



## Edgar Degas – Early French Impressionist

### 1. Overview

- a. Artist, printmaker, and teacher Barbara Mason discusses the life and artwork of Edgar Degas, a traditionally trained oil painter and pastel artist who later in his life was aligned with and considered as an early impressionist. Degas' father wanted him to go into business, but he was passionate about being an artist and so his father finally agreed. He went to the French School of Fine Arts, and then spent three years in Naples, Italy. He first became a skilled draftsman, before learning to paint. One of Degas' greatest inspirations was the famous French neoclassical portrait and historical realism painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (pronounced AWNG or AWN-GREY). Degas was also a collector of works by famous artists. Degas mentored the American artist in Paris Mary Cassatt, and introduced her to impressionism. Edgar Degas thought he would become a painter of historical scenes, but instead is known for his paintings, pastels, and sculptures of people in social environments – especially dancers in their studios. Students in this lesson will see examples of work by Degas created in watercolors and pastels depicting examples of two Degas inspired images of ballerinas. One interesting fact: all but one of the sculptures of dancers that Degas was known for were cast after his death from models found in his salon (studio).
- b. Grade Level: Grade 1<sup>st</sup> -5<sup>TH</sup> Grades.
- c. Vocabulary
  - i. École des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts)
  - ii. Louvre Museum
  - iii. Naples, Italy
  - iv. Realist
  - v. Impressionism
  - vi. Pastels
- d. Art Medium
  - i. White computer paper
  - ii. Watercolor paper
  - iii. Watercolor paintbrush
  - iv. Chalk Pastels
  - v. Pencil

- vi. Watercolors
- vii. Crayons
- viii. Felt markers
- ix. Cup
- x. Water
- xi. Downloadable template on our website

## 2. Fun Facts

- a. Edgar Degas wanted to paint historical scenes but found it was not his gift.
- b. Degas did not paint outside, but some of his early paintings were of horses and jockeys
- c. He is best remembered today for his sensitive depictions of dancers, which represent about half of his work.
- d. Impressionism is a style of painting which began in France in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- e. Later in his life, Degas worked on larger images and in pastels, and worked on his art close to the canvas because of his failing eyesight.
- f. Impressionist painters did not paint from their imagination, from literature, history, or mythology. They painted what they saw in the world around them. They were interested in capturing in their paintings the light and the weather around them.

## 3. Lesson Plan

- a. Elements of Art
  - i. Line
  - ii. Shape
  - iii. Form
  - iv. Value
  - v. Space
  - vi. Color
  - vii. Texture
- b. Principles of Art
  - i. Balance
  - ii. Emphasis (contrast)
  - iii. Movement
  - iv. Proportion
  - v. Gradation
  - vi. Harmony

- c. Visualization
    - i. How did your pictures differ when you painted them with watercolors or used chalk pastels, crayons, soluble markers, or colored pencils?
    - ii. How were each of your pictures similar when you colored them with felt pens, crayons or chalk or painted them with watercolors?
  
  - d. Goals and Objectives
    - i. Students will understand the process of painting with watercolors and a paintbrush.
    - ii. Students will observe how textures and values change depending upon which medium they use.
    - iii. Students are reminded that the chalk should be carefully brushed off or tapped off the surfaces – NEVER blown into the air where it might be inhaled.
  
  - e. Students Critique Questions
    - i. What do you like about the pictures you have created?
    - ii. What do you like about your classmate's pictures?
    - iii. What would you do differently next time you create a drawing or painting from a famous artist's template?
    - iv. Do you see how Degas could maintain his ability to create art by working with larger images as his eyes got worse?
4. To meet standards, students should be encouraged to watch the following videos.
- a. Edgar Degas <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUuqrLawzjo>
  - b. What is Impressionism?  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nesTk\\_6j-0c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nesTk_6j-0c)

(See compliance standards by grade on the following page)

COMPLIANCE WITH EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS (PER GRADE)

1<sup>st</sup> Grade VA.1.CR1.1 #1., #2., & #3., VA.2.CR2.1 #1., VA.3.CR3.1 #1., & #2., VA.8.RE2.1 #1., VA.9.RE3.1 #1., VA.10.CO1.1 #1. & #2., VA.11.CO2.1 #1. & #2., VA:Cr1.1.1a, VA:Cr1.2.1a, VA:Cr2.1.1a, VA:Cr3.1.1a, VA:Pr4.1.1a, VA:Re.7.1.1a, VA:Re.7.2.1a, VA:Re8.1.1a, VA:Re9.1.1a, VA:Cn11.1.1a

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade VA.:1.CR1.2 #1., #2., & #3., VA.2.CR2.2 #1., VA.3.CR3.2 #1., #2., & #3., VA.8.RE2.2 #1., VA.9.RE3.2 #1., VA.10.CO1.2 #2., VA.11.CO2.2 #1. & #2., VA:Cr1.1.2a, VA:Cr1.2.2a, VA:Cr2.1.2a, VA:Cr3.1.2a, VA:Pr6.1.2a, VA:Re.7.2.2a, VA:Re8.1.2a, VA:Re9.1.2a, VA:Cn11.1.2a

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade VA.1.CR1.3 #1., #2., & #3., VA.22.CR2.3 #1., VA.3.CR3.3 #1., #2., & #3., VA.5.PR2.3 #1. & #2., VA.6.PR3.3 #2., VA.8.RE2.3 #1. & #2., VA.9.RE3.3 #1. & #2., VA.11.CO2.3 #1. & #2., VA:Cr1.1.3a, VACr1.2.3a, VA:Cr2.1.3a, VA:Cr3.1.3a, VA:Pr6.1.3a, VA:Re7.1.3a, VA:Re8.1.3a, VARE9.1.3a, VA:Cn11.1.3a

4<sup>th</sup> Grade VA.1.CR1.4 #1., #2., & #3., VA.2.CR2.4 #1., VA.3.CR3.4 #1., #2., & #3., VA.5.PR2.4 #1. & #2., VA.7.RE1.4 #2., & #3., VA.8.RE2.4 #1., VA.9.RE3.4 #1. & #2., VA.11.CO2.4 #1. & #2., VA:Cr1.1.4a, VA:Cr1.2.4a, VA:Cr2.1.4a, VA:Cr3.1.4a, VA:Re.7.1.4a, VA:Re.7.2.4a, VA:Re8.1.4a, VA:Re9.1.4a, VA:Cn11.1.4a

5<sup>th</sup> Grade VA.1.CR1.5. #2., & #3., VA.2.CR2.5 #1., #3., & #4., VA.3.CR3.5 #1., #2., & #3., VA.5.PR2.5 #2. & #3., VA.7.RE1.5 #1., #2., & #3., VA.8.RE2.5 #1., VA.9.RE3.5 #1. & #2., VA:Cr1.1.5a, VA:Cr1.2.5a, VA:Cr2.1.5a, VA:Re.7.1.5a, VA:Re8.1.5a, VA:Re9.1.5a, VA:Cn10.1.5a