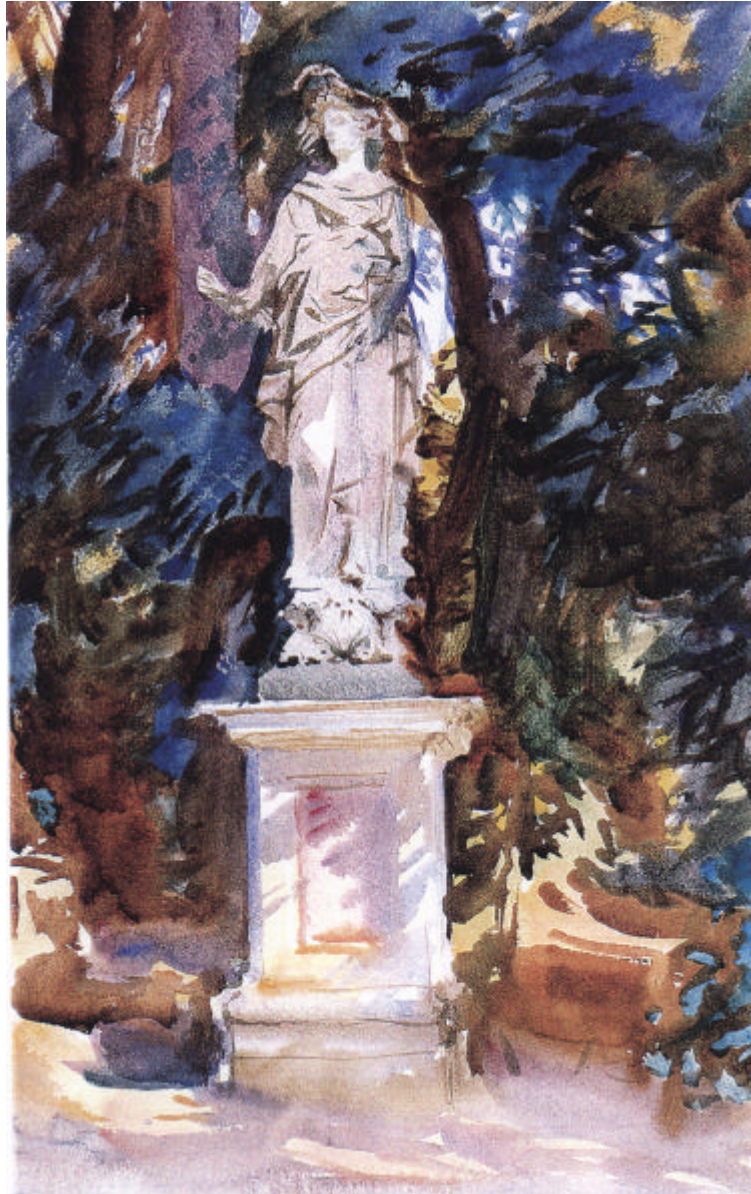


John Singer Sargent A Guide for Teachers



Boboli, 1907
Watercolor and pencil on paper, 18 1/8" x 11 7/16"
Brooklyn Museum of Art

By Rebecca Allan, M.F.A.
and
Ellen Nottingham, Ph.D.

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John Singer Sargent

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John Singer Sargent

A Guide for Teachers

Introduction

This guide introduces middle and high school teachers and students to the art of John Singer Sargent, the preeminent international portrait painter of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It examines Sargent's primary subjects— portraits and landscapes— and considers his relationship to his artistic and literary peers.

The guide contains transparencies of each work of art, background information, discussion questions, related activities, a glossary and a historical synopsis of the period in which Sargent lived. Activities in the language arts and visual art are designated by a specific symbol.



Represents a visual arts activity.



Represents a language arts activity.

Each activity is designed with the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) in mind. The EALRs are listed after each activity. The guide has three parts, corresponding to Sargent's subjects:

Part 1: Sargent and the Wertheimers

Key Images:

Asher Wertheimer, 1898

A Vele Gonfie: Portrait of Ena Wertheimer, 1905

Essie, Ruby, and Ferdinand, Children of Asher Wertheimer, 1902

Sargent's portraits of the Wertheimer family reveal the complex relationship between artist and patron.

STUDENTS DISCUSS:

- aspects of individual identity and family relationships
- the projection of appearance and personality through gesture, light and shadow
- the expression of status, character, and mood through fabrics, furnishings, and interior spaces

ACTIVITIES EMPHASIZE:

- visual observation and description, awareness of light and shadow
- personal identity and narrative perspective in writing

Part 2: The Painter's Peers

Key Images:

Robert Louis Stevenson, 1887

Man with a Cat, 1898-99 by Cecilia Beaux (*Note: this painting is not in the exhibition*)

Vernon Lee, 1881

Literature and painting offer unique yet interrelated ways of revealing the lives of individuals and their social milieu. Robert Louis Stevenson, Henry James, Edith Wharton, and Cecilia Beaux all worked within Sargent's social and cultural milieu.

STUDENTS DISCUSS:

- artistic friendship
- similarities and differences in artistic style, intention, and technique
- how character is conveyed through gesture and surroundings

ACTIVITIES EMPHASIZE:

- drawing to convey the gesture and character of the sitter
- understanding tone in writing, comparing, and contrasting works of Sargent's contemporaries in art and literature

Part 3: The Intrepid Landscape Painter

Key Images:

Boboli, 1907

Tents at Lake O'Hara, 1916

Sargent's landscape painting gave him a sense of physical freedom and spontaneity in contrast to the restrictions of his society portraits.

STUDENTS DISCUSS:

- Sargent's use of watercolor and oil techniques to convey temperature, light, and atmosphere
- the challenges and rewards of painting out-of-doors

ACTIVITIES EMPHASIZE:

- making thumbnail sketches to record visual impressions
- writing about sensory experiences and the landscape

John Singer Sargent: A Brief Background

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) was one of the most sought-after portrait painters of European and American high society at the turn of the nineteenth century. Born in 1856 in Florence, Italy, Sargent was the son of Fitzwilliam and Mary Newbold Singer Sargent, American expatriates from Philadelphia. Sargent's parents moved permanently to Europe in 1854, possibly in response to the death of their first child. His mother had four more children, but only John and his sisters Emily and Violet lived into adulthood.

The Sargent family lived a restless, nomadic life in Europe, renting homes in Switzerland, France and Italy, and traveling frequently to pursue better climates and new landscapes. Sargent's education was essentially conducted by his father, a physician, and his mother, who took him to museums, gardens, and great buildings, lecturing feverishly and sketching as they traveled.

At 18, when he became a student of the painter Carolus-Duran in Paris, Sargent was fluent in French, German, and Italian, had studied briefly at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Florence, and had a full portfolio of drawings and watercolors documenting his family's myriad travels.

