

Art/Western Cultural History essays

Essay #11: Compare and contrast another painting from this time period to Monet's

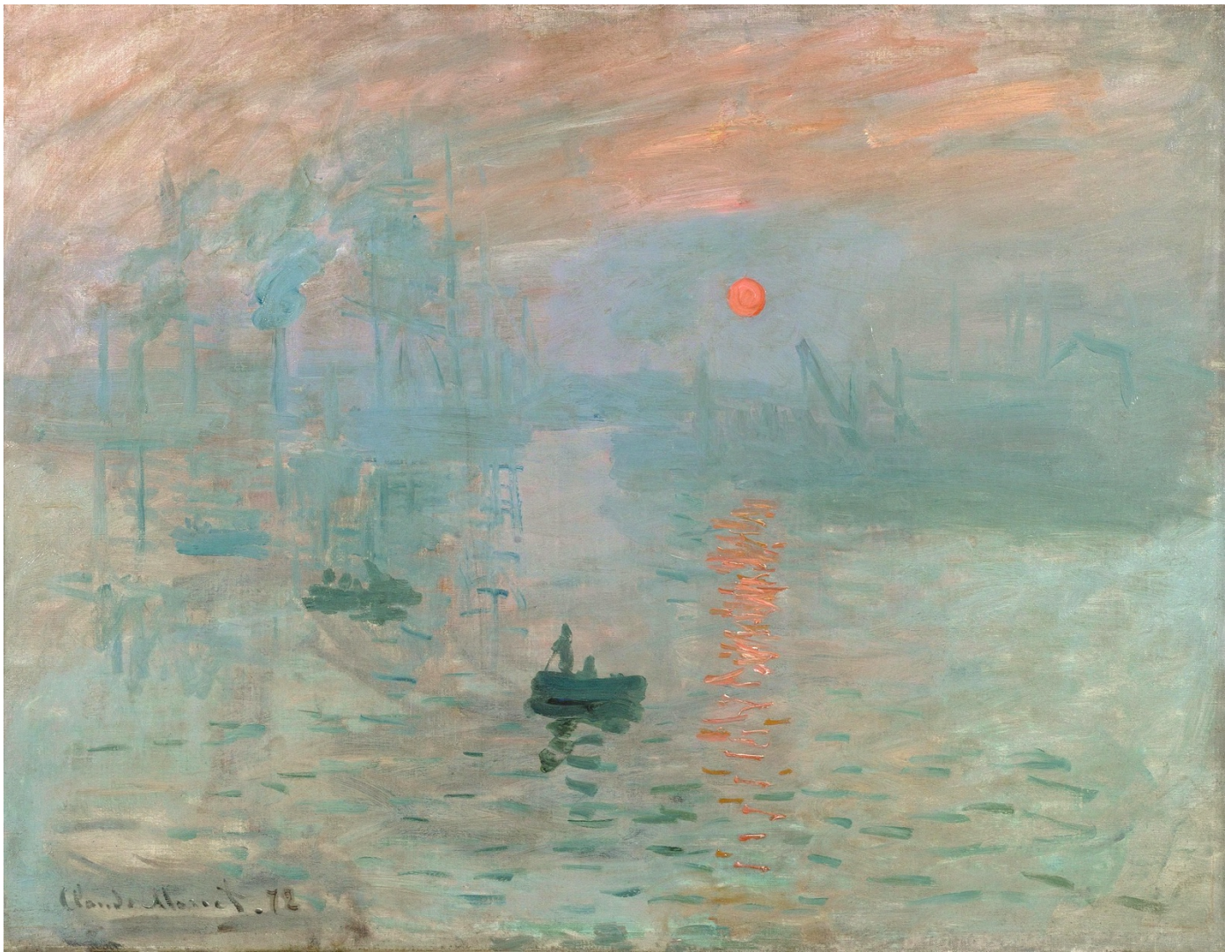
4 paragraphs: an introduction paragraph, a paragraph about the similarities between the two paintings, a paragraph about the differences between the two paintings, and a conclusion paragraph.

