theology.

1878
Moves to Brussels to train to be a preacher.

1880
Moves to an impoverished mining town where he briefly serves as a preacher.

1881
Studies under his cousin, artist Anton Mauve.



Nursery on Schenkweg (detail), 1882. Black chalk, graphite, pen, brush, and ink, heightened with white body color on laid paper watermarked ED & CIE (in a cartouche). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of Walter C. Baker, 1971 (1972.118.281)

See the Van Gogh Museum Collection Online!

Find high-resolution images and more information about the artist. www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en

Keep Exploring!

- Create a large-scale timeline for the classroom. Have students measure to be sure the scale is correct.
- Identify key locations on a map to trace Van Gogh's journey.
- Go beyond Van Gogh's lifetime! What happened to his legacy after his death?

1885
Enrolls in the
Academy of Fine
Arts in Antwerp.

1886
Relocates to Paris
to live with his
brother Theo.

1888
Moves to the South
of France.

1889
Commits himself to
an asylum to seek
treatment.

1890
Van Gogh dies
from a gunshot
wound.

Colorful Language (Grades K–5)

Overview: Use Van Gogh images to generate adjectives and create a haiku and a work of art with an emphasis on color.

SC Standards Addressed

VA.CR; VA.R

VA 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3; 4.1, 4.2; 5.1, 5.2; 6.1, 6.2

ELA LCS 9.5; RC 6.1; MC 7.1, 7.2

Objectives

- Students will be able to explain the connection between the building blocks of poetry (words) and the elements of visual art (specifically color).
- Students will be able to generate an original poem based on an adjective.
- Students will be able to create a work of art using color to convey tone.

Materials

- Reproductions or digital images of Van Gogh paintings
- Paint swatches or small cutouts of various colors (optional)
- Paper
- Drawing/painting materials of your choice, based on ability level:
 - Colored pencils
 - Oil pastels
 - Crayons
 - Paint and brushes

Resources

The Van Gogh Museum collection online: www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en

Instructor Procedures

- Begin by looking at one of Van Gogh's paintings from the earlier part of his career (pre-1885) like the first image on the next page. Discuss the overall image, making meaning as a group. Then have a directed discussion about the use of color and how it impacts the overall mood of the work.
- Examine a second painting from Van Gogh's later works (1888–1890) and ask students to compare the two, with particular attention to the use of color. Have students determine how the mood or tone of the painting changes with the choice of color. Reflect on how Van Gogh's style changed over his career.
- Ask students to generate a list of adjectives that might describe each painting.
- Have students choose one of the adjectives from either list and create a haiku based on that idea.
- Using the haiku as a starting point, ask students to create their own accompanying work of art using color as a way to capture mood.

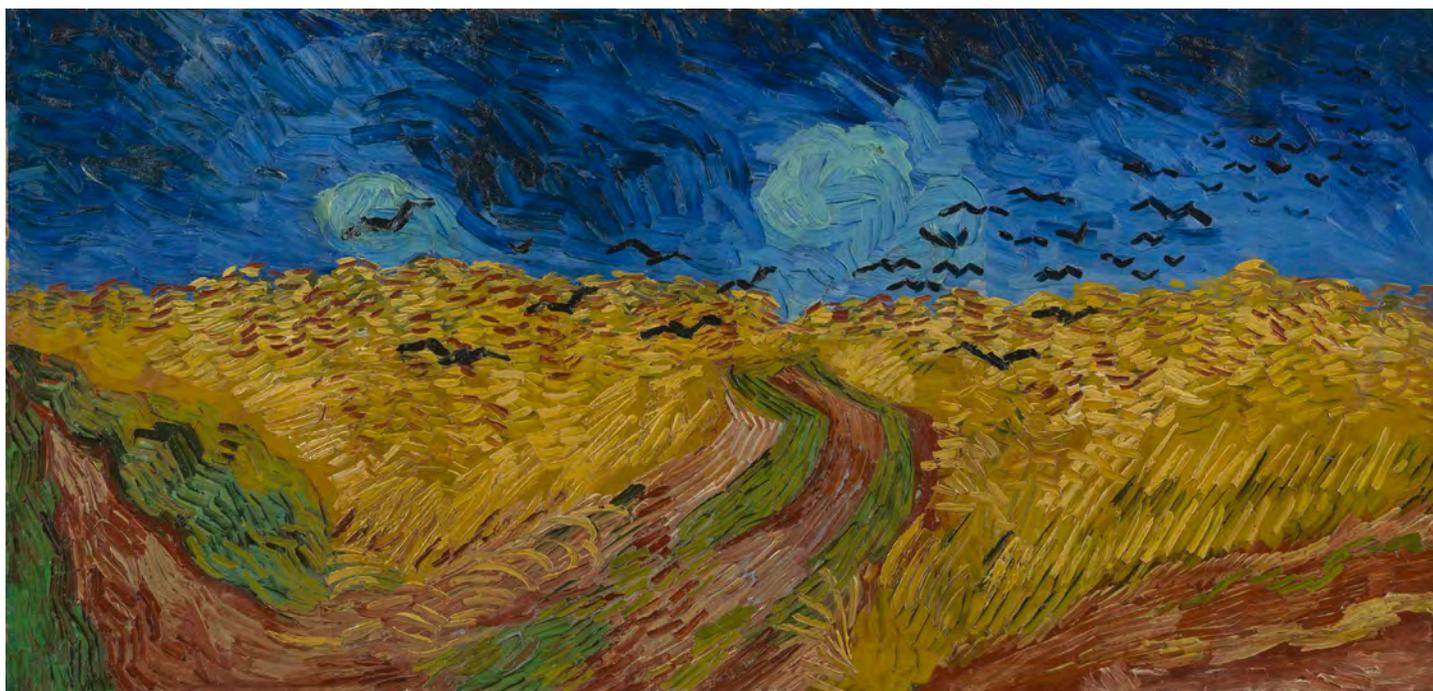
Right: Vincent van Gogh, *Women on the Peat Moor*, 1883. Oil on canvas. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation).