Sargent's education as an artist encompassed academic study and learning directly from the works of the great masters. His sensibility as a painter was shaped by studying portraits by Rembrandt, Hals, El Greco, Velasquez, and Ingres and was influenced by the experimental works of his Impressionist contemporaries, Monet and Manet. By 1886 he had established a studio in London where his reputation as a portraitist grew rapidly and placed him at the center of aristocratic and nouveau-riche British society.

Sargent's success with portraiture was always tempered by the burden of satisfying his patrons' desires to be portrayed in a flattering light. He vowed several times to give up commissioned portraits completely. But it was central to his professional and financial success. In contrast, Sargent found artistic and physical renewal through his lifelong pursuit of landscape painting, which offered him a relief from the demands of patrons and a chance to be himself with artist-friends and family.



Sargent painting a watercolor, Simplon Pass, Switzerland, c. 1910
Courtesy of Trevor Fairbrother

Part 1: Sargent and the Wertheimers

Asher Wertheimer, 1898

A Vele Gonfie: Portrait of Ena Wertheimer, 1905

Essie, Ruby, and Ferdinand, Children of Asher Wertheimer, 1902

One of the most remarkable relationships between artist and patron was that of Sargent and Asher Wertheimer, a successful London art dealer. In 1898 Wertheimer commissioned Sargent, then 42, to commemorate his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary with portraits of himself and his wife, Flora. Over the next ten years, the relationship evolved and Sargent was commissioned to paint ten more portraits of the Wertheimer children, all of which were publicly exhibited and later hung in the family's home.

By commissioning Sargent, Asher Wertheimer was consciously placing himself within the European tradition of royal family portraiture and therefore identifying himself with the aristocratic and newly wealthy members of London society during the Edwardian period. Fine portraits themselves were status symbols, and the ability to pay for twelve Sargent portraits (the equivalent of \$1.4 million today) advertised and increased Wertheimer's powerful social standing.

As Sargent painted the Wertheimers, he developed a deep and lasting friendship with them and was inspired by the proud assertion of their Jewish identity. Recent scholarship on Sargent suggests that his close bond with the Wertheimers may have been forged because they shared a kind of outsider status in London society; he as an American, reserved bachelor who was probably homosexual, and the Wertheimers as descendants of German-Jewish immigrants.

The Wertheimer portraits generated mixed responses, reflecting the deep currents of prejudice against Jews in Britain following the Boer War. Some viewers mocked the portraits as caricatures. Yet Asher and his family members were generally satisfied with Sargent's representation of them, reflecting a sense of pride in their independence and family heritage.

Overhead 1 (left)

Asher Wertheimer, 1898

Oil on canvas, 58 x 38 1/2 in.

The Tate Gallery, London. Presented by the widow and family of Asher Wertheimer in accordance with his wishes, 1922

The portrait of Asher Wertheimer reveals a man of 54 who meets us with an open, direct gaze and an expression of alertness. A slight smile, partially hidden by a substantial moustache, hints at an exuberant yet slightly guarded personality. This is a man in buoyant health evidenced by sparkling eyes and a ruddy complexion.

Asher's clothing and grooming combine late Victorian and earlier styles. His moustache was fashionable but his full beard less popular among men in the late 1890s. He wears a frock coat, casually unbuttoned over a (vest-like) waistcoat, a winged collar, and a (newly fashionable) ascot tie, fastened with a gold scarfpin. He sports a watch chain, called an Albert (after the husband of Queen Victoria), reflecting the influence of the British royal family on styles of dress.

Sargent catches his patron in mid-motion; next he might lift his cigar to his lips or reach down to ruffle his dog's generous mane. His theatrical use of light and shadow helps to convey this sense of **implied movement**. The space surrounding Asher is cloaked in deep charcoal and silvery grays, while his head emerges as if lit by a spotlight. Light flickers across his watch chain and illuminates the pink tongue of his panting poodle, Noble. Through his abilities as a draftsman and conscious choices about color, light, and **gesture**, Sargent conveys Asher's domestic comfort, self-possession, and confident authority.



Overhead 1 (right)

A Vele Gonfie: Portrait of Ena Wertheimer, 1905

Oil on canvas, 64 1/4 x 42 1/2 in.

The Tate Gallery, London. Bequeathed by Robert Mathias

Well, but didn't the psychologist fellows say that there was an hour in every woman's life every self-sacrificing woman's when the claims of her suppressed self suddenly asserted themselves, body and soul, and she forgot everything else, all her duties, ties, responsibilities?

Edith Wharton, *Charm Incorporated*

A Vele Gonfie (Italian for in full sail) was painted when Ena, the eldest Wertheimer daughter, was 31 and about to be married. Sargent's friendship with Ena provided a place of acceptance and refuge from the demands and expectations of most of his patrons.

Ena seems to create her own weather as the wind sweeps through her feathered cavalier's hat and heightens the color of her cheeks. Looking back over her left shoulder, she seems about to stride right out of the painting. According to family stories, Sargent staged this pose as Ena arrived at his studio, full of agitation at the length of time Sargent was taking to do her portrait. Sargent liked the way her cloak swung around her and asked her to keep it moving. Ena complied, grabbing a broomstick and sticking it through the cloak (visible at the right edge of the painting). The wind moving around Ena could be seen as a metaphor for the refreshing force of her friendship.



Proper society women, often confined by tight-fitting corsets and gowns, usually sat still for Sargent. But Ena is clearly moving beneath her cape. Her height (over six feet) and her willingness to make mischief by posing in a masculine military costume allowed Sargent to play around with acceptable notions of proper feminine portrait attire and behavior.

Talking About the Artwork with Students

- Compare Sargent's portraits of Asher and Ena. In what ways are these portraits theatrical? How does Sargent's use of light contribute to this quality? What is revealed by the light? What is concealed by shadow?
- Describe the physical gestures and facial expressions of Asher and Ena. What kind of personality/character does each figure convey through these gestures? Through facial expressions? Is there a resemblance between father and daughter?
- What could you say about Asher's social status based upon this portrait? Look for clues in his gesture and clothing.
- How does the portrait of Ena convey a mood of freedom? Nonconformity? What do you think Sargent admired most about Ena? *Women's roles in British and American society at this time were changing dramatically as a result of their demand for suffrage (the right to vote), along with greater social, legal, and educational rights.*

Overhead 2 (top)

Essie, Ruby, and Ferdinand, Children of Asher Wertheimer, 1902

Oil on canvas, 63 1/2 x 76 1/4 in.

The Tate Gallery, London. Presented by the widow and family of Asher Wertheimer in accordance with his wishes, 1922

Sargent's portrait of three of the ten Wertheimer children, *Essie, Ruby, and Ferdinand*, reveals his appreciation for other great portraitists such as Frans Hals, Diego Velazquez, and Sir Joshua Reynolds. From his artistic ancestors, Sargent understood the complexities of painting children and expressing their unique identities.



The projected public image of the virtuous family was often at odds with the real internal conflicts and power struggles among parents, children, and siblings. Sibling relationships in the nineteenth century were influenced by class, gender, age, and parental favor. Younger siblings were often instructed by their older sisters. A sibling's religious or moral ideas or choice of profession was often influenced by an older brother.

