

Georgia O'Keeffe, *Jimson Weed, White Flower No. 1*, 1932  
Modern Art – painting



**Key Facts:**

**Artist:** Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) was an American Modern artist. She is known as the “Mother of American Modernism.”

**Art period/style:** American Modern Art

**Key characteristics of that period:** Modern art had a tendency toward abstraction, experimentation, and innovation.

**Techniques:** oil painting, watercolor

**Some Background:** Georgia O'Keeffe is most famous for her paintings of flowers, but she also painted landscapes of New Mexico as well as cityscapes of New York City. Her well-known flower paintings are unique because she zoomed in and painted the flowers enlarged on the canvas, often only painting part of the flower.

## The Five Core Habits:

Practice the *Five Core Habits of Grammar* with art - NAMES (found on pgs. 18-19 in the Foundation Guide). Part of teaching is learning to ask a student good questions. This is a great activity for looking at art! Plus, you get to sneak in a little art history and technique along with.

### 5 CORE HABITS



#### NAMING

1. What do you call this?
2. Where does this name come from?
3. Are there any other names for this?



#### ATTENDING

1. What are the parts of this?
2. Where do you usually see this?
3. What makes this special?



#### MEMORIZING

1. What would help you memorize this? An acronym, a song, a chant, a picture, etc.
2. What did you already know about this?



#### EXPRESSING

1. Could you draw a picture of this or write a song about it? Could you act it out?
2. How does this make you feel?



#### STORYTELLING

1. Can you tell me a story about this?
2. Can I tell you a story about this?

N names (name things specifically)

A attending (look and listen carefully. Also- taste, smell, touch. Compare things.)

M memorizing (soak up facts and ideas. Memorize facts and relations of things to recall, connect, and expand new ideas to older ones from past memorizations.)

E expressing (express ideas creatively- reciting, drawing, singing, dancing)

S storytelling (hear and tell stories)

This helps us grasp the basic elements, vocabulary, and rules of any subject, and helps us progress more quickly toward comprehension and creativity in future studies.

Using the image on the first page, go through these questions:

#### N – Names:

- Name the artist, era/art style, and technique.
- What can you find? Name the things you see.
- What do you see?
- What colors do you see?
- Is the flower abstracted?

#### A – Attending

- Does this painting make you imagine hearing.... smelling.... tasting... feeling anything?
- Do you feel any emotions?
- How is color used?
- How is line used?
- How did she divide the composition?
- Notice where she has smooth blending of colors versus hard edges or lines separating different colors.
- Look at how she has shapes go off the edges of the composition.

Attending to details – here are a few close-ups. What else do you notice now?



## **M – Memorize**

Memorize the artist, time period, and facts about the artwork/technique.

## **E – Express**

Express your thoughts and ideas about the art. You can also express by trying the technique on your own. Have your students create their own Georgia O’Keeffe flower painting. You could do this with oil pastels or watercolor paint on watercolor paper. However, I recommend using acrylic paint on canvas boards.

Have your students begin by sketching out a large, zoomed-in flower. Talk about O’Keeffe’s use of line. Make sure they zoom in and allow the petals to go off the edges. Composition is important. Then, when they begin painting, discuss color. Georgia O’Keeffe used bold colors with beautiful blending of colors within the flowers.

Here are a few student O’Keeffe studies done with oil pastels:





Here are some created with watercolor:





And finally, some student paintings created with acrylic paint on canvas:





Here are more examples of her paintings:



*Oriental Poppies*, 1928



*White Flower*, 1932





*Jack-in-the-Pulpit No. IV, 1930*



*Music, Pink and Blue No. 2, 1918*



*Light of Iris, 1924*



*Blue Morning Glories, 1935*



## **S – Story telling**

Tell the story about this work of art.

Now, refer to the painting on the first page.

Georgia O’Keeffe is considered one of the greatest 20th-century American artists. She mastered the elements of line, color, and composition. Her large zoomed-in flowers spill off the edges of her canvases, causing them to become more abstract. Her compositions are divided by bold colors with defined outlines along each flower petal or leaf. O’Keeffe’s paintings capture the boundary between representation and abstraction. Her close-up flowers are so magnified that the petals and blooms become abstracted into sweeping shapes and swaths of color. O’Keeffe created her own style contrasting from the chaotic modern art scene of the time. She also paved the way for many women artists.

*Jimson Weed, White Flower No. 1*, depicts one of O’Keeffe’s favorite subjects: a magnified flower. To her, the delicate blooms stood as some of the most overlooked pieces of naturally occurring beauty, objects that the bustling contemporary world ignored. So she made it her mission to highlight their complex structures, explaining: "When you take a flower in your hand and really look at it, it's your world for the moment. I want to give that world to someone else. Most people in the city rush around so, they have no time to look at a flower. I want them to see it whether they want to or not."

In November, 2014, *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1* was sold for \$44.4 million at a Sotheby's auction, makes Georgia O’Keeffe the highest-selling woman in art.

(<https://www.georgiaokeeffe.net/jimson-weed-white-flower.jsp>)

Likely inspired by similar compositions in modern photography, these images are not only celebrations of natural forms, but also striking essays in abstract design. Throughout most of her career, she frequently attempted to persuade others to discuss her work without referring to her gender, writing on one occasion, “I have always been very annoyed at being referred to as a ‘woman artist’ rather than an ‘artist.’”

<https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1930.2162>