Below: Vincent van Gogh, *Wheatfield with Crows*, 1890. Oil on canvas. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation).

Opposite page: *Flower Beds in Holland* (detail), c. 1883. Oil on canvas on wood. National Gallery of Art, Washington Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1983.1.21

Try This!

When discussing a work of art with students, start with “What’s going on here?” to get them engaged and open to considering many possibilities.



Assessment

- Assess the haiku based on how descriptive the language is and how successfully it conveys the adjective in its overall tone.
- Ask students to explain how their visual image relates to the haiku they wrote.

Adaptations

- For a challenge, give students two to three paint swatches. Ask them to create their poem based on just these colors.
- For younger or less advanced students, choose a Van Gogh painting that can serve as the inspiration for their poem.
- Younger students may be more comfortable first identifying nouns in the images before moving onto adjectives, which can be a bit more abstract.
- For young students not yet able to generate their own poems, students could instead try mixing paint to create their own version of the colors Van Gogh used.

Place Value (Grades K–5)

Overview: Create a sketch of a landscape with dark and light values.

SC Standards Addressed

VA.CR; VA.R

VA 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3; 4.1, 4.2; 5.1, 5.2; 6.1, 6.2

Objectives

- Students will be able to explain what value is and how it can be used in works of art.
- Students will be able to create their own value drawing using dark and light shades and tints of the same hue.
- Students will be able to examine Van Gogh’s work, explain how he uses value, and compare his work to their own.

Materials

- Reproduction or digital image of a Van Gogh drawing
- Paper
- The outdoors (or photographs to draw from)
- Drawing materials of your choice, based on ability level:
 - Colored pencils
 - Drawing pencils

Resources

The Van Gogh Museum collection online: www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en

Instructor Procedures

- Start by looking at a Van Gogh sketch that uses various tints and shades of just one color.
- Examine the image together and try to make meaning of the image. Identify the various types of lines Van Gogh used. Then expand the conversation to value, asking students to define and find examples of how Van Gogh used light and dark tones. Ask students to imagine what this scene looked like in real life.
- Demonstrate ways that students create variations in value — from applying pressure to placing lines closer together and overlapping (cross hatching).
- Have students make a line drawing of an outdoor scene (or a subject of your choice) using one color to create variations of value.
- Students can sketch from nature (a view out a window perhaps), as Van Gogh did, or from another image.
- Ask students to present their work and explain why they made the choices they did. Have students reflect on how variety even with one color can express an entire scene.

Assessment

- Ask students to explain why they made certain parts of their image lighter or darker.
- Assess students' ability to explain how Van Gogh uses value and make comparisons to their own work.

Adaptations

- If students need guidance in creating their initial value drawings, print out a landscape image in black and white to get them started.
- As an extension, have students create another version of the image in full color. Have them reflect on how the first image informed the creation of the second.
- For older or more advanced students, emphasize how value can be used to show depth and space as well as light and shadow.