The writings of Hegel and other philosophers defined children as both members of a family and individuals in their own right. The notion of three distinct phases of childhood: early childhood—childhood proper, and adolescence—emerged at this time. While children were under the absolute power of their fathers, they were also considered heirs to the family's future. Children represented the family's permanence and its continuation into future generations.

Sargent posed the Wertheimer children with three of their dogs on a wide, horizontal sofa. The room is relatively simple, with the exception of a large mounted globe in the upper right corner. Despite the simplicity of the background, the good fortune of the family is evident in the luxurious silk fabrics on the sofa and the stylish materials (silks, wool, patent leather) of their clothing.

In 1902, Essie was 22, Ferdinand 14 and Ruby 13. Varying intensity of light suggests the age differences among the children; it is brightest on Ferdinand's face and gradually diminishes on the faces of

Ruby and Essie. Their sibling bond is also reinforced by their triangular placement linked by the small beribboned dog in the center.

Ruby and Ferdinand are at the age when most children become consciously aware of their own developing identity and place in the world. Essie, at 22, is at the age when women were expected to marry. All three children have somewhat serious, thoughtful facial expressions. While each child looks in a different direction, Essie looks directly at us. This could be interpreted as an expression of her closer identification with the artist, or an awareness of her changing role in the family. Ferdinand and Ruby look off in either direction, lost in their own thoughts, seemingly unaware of us.

Sitting for a portrait is a serious responsibility, and Essie, Ruby, and Ferdinand would have been expected to hold their poses for hours, perhaps over a period of days. But Sargent had already painted many children, including his own sisters, and he must have had the ability to put his young friends at ease. It is possible that they cooperated willingly because they understood the importance of the portrait to their parents and family. These three out of the four youngest in a family of ten children must have enjoyed being the singular focus of the artist's attention.

Talking About the Artwork with Students

- *Essie, Ruby, and Ferdinand* includes six figures (with children and dogs). How does the artist bring so many figures together to create a unified portrait?
- Describe the qualities of light. How does light fall across the faces of the children? How is it different from one figure to another? Is light warm or cool? How might this variation in light relate to the children?
- How old do you think each child is? Do you think their poses are natural? If not, why not? Do they seem content? Impatient? Why might the artist (or parent) have asked them to pose in this way?
- How would you describe the personality of each sibling?

ACTIVITIES for PART 1: Sargent and the Wertheimers



Portrait Montage

EALRs: Art 1.1, 1.2, 1.4

The family bond in Sargent's *Essie, Ruby, and Ferdinand* is emphasized visually by the arrangement of the three children in a triangular **composition**.

Using photographs carefully cut from magazines or photocopies of your own family photographs, make a portrait **montage** (a whole new picture created from separate parts of other pictures). Look for images of rooms, furniture, toys, cars, or animals to include in the portrait.

Your compositional choices are important! The arrangement of figures within the space of your montage can express the way your sitters feel about each other, or it can indicate their age differences. What happens when you place your figures in a triangle? Along a horizontal? Close together or far from each other? Overlapping?

Assessment: Completion of a montage portrait that demonstrates awareness of compositional choices and craftsmanship (careful cutting, arranging, and gluing of montage pieces).



Shadows and Light

EALRs: Art 1.1, 1.2

Look again at the portraits of Asher and Ena Wertheimer. Notice the values (lights and shadows) on the faces of each sitter.

Make a pencil sketch of the head of Asher or Ena. Use hatching strokes (side by side strokes) to create deep shadows and use dark shading around the head to make it pop forward, as if lit by a spotlight. Look carefully at the way light and shadow shape the features of the head: brow, nose, cheeks, jaw line, lips, and ears.

Assessment: Completed sketches of heads based upon Sargent's portraits, showing value contrasts from light to dark.



Defining the Self

EALRs: Writing 2.2, 3.1

Students and others use various phrases, images, moments, and roles in the family, at school, and with friends to define themselves, consciously and unconsciously. With the class, brainstorm some of these possible phrases, images, and roles. List them on the board.

After all students gain a sense of the possibilities, ask each student to compile his or her own list. As the students list words and phrases, they may also remember incidents in their lives that they have unwittingly incorporated into their sense of who they are. Encourage students to note such snapshot memories in their lists.

These lists of self-defining phrases, images, roles, and moments offer rich raw material for myriad forms and pieces of writing, such as a poem or a personal essay, a research paper, family memoir, or an expository essay.

Assessment: Personal lists generated by each student and stored for future use.



From Whose Perception?

EALR: Reading 2.3

In many pieces of literature, the author deliberately creates differences among the narrator's perception and a character's self-perception and a reader's perception. Katherine Anne Porter's short story "He" could be read with these differences in mind.

What is the narrator's perception or attitude? Encourage close reading for what the narrator tells the reader and with what word choices. In examining a character's perception or attitude, look first at what Mrs. Whipple says and does. What are her perceptions and her intentions in her words and actions?

Then consider her second son, the "he" of the title. What might his perception be?

Finally, how do you as the readers perceive Mrs. Whipple? What differences do you find?

Assessment: Participation in the class discussion; or discussion participation through the examination of the characters' words and actions, followed by written responses by students regarding their own perceptions and differences they find.



Voice Inside and Out

EALRs: Reading 2.3, Writing 1.2, 2.2

In Dorothy Parker's short story "The Waltz," we read the thoughts of a young woman who dances with a young man. She interrupts her own thoughts occasionally to speak briefly to him. She changes tone drastically as she switches from thought to speech.

After reading "The Waltz" and noting the format, write a story featuring the contrasting thoughts and spoken words of the portrait artist to the sitter. Reveal the artist's view of his differing opinions of the sitter. What is he thinking about the sitter as he paints compared to what he says to the sitter as he paints?

Assessment: The students' completed stories, evaluated according to the six writing traits with special attention to the trait of voice.



Inside and Outside Me

EALRs: Writing 2.3, Communication 2.5

Consider how others see you and list those attributes. Consider how you see yourself and list those attributes. Compare, noting differences.

Present the similarities and differences in a compare and contrast essay or in a three-dimensional form, using a mask or box. With a mask, write how others perceive you on the front side and how you see yourself on the reverse side. With a box, on the outside write how others perceive you, and on the inside write how you see yourself.

For younger students: Ask students to write about their physical characteristics on one side and their personality on the other side of the mask.

Assessment: Completion of an essay, a mask, or a box, including three or more points of similarity and difference and using pertinent ideas and content and specific word choice.



Self-Portrait Collage

EALR: Writing 2.2

Create collage self-portraits. Begin with a profile silhouette of each student's head and cut-out words and images that each student has collected as representing herself or himself. The student's profile silhouette can be either the form on which the words and images are mounted, or the central image surrounded by the words and images. Words and images could come from word-processing, handwritten papers, magazines, photographs, drawings, paintings, fabric, buttons, etc. Limit or encourage mixed media as you choose.

