

Art/Western Cultural History essays

Essay #5: Compare and contrast another painting from this time period to Dürer's

4 paragraphs: an introduction paragraph, a paragraph about the similarities between the two prints/engravings, a paragraph about the differences between the two prints/engravings, 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.

Albrecht Dürer, *St. Jerome in His Study*, 1514, Engraving on paper (printmaking)
Northern Renaissance



Compare this work to another similar Renaissance engraving.

Talk about similarities and difference in:

- Medium/technique (printmaking, engraving, woodcut, etc.)
- Composition (are both arranged similarly? Symmetrical? Same size figures? Same number of figures? Same arrangement of figures?)
- Use of line, hatching, value
- Attention to detail
- Are objects in the painting the same? Are there different objects?
- How about symbolism?
- Their treatment of space?
- Are there things going on in the world that impacted both artists?
- How about their worldview?
- The meaning and story behind each print?
- Did the fact that engraving/printmaking is a new technique have an impact?

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!

Ideas for prints to compare to Dürer's:

Here are some Renaissance artists who worked with printmaking (most will be engraving or woodcut from this time period). These are just a few, you could find many more.

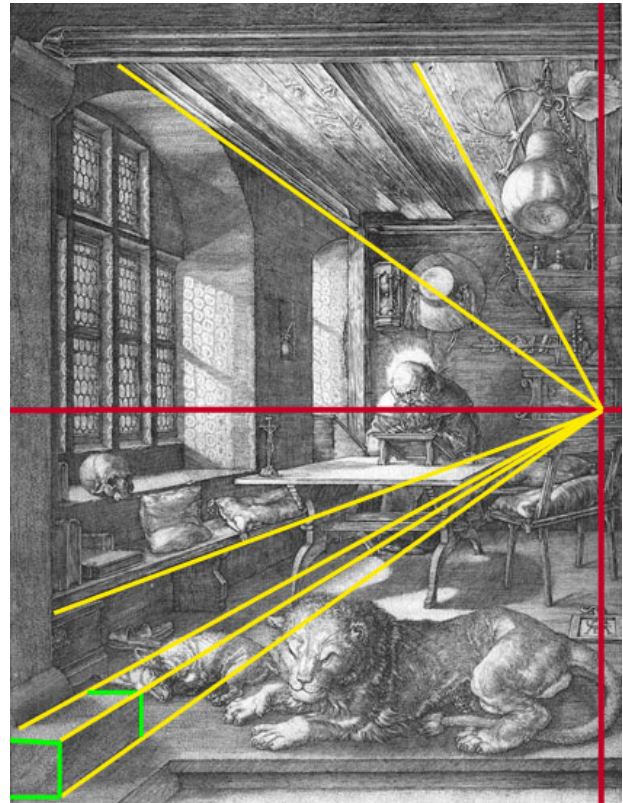
- Antonio Pollaiuolo
- Annibale Carracci
- Hans Baldung
- Marcantonio Raimondi
- Jean Duvet
- Lucas Cranach the Elder
- Andrea Mantegna
- Jacopo de' Barbari

About Dürer: *St. Jerome in His Study*

Albrecht Dürer was the leading German artist of the Renaissance. Dürer was an early master of printmaking – both woodcut and engraving. As all engravings, the image is made up completely of lines and hatching. Through his linework and hatching, Dürer was able to create a full range of values, as well as amazing details and textures. The lighting is clear and natural, and not dramatic, but there is a strong sense of light that floods the room from the windows.

Dürer was technically an amazing artist with great details. As a northern artist of the Renaissance, detail was a common characteristic. He intensely observed the natural world and human figure for his art.

Linear perspective (one-point perspective) creates a realistic sense of space. This was an influence from the Italian Renaissance. The vanishing point is off on the right side of the composition.



Saint Jerome was a fourth century scholar who translated the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into everyday Latin (his new text was referred to as the Vulgate). He is seated in his study, peacefully at a slanted writing table, and his lion and dog slumber equally peacefully in the foreground. The light of his halo and the sunlight pouring in through the windows are in perfect equilibrium, creating harmony. St. Jerome was a perfect example of the Christian intellect and contemplative life.





The engraving is loaded with symbolism:

- There is a cross on the corner of Jerome's desk. There is also a skull on the window ledge (a reference to sin leading to death). There is a clear reference to death and life here... and even to the Resurrection.
- The lion is a common symbol for St. Jerome. The lion refers to the legend in which Jerome pulled a thorn out of a lion's paw, taming the lion, who in return, became his companion.
- The sleeping dog is a symbol for loyalty and faithfulness.
- There is a halo of light around Jerome's head, which identifies him as a saint and indicates his divine inspiration while translating the Scripture.
- St. Jerome is clearly hard at work at his desk, engrossed in study and meditation.
- There is an hourglass above St. Jerome. This reminder of time symbolizes man's finite life. The hourglass and skull encourage the viewer to contemplate mortality.
- Vanitas tradition of art (comes from Ecclesiastes 1:2 – Vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas – vanity of vanities, and all is vanity)
- The lighting from the windows direct the viewer's eyes to Jerome. The halo also makes him stand out as a focal point. The perspective lines also draw our eyes toward him.
- The hat hanging on the wall is a Cardinal's hat. St. Jerome was the secretary to the Pope (today this is the Cardinal).
- There is a gourd hanging. This refers to a theological and translation debate that St. Jerome had when translating the book of Jonah. Jerome chose the Latin word hederā (ivy) for the plant that grew near Jonah. Others used the word cucurbita (gourd). There was a scholarly debate over the word choices.

Relevant to Dürer during this time:

The Reformation and translations of the Bible were important in this time. Three years after this engraving was made, Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door at Wittenberg and launched the Protestant Reformation.

He was a Christian and a scholar himself. He was friends with Martin Luther, who translated the Bible into German. They both believed there is joy in doing work for God. Two of Martin Luther's teachings – the Bible is the only authority and salvation is through Christ alone can be seen in this engraving. Jerome is engaged in Bible translating, which enabled others to read the Bible for themselves. The arrangement of the crucifix and skull symbolize the death and resurrection of Jesus and salvation through Him.

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: Albrecht Dürer Title: <i>St. Jerome in His Study</i>	Artwork #2 Artist: Title:
Describe the composition of each work	- Asymmetrical composition with a strong diagonal across the composition	
Describe the use of color in each piece	- black & white	
Describe the use of values, light, and shadow	- full range of values (created by hatching) - sunlight comes in the windows, illuminating the scene - soft shadows	
Describe the use of space. Is it flat or more three-dimensional and realistic?	- realistic sense of space - linear perspective – one-point perspective; vanishing point off to the right side	
What is the story, meaning, mood, emotions, etc.?	- (see above description)	
What/who is depicted? What is happening in the image?	- St. Jerome (see above description)	

<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"> - Renaissance, thriving arts, development of printmaking as a major art form - right at the time of the Reformation - arts thriving 	
<p>What was the worldview or prevailing philosophy at the time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catholic Christianity - the beginning of the Reformation - Humanism 	
<p>Is there any symbolism used?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tons, see above description 	
<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"> - (do research) 	
<p>Is there a focal point in each?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - St. Jerome at his desk 	
<p>Did a previous art style influence this artwork?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 	
<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?