Use the handouts (in your art binder) about the art elements, art study with the 5 common topics, and the art terminology for analyzing art. These handouts will help guide your thoughts.

Claude Monet, *Impression Sunrise*, 1872

Oil paint

Impressionism



Compare this work to another similar Impressionist painting.

Talk about similarities and difference in:

- Medium/technique
- Composition (are both arranged similarly? Symmetrical? Asymmetrical? Same size figures? Same number of figures? Same arrangement of figures?)
- Use of color
- Use of light and shadow
- Do they appeal to the emotions?
- Are objects in the painting the same? Are there different objects?
- How about symbolism?
- Their treatment of space?
- Painting style/technique (impasto)
- Are there things going on in the world that impacted both artists?
- How about their worldview?
- The meaning and story behind each painting?

Hint: Include the two images in your paper (two additional pages). And give the information for each painting under each image. When writing about art, visuals are helpful!

Here are some other Impressionist artists to research for comparing to Monet:

- Pierre-Auguste Renoir
- Mary Cassatt
- Berthe Morisot
- Camille Pissarro
- Edgar Degas
- Paul Cézanne
- Édouard Manet

Impressionism:

Impressionist artists were part of the Avant Garde in Europe (French for "advance guard"). This refers to people or works that are experimental or innovative, pushing the boundaries of what was accepted as the norm. The mark of an artist's success in 19th-century France was acceptance into the annual Salon (a large art exhibition). In 1863 the Salon jury rejected almost 3,000 works of art that were submitted. The many artists who were rejected rebelled and started a new official exhibition, the *Salon des Refusés* (Salon of the Rejected Painters). This was one of the most important gatherings of the avant-garde painters and included Impressionist artists. Impressionism was far from the traditional style and subject matter of painting.

Impressionist artists focused on how light and color operate. They studied the effects of atmosphere and light, and attempted to duplicate these effects on canvas through a varied palette. The typical subject matter was weekend leisure activities, everyday activities, and landscapes.

Impressionists focused on sensations of light, color, and movement through short, choppy brush strokes, which caught the vibrating quality of light. Color and light were major components of the Impressionist quest to capture fleeting sensations. Many Impressionists painted *en plein air* – which is French for outdoors or “in the open air.” In 1841, the invention of tubes for oil paint made this possible for artists.

Claude Monet

Monet was the leading and most passionate Impressionist painter. He tried to record the feeling of a single moment in time and the effects of light (most often in landscape scenes). Through quick, choppy brushwork, he tried to record the fleeting effects of light and atmosphere. Monet investigated light and color more than any other Impressionist. His choppy brush strokes duplicated the glimmering effect of light on surfaces.

Monet often painted the same scene over and over at different times to day, with different lighting, different seasons, and different weather. He was almost obsessed with understanding light and color.

Impression Sunrise

This painting was shown in the first Impressionist show in 1874. The term Impressionism came from a hostile critic who saw the work as a mere “impression.” The word “impression” suggests a lack of realism (realistic representation was standard at the time). The critic intended for the label to be derogatory, but the Impressionist artists embraced the term and called themselves Impressionists. He thought the painting was haphazard and unfinished. It seemed like a sloppy sketch compared to the polished and realistic paintings of the Academy. There were 8 Impressionist exhibitions between 1874-86. By the end of the century, these independent exhibitions ended the French Academy’s grip on standards for art.

Monet didn’t try to disguise the brush strokes or blend the pigment to create smooth tonal gradations and an optically accurate scene. He had a unique technique of applying paint with strokes of pure color.

This painting depicts the scene of the port of Le Harve in France. The painting is dominated by the colors of a sunrise. In the background, the viewer can see blurry boats and even cranes for unloading boats at the port. Everything is obscured by the haze. There are no clear lines to any of the shapes. There is no clear focal point. However, the bright orange-pink color of the sun along with its reflection in the water draws the viewer’s eyes in. Monet really did seem to break all of the rules.