Students can then write a paragraph about the creation process and a paragraph describing their collage self-portraits.

For younger students: Ask younger students to think of several descriptive words that evoke the qualities of their appearance or dress including color and texture of skin and hair, eye color, favorite items of clothing.

Assessment: Completed self-portraits and accompanying paragraphs that describe the process and the student's selecting words and images .



Messages from the Milieu

EALRs: Reading 1.2, Communication 1.1,1.3

List the fabrics, furnishings, and interior spaces or rooms that students can recognize in Sargent's portrait of Essie, Ruby and Ferdinand. Depending on the age and experience of your students, you may need to supply the words for some of the items. (To supplement this naming, you might bring in fabric samples for students to touch and hold.)

Discuss the practicality, flimsiness, and relative cost of the identified items. With these attributes in mind, students can theorize about status, character, and mood. Why might the young people sitting for this portrait choose to appear in those clothes and surroundings? What message is intended?

For younger students: This activity can be used with students of any age. Expect more detailed and socially aware results from older students.

Assessment: Participation in class discussion, or participation and note-taking during class discussion.



Commissioning Your Portrait

EALRs: Writing 1.1, 1.3, 2.3

After noting messages conveyed (or at least intended) through the fabrics, furnishings, and interiors included in the Wertheimer portraits, students can list their own choices for a portrait of themselves. Which of their clothes, belongings, and environments would they want included in their own portraits?

With their lists completed, they could write a description of their planned portrait or they could compose a letter to the artist, a letter in which they layout their plan for the pose, the setting, outfit to wear, and displayed belongings.

For younger students: Younger students may focus more on their immediate interests and family, and their use of the writing traits may be less adept.

Assessment: Descriptive essay or letter to artist.



The Sitter's Story

EALR: Writing 2.2, 2.3

After noting messages conveyed by the fabrics, furnishings, and interiors included in the Wertheimer portraits, students can write a short story from the perspective of Asher, Ena, Essie, Ferdinand, or Ruby Wertheimer.

From that person's perspective, students write how they first met the artist, who decided what they would wear, what they were thinking about as their portrait was being painted, and what it felt like to pose for many hours. Were they getting along with the other siblings in the portrait? What aspects of their personality did Sargent emphasize? What did he leave out? Were they pleased with their portrait? Why or why not?

Assessment: Completed short story, written consistently from point of view of selected person in portrait.



Deducing a Character

EALRs: Reading 2.1, Writing 3.1, 3.4

As an alternative, work from the reverse the way John Steinbeck does in an incident in "Travels with Charley". At a posh Chicago hotel, Steinbeck waits in a room not yet tidied and cleaned after the departure of the previous guest. Steinbeck's restless imagination "reads" all the detritus of the previous occupant and derives from it a character sketch of the man.

Arrange some furnishings and leftover bits and pieces of occupancy, call it a hotel room, and invite students to "read" the setting and left behind items. From this evidence students can write a character sketch, a portrait in writing, of the person they imagine stayed in the room.

Assessment: Completed written character sketches using furnishings and other objects as support..



Wharton on Sargent?

EALRs: Reading 2.1, 2.2, Writing 2.2, 2.3

Edith Wharton's short story "Charm Incorporated" is a parody of the relationships between portrait painters and their patrons. The story was written five years after Sargent's death, and its main character Axel Svengaart, a portrait painter from Norway, could be a veiled re-creation of Sargent himself.

After reading the story, students could discuss the following questions: What was James Targatt never able to share with his wife, Nadeja? Why did James and Nadeja marry in the first place? Why didn't James tell Nadeja how he felt about her family? How did James' feelings for Nadeja change after Axel Svengaart asked to paint her for his own pleasure?

Assessment: Participation in class discussion, or written answers to the questions, with facts from story cited to support answers.

Part 2: The Painter's Peers

Robert Louis Stevenson, 1887

Man with a Cat, 1898-99 by Cecilia Beaux

Vernon Lee, 1881

Portrait painters and writers share a desire to reveal an individual's true character beyond what is presented publicly. Henry James and Edith Wharton, American writers who spent much of their lives in Europe, created insightful stories and novels that exposed the differences between strict social codes of behavior and the true desires and motivations of Edwardian British and American society.

Sargent knew Edith Wharton and had a deep and lasting friendship with Henry James. But while Sargent benefited enormously from his ability to play into his wealthy patrons' images of themselves, James's and Wharton's writing was more critical of their subjects, exposing their hypocrisy and social pretenses. In his best portraits, Sargent went beyond flattering his subjects to get at something more truthful about them.

American painter Cecilia Beaux and Sargent had parallel lives on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Beaux was born in 1855, one year before Sargent, in Philadelphia. While Beaux became one of the most sought-after portraitists of upper-class East Coast society, her career rivaled Sargent's in its dedication to hard work and its involvement with immortalizing members of the same privileged society of patrons. Beaux and Sargent both made portraits of Henry James and each painted members of the same families in America. Beaux apparently knew Sargent, and said of him:

He was a very shy man, and his almost stammering appeal to me as to what I thought of the problem (in one of his designs) was that of an eager, anxious self-doubter. I saw that his wordy appearance, manner, and speech were a sort of armor for his sensitiveness.

Cecilia Beaux, 1930

Overhead 2 (bottom)

Robert Louis Stevenson, 1887

Oil on canvas, 20 1/16 x 24 3/4 in.

Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati

Bequest of Charles Phelps and Anna Sinton Taft

Sargent came to paint the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson (*Kidnapped*, *Treasure Island*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*) at the request of American patrons Charles and Elizabeth Fairchild. Elizabeth was a poet and especially fond of Stevenson's writing. This is one of three portraits Sargent painted at Skerryvore, the Stevensons' seaside home in Bournemouth, England.



Sitting languidly in a wicker armchair, the writer looks directly at us with a thoughtful, somewhat quizzical expression. His gaunt, angular figure leans into the chair, while his legs jut out at a jaunty angle. A chain smoker, he dangles a cigarette between skeletal fingers. Perhaps Stevenson looks older than his 37 years because he suffered from consumption (a form of tuberculosis), that forced him to do most of his writing in bed. He overcame many bouts of illness and his closeness to death fueled an intense passion for life. The ruddy color of his skin and warm reddish tones of Sargent's palette imbue Stevenson with a sense of life that would not be extinguished easily.

Henry James was also a friend and a neighbor of Stevenson's when both writers lived in Bournemouth.

Sargent told Henry James that Stevenson was the most intense creature he ever met. And in a letter to a friend, Stevenson wrote of Sargent: "We both lost our hearts to him: a person with a kind of exhibition manner and English accent, who proves on examination, simple, bashful, honest, enthusiastic, and rude with a perfect (but quite inoffensive) English rudeness." Stevenson, of course, was Scottish.