Did You Know?

Van Gogh spent his childhood exploring woods and fields. He believed art and nature went hand in hand and that artists had to truly understand the natural world.

Vincent van Gogh, *Landscape with Houses*, 1888. Pencil, brush and oil paint and watercolor on paper. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation). <https://vangoghmuseum.nl/en/collection/d0332V1962r>





Flowery Verse (Grades 6–12)

Overview: Create an original work of art based on a letter from Van Gogh.

SC Standards Addressed

VA 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3; 4.1, 4.2; 5.1, 5.2; 6.1, 6.2

VAH 1.1, 1.2, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3; 4.1, 4.3; 5.1, 5.2; 6.1

ELA C 1.4, 1.6; LCS 8.1, 9.1

Objectives

- Students will be able to define difficult vocabulary and make meaning from an excerpt of Van Gogh's letter.
- Students will be able to use the text to create their own work of art.
- Students will be able to generate words and poems inspired by the images.

Materials

- Copies of the poem excerpt (or access to letter database if students are selecting their own poems)
- Dictionary or other resources for vocabulary
- Paper
- Pencils
- Art materials of your choice: colored pencil, oil pastel, paint

Resources

Vincent van Gogh: The Letters: <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters.html>

Letter excerpted here: #689

Instructor Procedures

- Give students an excerpt of a letter from Van Gogh — use the example on page 9 or find another on the website listed above in Resources.
- Read through the text together and identify difficult vocabulary words.
- Individually or in groups, assign students to define particular words, then share findings as a group.
- Using the letter excerpt as a starting point, have students create original works of art using materials of your choice. Compare/contrast students' work to Van Gogh's sketch and each other's.
- Have each student swap their work of art with someone else. Ask them to describe the work using five adjectives and five nouns. Use those words to generate an original poem.

Assessment

- Evaluate students' ability to effectively research and communicate their vocabulary words and make meaning of the overall excerpt
- Ask students to explain why they made particular choices in their artwork, with attention to how it relates back to the original text.
- Assess students' poetry based on their ability to incorporate advanced vocabulary and figurative language.

Adaptations

- Read the excerpt of the letter aloud in addition to offering a printed version. Provide a document with larger text if needed.
- For more or less advanced readers, select a different letter excerpt as a starting point.
- Students studying French can try reading this letter in its original language and translating it from there.

Extension

- Give each student a different Van Gogh letter or have them research and identify their own letter. (See Resources on page 8)

Food for Thought

Van Gogh wrote more than 650 letters to his brother Theo, many of which provided insight on his artistic preferences, new ideas, and mental state.

Did you know?

Van Gogh was an avid reader. No wonder his vocabulary was so impressive!

Excerpt, letter to Theo van Gogh.
Arles, Wednesday, September, 26 1888.



This sketch accompanied Van Gogh's letter. Let your students compare their interpretations with the letter's description.

Vincent van Gogh, *Bush in the Park at Arles - The garden of the poet*, 1888. pen and ink on paper. Private collection.

The round bush is a variegated green, slightly tinged with bronze, the grass is very, very green, Veronese tinged with lemon, the sky is very, very blue.

The line of bushes in the background are all raving mad oleanders. These bloody plants flower in such a way that they could surely catch locomotor ataxia! They're covered in fresh blooms, and then in masses of faded blooms; their foliage also keeps on putting out strong new shoots, apparently inexhaustibly.

A funereal cypress, completely black, stands above them and a number of small coloured figures are strolling along a pink path.

Opposite page: *Orchard with Arles in Background* (detail), 1888. Reed pen, pen, ink, and graphite on laid paper. 12 x 15 in. The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York. Bequest of Charlotte Pruyne Hyde, 1971.81. Photograph by Joseph Levy.

Turning to Japan (Grades 6–12)

Overview: Create a work of art based on a Japanese print.

SC Standards Addressed

VA 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3; 4.1, 4.2; 5.1, 5.2; 6.1, 6.2

VAH 1.1, 1.2, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3; 3.1; 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5; 5.1

Objectives

- Students will be able to find comparisons between the work of Hiroshige and Van Gogh's copies.
- Students will be able to create their own work of art based on a Japanese print, with a particular eye to composition, line, and space.