The Impressionist artists were watching nature become industrialized. Cities, buildings, factories, and trains, were changing the landscape around them. The Industrial Revolution was changing everything around them.

Monet painted this quickly, trying to capture the light and colors of the scene. He was not interested in a realistic depiction of the port, but wanted to capture the fleeting moment and light.

1872, the year this was painted, marked the end to a turbulent time in France. The French Revolution, the reign of Napoleon, the restoration of the monarchy, and various other political events.

The Impressionists experimented and broke the rules. Musicians of the time did this as well. Claude Debussy also broke traditions with music with unusual note combinations and exotic scales. Listen to his piece *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*.

Art comparison chart

These are just a few questions to get you thinking about how to compare the works of art. All of these questions may not apply, and there might be additional questions that are relevant; this is not a complete list. The information above, your own observations, and with additional research you can complete this chart to help with your essay. I have *started* the chart to help get you going. Spend some time truly observing each work and fill in the chart.

	Artwork #1 Artist: Claude Monet Title: <i>Impression Sunrise</i>	Artwork #2 Artist: Title:
Describe the composition of each work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hazy/foggy sunrise over water/ocean - not many defined shapes 	
Describe the use of color in each piece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sunrise colors (pink/orange, blues, grays) - choppy strokes of color/paint applied to the canvas 	
Describe the use of values, light, and shadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - soft light - low contrast - reflections of light/shadow in water 	
Describe the use of space. Is it flat or more three-dimensional and realistic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - space is flattened compared to traditional styles where they try to create realistic space - no perspective, foreshortening, or other devices used to create depth - small sense of space created by the hazy ships and port cranes in background 	
What is the story, meaning, mood, emotions, etc.?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a study on light and color - calm scene - possible feelings on industrialization and nature? 	
What/who is depicted? What is happening in the image?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a few boats - a sunrise - fog and maybe steam - busy harbor/port in background - a calm scene with it being early morning 	

<p>Under what conditions was this artwork created? (for example, was a war going on, persecution, were the arts thriving...?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - painting <i>en plein air</i> - oil paint in tubes - Salon des Refusés <p>(do some research to add context)</p>	
<p>What was the worldview or prevailing philosophy at the time?</p>	<p>-</p> <p>(do some research to add context)</p>	
<p>Is there any symbolism used?</p>	<p>-</p>	
<p>Is there anything about the artist that influenced their decisions making? For example, were they a Christian? Were they commissioned by someone and told what to create?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empiricism - Avant Garde artists - Industrialization <p>-</p> <p>(do some research to add context)</p>	
<p>Is there a focal point in each?</p>	<p>- the sun and boat in the center</p>	
<p>Did a previous art style influence this artwork?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impressionisms worked in reaction against Realism (research this) - Impressionism helped pave the way to abstract art later down the road <p>(do some research to add context)</p>	
<p>Do these two works of art have a direct relationship to each other?</p>		

Essay Outline

After completing the chart, you will have it to refer to for writing your essay.

Think of your thesis. Was one artist more of a master? Did one artist impact the world more? Or did one of the artworks have more of an impact on you? Why? Or are both artists great examples of a certain style or technique? Did an event in the world or certain politics play a major role in how the artwork was made?

Thesis:

Introduction paragraph:

Do some research. Introduce each artist. Where are they from? What time period?

Some ideas to consider including: How were they trained? Did both artists work in the same style? Did they have similar artistic goals, styles, patrons, etc.? Was there something going on in the world that affected both artists? Briefly introduce each painting. What is depicted in each? What is the technique in each? What is the style for each?

Similarities paragraph:

Use the questions on page 2 and the comparison chart to put the similarities together.

Differences paragraph:

Use the questions on page 2 and the comparison chart to put the differences together.

Conclusion paragraph:

Wrap it up. Restate thesis. Back it up. Give context/circumstances to each artist and artwork (what was going on in the world, what were the artists beliefs, etc.). How did this relate to the artwork and artist? Did it impact their artwork? Did it dictate what they painted and why? Did a previous art style or artist influence these artists? Or did either of these artists influence the art world?