Sargent's ability to describe the qualities of his sitter's surroundings is a pleasure to take in: the bur-nished sheen of the dark oak cabinet, the golden gleam of the wicker, the loosely brushed fur carpet and the opaque black of Stevenson's bohemian velvet jacket. Similar qualities of place are present in Edith Wharton's descriptions of Charlotte Ashby's home in her short story "The Pomegranate Seed":

Charlotte Ashby paused on her doorstep... While she stood there she called upon the scene within: the hall hung with old prints, the ladder-like stairs, and on the left her husband's long shabby library, full of books and pipes and worn armchairs inviting to meditation."

Edith Wharton, *The Pomegranate Seed*

Overhead 3 (left)

Man with a Cat, 1898-99 by Cecilia Beaux

National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (www.nmaa.si.edu)

Bequest of Henry Ward Ranger through the National Academy of Design (note: this portrait is not in the Seattle Art Museum's *John Singer Sargent* exhibition)

Great portraitists are skilled observers who have the ability to gain a special kind of trust from their sitters. When that trust is present, the sitter lets down his guard and the painter works to reveal the multilayered persona of her subject. Cecilia Beaux, like Sargent, understood this unspoken collaboration, and this portrait of her brother-in-law (*Man with a Cat*) demonstrates her ability as a painter to observe and to project empathy and objectiveness.

Beaux and Sargent worked within the same aristocratic social spheres, though she worked primarily in America. Their artistic educations and influences were similar, based upon the academic art traditions of Europe and influenced by the Impressionists' experiments with pure color and transitory aspects of light. Comparing Beaux and Sargent allows us to consider how individual artists have distinct sensibilities or ways of approaching similar subjects.

Henry Sturgis Drinker (the man pictured in *Man with a Cat*) was the husband of Beaux's older sister, Etta, with whom he had six children. Drinker was a dedicated corporate railroad lawyer who lived life at a frantic pace. He devoted much of his spare energies to saving Lehigh University, his alma mater, from financial ruin. Although he loved Cecilia's sister, he was a distant and preoccupied husband.

In this portrait, Beaux seems to have been able to fuse the complex energies of this ambitious patriarch. Sitting cross-legged in a Windsor chair (just like Robert Louis Stevenson in Sargent's portrait), Drinker provides a cozy lap for his sleepy, marmalade tabby. While his figure seems relaxed, his long, outstretched fingers pulsate with nervous energy. The spindly legs and sloping back of the chair visually echo his hands and shoulders. The undulating folds of his loose-fitting, white linen jacket carry the eye along his arm to the patterns of light and shadow on his face.



In contrast to Sargent's portrait of Stevenson, Beaux's treatment of Henry's face is far more complex; the gradations of light and shadow are broader and better defined. Subtle shifts of **hue and value** reveal variations in the weight and transparency of his flesh. Though half of his face is in shadow (as is Stevenson's), we can still make out the eyes, nose, and prominent chin.

Like the Dutch painter Vermeer, Beaux works with multiple sources of light and frames her subject within a comfortable domestic interior. Light coming through the opened wood shutters softly illuminates the space just behind Henry, while the right side of his head and torso are bathed in light from another source (another window?).

In Vermeer's work, the various sources and levels of light in a room symbolized the intricate levels of relationship between human beings and within the setting of the home. The light in Beaux's portrait of Henry Drinker kindles our curiosity about what (and who) we might find in the household just beyond his left shoulder.

Overhead 3 (right)

Vernon Lee, 1881

Oil on canvas, 21 1/8 x 17 in.

The Tate Gallery, London

Bequest of Miss Vernon Lee

Through Miss Cooper Willis

Vernon Lee was the pen name of Violet Paget, an English writer and friend of both Sargent and Henry James. She maintained a life-long correspondence with Sargent in addition to her work as an essayist, novelist, and critic. Initially impressed with her intellect, James later called her a tiger-cat and broke off their friendship after she harshly satirized him in a story.

Sargent first met Lee when both were 10 years old, in Nice, where his family spent the winter of 1866-67. Their youthful adventures included throwing acorns at pigs fenced in the Porta del Popolo in Rome and hunting for treasures among the ancient ruins of the city.

Lee became a foil for Sargent. She cultivated an androgynous identity and adopted a male pseudonym, perhaps like George Sand, to gain access to a literary establishment that almost completely excluded women. While Lee could be aggressive and preachy, Sargent maintained an unruffled reserve that sometimes put the friends at odds with each other.

Their clashing temperaments provided the spark of inspiration when Lee sat for Sargent in London, when both were 25. Painted in about three hours, this work is essentially an **oil sketch** with a broadly painted background and an unfinished left edge. Without the usual studio props and furnishings of his society portraits, the relative simplicity of this work directs our attention to the essential character of the writer.

Sargent successfully captured the intensity of his friend projected through her alert and mobile expression. Her large, gray-green eyes, arched left eyebrow, and slightly open mouth suggest her quick intelligence, while her slightly protruding lower lip is that of a real person rather than a perfected mannequin



Vernon Lee's personal style challenged the boundaries between masculine and feminine appearances during the late Victorian period. She preferred wearing black silk dresses with high Gladstone collars and a smooth, swept-back hair style. As a person for whom the life of the mind was primary, Lee probably rejected the curls, flounces, corsets, bustles, and time-consuming grooming rituals of her contemporaries because she preferred to spend her time writing or debating a literary point.

Lee's figure is not confined by an outline. Instead Sargent represents the shape of her head and torso through the subtle placement of light and dark values. While **underdrawing** is visible along Lee's left jaw, her facial features are mostly defined by variations of black, gray, umber, and pink. Attempting to capture the fleeting impression of his sitter and her mood, Sargent worked with swift, fluid brushstrokes, varying the amount of **painting medium** he added to achieve greater transparency or opacity.

Talking About the Artwork with Students

- Is it possible to tell how Sargent and Robert Louis Stevenson felt about each other by looking at this portrait? Remember, the portrait was commissioned by someone other than Stevenson, and Stevenson was not aristocratic, but a fellow artist. For clues, notice Stevenson's gestures (body language) and facial expression. Compare this to the gestures and facial expression in Sargent's portrait of Asher Wertheimer.
- Describe the physical qualities of the room in which Stevenson sits, its colors, furnishings, and textures. How do these qualities reflect the personality of Stevenson?
- Compare Cecilia Beaux's *Man with a Cat* with Sargent's *Robert Louis Stevenson*. How did Sargent and Beaux use light and shadow on the sitters' faces? Which portrait appears to be more complete and why?

ACTIVITIES for PART 2: The Painter's Peers



Gesture Drawing

EALRs: Art 1.1, 1.3

Choose one student to sit for the class as the model for a portrait. The student must assume the same pose as Robert Louis Stevenson and Henry Sturgis Drinker (*Man with a Cat*). He or she could hold something on his/her lap (a favorite object, a book) to mimic Henry Drinker. Make several quick pencil sketches of the model, trying to capture the **gesture** of his/her body (how the body is positioned).

Assessment: Several completed gesture sketches of the model, capturing the direction and position of the figure in the chair.