Materials

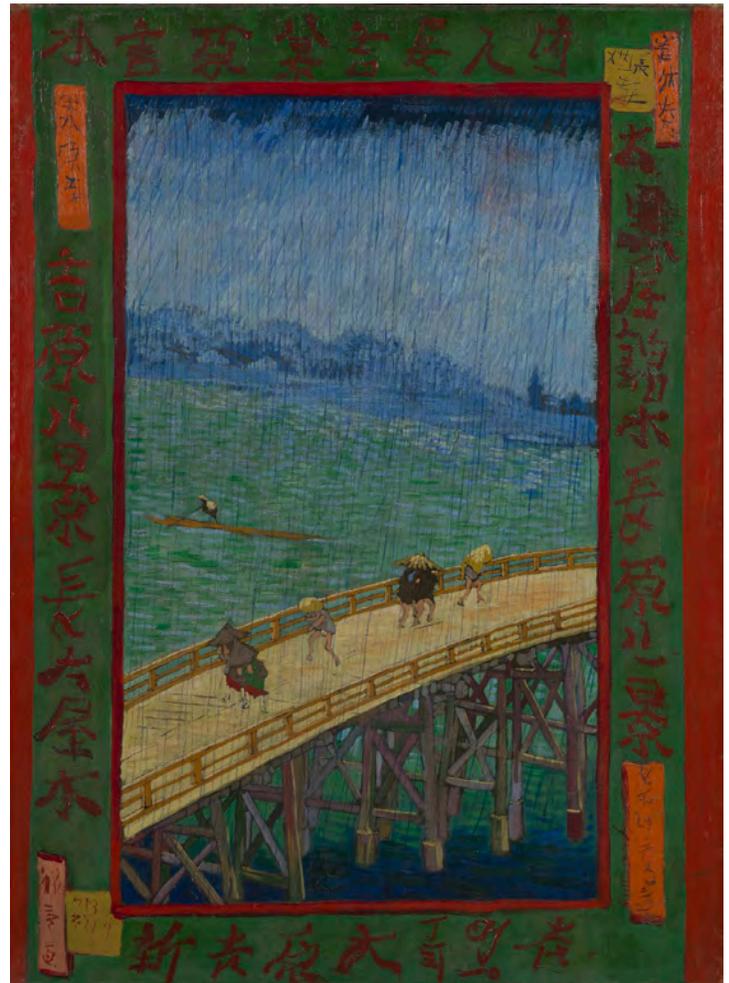
- Images of Hiroshige — projected or printed
- Images of Van Gogh copy
- Art materials (varied based on chosen medium)
 - Colored/drawing pencils
 - Pen and ink
 - Watercolor paint
 - Woodblock or linocut (for more advanced students)

Instructor Procedures

- As a group, begin by examining Japanese prints by artists like Hokusai and Hiroshige (whose work Van Gogh saw) and discuss how they differ from Western landscapes.
- Have students select a Japanese print from which to create a line sketch, focusing on the linear elements of the picture plane and the composition.
- Use the drawing exercise to inform a discussion about how Japanese artists expressed space.
- Now, have students compare a print by Hiroshige to a copy by Van Gogh, noting where he has taken liberties and where he has tried to remain faithful to the original.
- Ask students to create a work of art that takes its inspiration from a Japanese print by Hokusai or Hiroshige.
- Choose a medium that will suit your students and is in keeping with their ability level and training, whether it's ink and colored pencil, paint, or linocut.
- Have pre-selected images or allow students to do research to choose a print themselves. For further information about Van Gogh and his Japanese inspiration, see Resources on Page 12.
- Once students have completed their final composition, ask them to present their work and have other students critique it. Be sure they address the choices they made in terms of depth and composition in relation to the original Japanese example.
- Continue the conversation. As a group, examine some of Van Gogh's later work that incorporated aspects of the Japanese aesthetic, particularly the portraits created during his time in Arles, featuring large areas of bold color and clearly delineated spaces.

“We wouldn't be able to study Japanese art, it seems to me, without becoming much happier and more cheerful... it makes us return to nature...”

—Van Gogh,
1888



Hiroshige's version of a scene (left) and Van Gogh's later copy (right).

Utagawa Hiroshige. *Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake*. 1857. Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Vincent van Gogh, *Bridge in the Rain* (after Hiroshige), 1887. Oil on canvas. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation).

Assessment

- Assess the final work of art based on how well the student addressed the principal themes of composition and space.
- Have students present their work and explain the choices they made.