Tone: Painting with Words

EALRs: Reading 1.2, 2.3

The artist speaks through a language of line, shape, relative positioning, color, light-shade contrasts, pattern, and movement. In critiquing writing, we often use some of the artist's terms.

The more pertinent question for students, however, is how do writers give shape, highlights, and color to their writing? Writers create tone or attitude through five elements: the connotations in word choice; sensory appeal; selection of particular detail; type of language used; and length and structure of sentences. Tone words include angry, happy, sentimental, proud, dramatic, urgent, joking, sarcastic, somber, mocking, peaceful, confused, or detached.

With students, discuss each of the elements of tone and find or create with them examples of each element at work in writing. For example, after explaining denotation versus connotation of words, give the students neutral words such as house, man, woman, and dead. Then ask them to brainstorm synonyms for each, synonyms that imply various added meanings. House can become mansion or hovel; man, gentleman or dude.

Assessment: Classroom display of individual student lists and samples of tone words and instances in writing.



The Body Speaks

EALRs: Reading 2.1, 2.3, Communication 2.5

Artists and writers both use body language to convey messages. Students and teachers use and 'read' body language, too; some do it more consciously than others. For portraits the artist poses the subject and directs the subject's gaze in relation to the surroundings and in relation to the imagined viewer of the finished portrait. Writers describe characters' positioning and gaze in relation to other characters and elements of the setting.

Ask students to assume the positions and gazes of subjects in Sargent's portraits, other painted or photographed portraits, or character descriptions and settings in stories you are reading. For example, in Maya Angelou's "Graduation," groups of students could choose different scenes to pose themselves in "freeze frames."

In their poses, students need to consider body positions of each character, position and spacing in relation to each other and setting, facial expression, and direction of gaze.

Groups or individual students, after observing and critiquing each other, need time to discuss (or write about) their feelings in the pose. Encourage discussion of feelings of empathy, close observation of the text, and use of specific nouns and verbs to communicate more exactly their experiences inside someone else's body language.

For younger students: In choosing a story or novel from which to take scenes for posing, consider the students' reading level, emotional development, and range of life experience, just as you would in assigning any literature to read. Look for scenes involving two or more characters with differing attitudes, with at least one of those attitudes unspoken.

Assessment: Participation in both doing and discussing freeze frames.



Comparing Contemporaries

EALRs: Reading 3.1, 3.3, Writing 1.1, 1.3

Comparing similarities and contrasting differences between or among artistic and literary works can help us better observe and understand each work. Sargent, Cecilia Beaux, Henry James, and Edith Wharton were contemporaries. Wharton regarded James as her mentor and emulated much of his tone and topics. Sargent and Beaux both drew portraits of Henry James. James and Wharton, like Sargent, focused much of their attention on aristocratic life in New York and abroad.

After reading short stories by James and Wharton* and viewing the Sargent and Beaux portraits, students could choose from among these painters and writers any two to compare and contrast in an essay. Encourage students to support their topic with numerous specific examples from the paintings and the writings.

*The following short stories may provide an especially good fit for reading as part of this assignment: "The Tone of Time," by Henry James, "Charm Incorporated," and "Pomegranate Seed" by Edith Wharton.

Assessment: Completed compare and contrast essay, with opinions supported by three or more specific elements from each literary and artistic work discussed.

Part 3: The Intrepid Landscape Painter

Boboli, 1907

Tents at Lake O'Hara, 1916

Portrait painting brought Sargent enormous financial success and international stature; by 1900 his fee for an individual portrait was one thousand guineas (about \$118,500 today). But his wealth did not insulate Sargent from ambivalence about this profession. He knew that many of his patrons sought to aggrandize themselves and heighten their social standing by commissioning him, and he felt compromised by the need to reinforce their sometimes inflated self-image.

Something about the experience of painting portraits was distasteful, even dishonest, to Sargent, in that he was not always free to interpret his sitters in a critical and objective light. But Sargent's wealth allowed him to divide his time between portraits and extended outdoor painting trips with artist-friends and family.

Sargent relished these summer trips when he became an intrepid expedition coordinator. His passion for working **en plein air** (outdoors) was initiated in his youth by his mother, Mary Newbold Sargent, an accomplished amateur watercolorist. On their trips throughout Italy, Spain, and Switzerland, Mary and John carried sketchbooks and John developed a quick eye and fast reflexes for recording the particular features of each stop on their crowded itinerary.

Working outdoors required extensive planning to transport the necessary equipment and materials: easels, sketching umbrellas, paints and brushes, tents and camp stoves, and culinary provisions. Fortunately, the invention of collapsible metal paint tubes in the 1840s made it much easier to carry paint. Before that, artists' paints were stored in (breakable) glass tubes or in pigskin bladders that were fragile and not suitable for travel.

Overhead 4 (top)

Boboli, 1907

Watercolor and pencil on paper

18 1/8 x 11 7/16 in.

Brooklyn Museum of Art, purchased by special subscription

Italian and Spanish gardens were a favorite subject of Sargent's, providing a delectable combination for a painter— nature's wildness set against formal statuary, fountains and paths. He was especially fond of Renaissance and Baroque gardens. The design of these gardens reflected a humanistic desire to cultivate and shape nature in accordance with a rational understanding of the universe.

Between 1906 and 1907 Sargent did a number of paintings of the Boboli Gardens in Florence, designed in the mid-sixteenth century for the grounds of the Pitti Palace of Cosimo Medici I. The presence of mythological and allegorical statues in these gardens imbued them with mystery, which Sargent conveyed through his use of silhouettes and flickering light effects.



The verdant, living atmosphere of the garden replenished Sargent physically and challenged him artistically. Using the improvisational medium of watercolor, Sargent tackled the challenges of recording transient light, reflections in water, and subtle qualities of temperature and atmosphere. The fluidity, transparency, and rapid-drying qualities of watercolor make it less predictable than oil. And in these

paintings, Sargent seems to have willingly taken risks he rarely took with his oil portraits.

Boboli represents the statue of Prudence, one of the many allegorical statues that inhabit the garden. The marble figure, by Giovanni Caccini, is one of a group of four which mark a cross-path in the garden. Prudence's **attributes** include a bunch of leaves in her right hand, a mirror (now broken) in her left, and a crown of grapes. The snake lingering at her feet (not visible in Sargent's painting) identifies her as someone who is discreet and careful to avoid unwanted situations.

This small work pulsates with energy as light flickers through a hedge and as leaves cast diagonal shadows across the marble pedestal. The serpentine line of a tree trunk behind the figure of Prudence interrupts the strong vertical movement of the statue while leading the eye from feet to head. Sargent's clear working sequence is evident in the delicate pencil underdrawing, visible in the figure. His **paint handling** ranges from pools of color that still seem wet to sharper-edged strokes that seem dry. A **palette** of greenish-blues, cadmium yellows, sepias, and mauves perfectly expresses this cool, shady bower.

Looking more carefully, we see that the shape of the marble statue is actually a function of **reserving light**, allowing the white surface of the watercolor paper to reflect up through a transparent layer of color. The paper itself is a source of light. Therefore, the statue is not directly painted in but formed by the careful juxtaposition of darker and lighter **color values**. The sensual surface of this work is completed by the slightly rough texture of the paper and the tiny particles of pigment scattered throughout.

Overhead 4 (bottom)

Tents at Lake O'Hara, 1916

Oil on canvas

22 x 28 1/8 in.

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford,

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund

In 1916, World War I brought Sargent's European painting expeditions to an end. At 60, still eager to explore dramatic landscapes, he embarked on a trip to Yoho National Park in the Canadian Rockies. His many experiences in the Swiss Alps and Austrian Dolomites, however, were no match for the difficult physical challenges of the Rockies.



Named for a Native American word expressing awe, Yoho National Park was established in 1896 on the western slope of the Continental Divide. For two months Sargent worked here, amidst spectacular waterfalls and fragile, high alpine forests. Accompanied by a guide and a manservant, Sargent set up sketching camps and braved the difficult physical challenges of working in rain, mud, snow and wind, and with the occasional "porcupines taking shelter in my clothes." Today's visitors to Lake O'Hara are strongly warned of the presence of grizzly bears.

Sargent produced several large oils and watercolors of the waterfalls, lake, and makeshift living arrangements at camp. *Tents at Lake O'Hara* depicts the temporary accommodations of the camp, complete with canvas tents, work table, fire pit and piles of cooking gear. Sargent's sense of humor tempered the hardships of this trip; he wrote to his cousin Mary Hale, "it was raining or snowing, my tent flooded, mushrooms sprouting in my boots, canned food always fried in a black frying pan getting on my nerves, and a fine waterfall which was the attraction to the place pounding and thundering all night. I stood it three weeks and yesterday came away with a repulsive picture."

Sargent's composition is defined by two billowing, triangular tents enclosed by the vertical forms of evergreens. The trees cast long, plunging shadows shot through with flecks of light across the lower half of the painting. Golden sunlight streams through the tents and cool blue-greens in the trees convey the temperatures of the mountains. A veil of bluish smoke rises from the fire pit against the crisp atmosphere of mountain air. Sargent's moustached guide does double duty as a model, sitting casually in the foreground peeling an apple or a potato.

Talking About the Artwork with Students

- Compare *Boboli* with *Tents at Lake O'Hara*. Which landscape seems more inviting? More threatening or harsh? What kinds of challenges might have faced Sargent as he painted both places?
- Describe the **palette** (the predominant colors) in *Boboli*? How do the colors tell you what the air temperature might be? Where was Sargent standing? How did he create the crisp edges of the shape of the statue? (By first drawing its shape in pencil, painting it in with a light purple watercolor wash, waiting until the wash was completely dry, then painting around the outer edges of the shape with deeper hues of brown and blue.)
- In *Tents at Lake O'Hara*, the figure of the guide in the foreground is somewhat camouflaged. Why does he blend in so well? How does Sargent create the illusion of depth in this painting? (By using **diminishing scale**: the foreground tent is larger than the one in the background.)
- Both watercolor and oil paint are transparent media; colors are created by layering transparent glazes of pigment. However, oil paint is thicker and more viscous (sticky). How does the viscous quality of oil paint affect the look of *Tents at Lake O'Hara*? (The paint surface is thicker and goopier. The texture of the paintbrush is visible in some areas.)

ACTIVITIES for Part 3: The Intrepid Landscape Painter



Traveling Thumbnails

EALRs: Art 1.1, 1.3

In a sketchbook or blank writing journal, make thumbnail (very small) sketches of some of the places you go to for one week. Places may include a ball field, the park, a beach, the woods or the view from your bedroom window or from the bus. Try to jot down the important features of the landscape including trees, buildings, and streets. Include the horizon (the line that separates the earth from the sky). Keep your travel sketches for future reference for a painting or story.

Assessment: Completed thumbnail sketches that include key features of the landscapes.

Note: A full WHAELS lesson plan for this activity is included at the end of this teacher's guide.



Personifications

EALRs: Art 1.1, 1.3

To personify is to use a human form to symbolize a quality such as patience, generosity, abundance, bravery, wisdom, kindness, musicality, or fairness. Sargent's *Boboli* includes a statue that personifies the quality of prudence (being careful to avoid unwanted results).

Make a list of qualities. Choose the one that you would like to personify. Make a drawing or painting of a figure that represents your quality. Your figure may include attributes (she may hold or wear something that refers to the quality you are personifying). For example, figures of abundance often hold bowls of fruit.

Assessment: Completed drawings with attributes or other elements that personify a particular quality.



Place Words

EALRs: Reading 1.1, 1.2

The English language offers such a wealth of words to describe a place! Make four lists, one each for light, space, color, and texture. Use the chalkboard, or work small on lengths of adding machine paper, or work large on rolls of newsprint.

Brainstorm words for each list... from glimmer to gloaming, from nook to cavernous, and from teal to burnt umber. Encourage students to delve into a thesaurus, to explore figurative language and scientific and technical terminology, and to check the names of all the colors in the box of sixty-four crayons and on paint charts.

Keep these lists visible and available during in-class writing time. Revel in our word wealth.

Assessment: Active participation in assembling contents of the lists.



Take Your Senses for a Walk

EALRs: Communication 1.1, 1.2, Writing 2.2

Take students on a senses walk— outside or inside the school. Each student will need to go with a small notebook or some paper and a pencil, to make notes of details seen, heard, smelled, or touched during the senses walk.

Follow the walk with time for descriptive writing in prose or poetry. One possible form is a sense poem: successive lines begin with “I see... I smell... I hear... I taste... I touch... I feel

poem moves through sensory experiences and culminates with emotional response.

With revising, students could shift their wording to make the sound of their poems less obviously following the formula. Encourage particular attention to specific word choice with sensory appeal throughout the writing.

For Younger Students: This activity can be used with students of any age. The range of vocabulary, complexity of sentence structure, and subtlety of observation and expression will increase with age and practice.

Assessment: Completed writing in descriptive prose or poetry.



A Walk with G. K. Chesterton

EALRs: Reading 3.3, Writing 2.2, Arts 1.2, 4.2

In his essay “A Piece of Chalk,” G. K. Chesterton tells of his delight in taking chalk and utilitarian brown wrapping paper out with him on his solitary countryside walks. Sketching, he asserts, aids his observing and enjoying of nature.

Read the essay with students and then distribute colored chalk and pieces of brown mailing paper to take outside and follow Chesterton’s example.

This experience could be extended to include descriptive writing in prose or poetry, or extended in the direction of field notes and scientific illustration, which combine detailed drawing and writing.

Assessment: Completed chalk drawings; chalk drawings with description writing in prose or poetry; or chalk drawings and field notes or scientific illustration piece combining numerous details in drawing and writing.