Adaptations

- For an extension, encourage students to do additional research on Van Gogh's affinity for Japanese art. Compare Van Gogh's work to that of other modern artists who were impacted by Japanese art (like Paul Gauguin or Emile Bernard).
- If students struggle with artmaking, spend more time creating the initial line sketches, modeling how to execute them.
- Considering having students replicate their compositions in collage to further underscore the notion of simplifying areas of color.

Tips and Tricks

Printmakers in Japan often left out the horizon line, or enlarged objects in the foreground.

A vertical detail of a painting, likely a tree trunk and foliage, showing textured brushstrokes in shades of blue, green, and brown.

Resources

Reference the following for further information or supplemental materials.

The Van Gogh Museum: www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en

- Overview of Van Gogh's life
- Van Gogh Paintings and Drawings
- Inspiration from Japan
- Van Gogh's Japanese Prints
- Van Gogh's Artist Friends
- Meet Vincent: Looking for Contrast (an overview of his development with color)

Vincent van Gogh: The Letters: <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters.html>

- Letter excerpted in Flowery Language lesson: #689

National Gallery of Art: www.nga.gov

- Vincent van Gogh Teaching Program

Tate Britain: www.tate.org.uk

- The EY Exhibition Van Gogh and Britain

The Art Story: www.theartstory.org/artist-van-gogh-vincent.htm

- Vincent van Gogh

Van Gogh Locations: vangoghlocations.com/en/

The Khan Academy: www.khanacademy.org

- Overview of Realism

Glossary

Key vocabulary incorporated in lessons and materials.

- **Complementary colors** – colors that are opposite one another on the color wheel; when mixed, complementary colors will create a neutral tone.
- **Crosshatching** – intersecting sets of parallel lines, usually used to create areas of shadow or depth.
- **Japonisme** – a French term referring to the late 19th century craze for Japanese art and culture in the West.
- **Monochrome** – a work of art consisting of light and dark tones of a single color.
- **Mood** – the emotion or feeling that a work of art can generate.
- **Realism** – a mid-19th century artistic movement characterized by subjects painted from everyday life in a naturalistic way; often these were images of working class people previously not often shown in works of Western art.
- **Shade** – a hue mixed with dark to create darker values.
- **Tint** – a hue mixed with white to create lighter values.
- **Value** – the range of lightness or darkness in a color.

Left: *Edge of Wheat Fields with Poppies* (detail), 1887. Oil on canvas. Frederic C. Hamilton Collection, bequeathed to the Denver Art Museum, 35.2017. Photograph courtesy of the Denver Art Museum.

Exhibition Sponsors

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This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Know Before You Go(gh)

- Please plan to arrive 15 minutes before your tour so that it can begin on time.
- Chaperones must remain with the group at all times in a 1:10 adult-student ratio.
- To avoid accidentally bumping into art, backpacks may not be worn on your back; they must be carried by hand (below the waist) or worn on the front of your body. Pencils, pens, food, or drinks are not allowed in the galleries.
- Bus parking is available on Hampton Street in front of the museum.
- Boyd Plaza, in front of the museum, is a lovely place for groups to enjoy lunch. (Space is not guaranteed.)
- A volunteer docent leading your tour will be in contact about a week before your visit to the CMA.

Works in the Exhibition

Van Gogh and His Inspirations brings 12 works by Vincent van Gogh to Columbia, South Carolina, alongside a variety of handpicked paintings and drawings that shaped his vision. Some of the works featured in this brochure are included in the exhibition: both cover images, plus the images on pages 1, 3, 8, and 12.

Evening for Educators

October 9, 2019
4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Enjoy a private look at *Van Gogh and His Inspirations* and a talk from Chief Curator Will South. Explore the galleries, learn about new tours, and try out lesson plan materials that include hands-on studio time. Attendees will receive documentation for professional development renewal credit. Registration required as space is limited.

Mark your calendar for future Evenings for Educators:

- February 12, 2020
- May 6, 2020

Benefits Just for Educators

- 10% off in the CMA shop (always tax-free!)
- A \$30 discount on select CMA memberships
- Free admission for educators during Teacher Appreciation Week, May 2–10, 2020

Learn more at www.columbiamuseum.org/educators

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Front Cover: Self-Portrait (detail), 1887
Oil on canvas. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT
Gift of Philip L. Goodwin in memory of his mother, Josephine S. Goodwin, 1954.189.
Allen Phillips/Wadsworth Atheneum

Below: *Flower Beds in Holland* (detail), c. 1883
Oil on canvas on wood. National Gallery of Art, Washington
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1983.1.21

Van Gogh and His Inspirations

Opens Friday, October 4