Writing Paintings of Memories

EALRs: Reading 1.4, 2.3, 3.3, Writing 1.1, 1.3, 2.2

David James Duncan writes of “river teeth” in the first section of his essay by the same name. His lush description of a fallen tree’s afterlife in a forest stream yields his metaphor of “river teeth” as “small parts of every human past... hard, cross-grained whorls of memory that remain inextricably lodged in us long after the straight-grained narratives have washed away.”

After reading Duncan’s extended metaphor and his first instance of one of his own such memories, students can dredge their own memories for such “self-contained moments of shock, or of inordinate empathy; moments of violence, incomprehension, surreality... mystical terror, joy.”

With students, note the word choices and sentence structures Duncan uses to create the physical and emotional perspective of a 3-year-old in his first memory piece. With his selected words, construction of individual sentences, and juxtaposing of those constructions, Duncan creates a written “landscape” analogous to Sargent’s *Tents at Lake O’Hara*: the larger (vast, overwhelming) setting with the focus tight on a specific smaller (insignificant-feeling by contrast, but essential to the writer/artist) set of elements, and a resulting highly personal experience revealed through the eyes and craft of the individual.

Students could write their own “river teeth” memories, and, in revising, work particularly on the writing traits of word choice and sentence fluency.

Assessment: Participation in discussion of Duncan’s words, phrases, and sentence structure and juxtaposing. Completed writing of their own memories, with special attention to the traits of word choice and sentence fluency.

W·H·A·E·L·S

WASHINGTON HOLISTIC ARTS ESSENTIAL LEARNING SAMPLER

Traveling Thumbnails: Capturing Visual Impressions of the Places You Go

How can you capture visual impressions of the places you go?

Art

Grades 5-12

Beginning-Intermediate

1 week

Rebecca Allan, MFA, painter, art educator

<p>Brief Description of Task/Project: Students fill a blank book or sketchbook with thumbnail sketches of places they go during one week, capturing their basic impressions of the features of outdoor or interior places, including: space, light, scale and prominent shapes.</p>	<p>Resources/Materials Needed: Small blank books or sketchbooks (approximately 5x7"), pencils, rulers</p>
<p>Explicit Target Learning Outcomes: Students will begin to observe and understand their surroundings more deeply by sketching the prominent features.</p>	<p>Assessment Criteria: Students will vary composition, line, shape, texture and value to convey their impressions of a place. Students will make thumbnail frames in their sketchbooks as borders for each drawing.</p>
<p>Arts Essential Learnings Focus:</p> <p>1 Acquires knowledge/skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 learns concepts and vocabulary1.2 organizes art elements1.3 uses art techniques1.5 creates, presents and evaluates <p>2 Solves Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1 uses the senses to gather information <p>4 Makes connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">4.2 integrates art in daily life	<p>Extensions to State Learning Goals:</p> <p>Goal 1: Students will study the work of artist John Singer Sargent in preparation for recording their own impressions of the landscape</p> <p>Goal 2: Students will become familiar with and practice methods used by visual artists for sketching from observation</p> <p>Goal 3: Students will strengthen their abilities to observe their environment carefully, with an eye for using it as a source of inspiration for their own artwork</p>

<p>What the Instructor Does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Introduces Sargent as an artist—his love of the landscape, his approaches to painting en plein air (outdoors) -Introduces vocabulary and techniques of thumbnail sketching 	<p>What the Student Does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Listens and shares in discussion about Sargent’s landscapes -Develops ideas for assessing own work -Draws window frames inside the sketchbook -Practices thumbnail sketches for one week, recording places visited -Assesses work with self and others -Reflects through written essay
<p>Assessment Strategies:</p> <p>Instructor may assess student work through verbal and written critique of the sketchbook. Criteria may include the student’s success in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Using simple shapes to record prominent features of landscape -Using values and textures to distinguish between different features -Using care in markmaking -Viewing the landscape from various perspectives 	<p>Demonstration of Student Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sketchbook filled with at least two thumbnail sketches for each day of the week -thumbnail sketches from a variety of places both landscape and interiors -see above criteria
<p>Student Applications of Learning in new of Different Contexts:</p> <p>Students will continue to observe their surroundings with a deeper awareness. Their thumbnail sketchbooks may serve as resources for writing: poetry, essays, stories</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students are now prepared to investigate and analyze the work of other artists who worked from the landscape and to compare Sargent with others like: <p>Winslow Homer, Charles Burchfield, Andrew Wyeth, Joan Mitchell, Georgia O’Keeffe</p>	<p>Key Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thumbnail Sketch Value Texture Shape Compositional Point of View Markmaking

Historical Synopsis: THE EDWARDIAN PERIOD

The Edwardian Period corresponded to the reign of King Edward VII (1901-1910) of England. Edward was the son of Queen Victoria and was kept away from the business of royal affairs during the reign of his powerful mother. Though he played a relatively small part in government during his own reign, his popularity and interest in public appearances increased the prestige of the British monarchy.

The Edwardian Period was also defined by:

- The end of the Boer War, a vicious conflict in South Africa during which the English defeated the Dutch in their fight for control.
- Liberals took control of the government from Conservatives (making a profound impression on the young Winston Churchill). Liberals are a far less radical alternative to working class and socialist leadership.
- Profound class divisions emerged.
- Establishment of meaningful reforms in health care, education, and housing, including the establishment of old-age pensions, and worker health insurance.
- Movement toward Irish Home Rule, yet England still ruled a vast empire (South Africa, India, Southeast Asia, Middle East), whose combined populations far outnumbered the homeland.
- Beginning of establishment of a large fleet for the high seas. Imperial and colonial rivalries with Germany, France, Russia, and the Balkans (the run up to World War I).
- Darwin's theories were vigorously debated, Dalton developing his atomic theory, Lister had established antiseptic surgical practices; and Pasteur's work influenced public health practices.

GLOSSARY

attribute	a symbolic object used to identify a person or a mythological or religious figure
composition	the physical arrangement of the art elements (line, shape, value, color) within the borders of the artwork
color values	darker and lighter versions of specific colors
diminishing scale	creating the illusion of spatial depth in a painting by reducing the size of objects as they move back into space
en plein air	French for (painting) out-of-doors
gesture	the physical position of the body in motion or at rest
hue	a color or a level of color saturation
illusion of depth	a quality of three-dimensional depth in a drawing or painting, created through the techniques of perspective
implied movement	a sense that a figure in a painting is in motion
montage	a new image created by pasting together fragments of existing images
oil sketch	loosely, sometimes thinly painted image, often done as a study for a larger, more complete work
paint handling	specific qualities of working with paint that characterize a painter's style including: choice of brush, speed of painter's hand, type and amount of paint medium, thickness of application
painting medium	liquid (oil, water) added to paint to give it greater fluidity or transparency
palette	the dominant colors used in a painting
reserving light	leaving areas of the paper unpainted or to convey a sense of light in a watercolor
underdrawing	drawing done on canvas, wood, or paper as a guide, before paint is applied
values	the range of lights and darks in a painting

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