



## 2nd Grade: MAY

### *The Water Lily Pond*

#### Claude Monet

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#### **About the Artist**

*The following information is provided to give classroom teachers a comprehensive understanding of the artist and artwork. Use your judgment on what to share with your students based on their level of curiosity, observation/inquiry skills, comprehension and age-appropriateness.*

#### **Claude Monet**

Claude Monet, born November 14, 1840, in Paris, France, was the second son born to Claude-Adolphe and Louise-Justine Aubree. Monet was actually given the name Oscar-Claude Monet at his baptism, but claimed “Claude” as his primary name. The family relocated to the coastal town of Le Havre when Monet was a young boy of five with the hope the move would further develop the family’s grocery business. Monet described his childhood years as undisciplined. He thrived on freedom despite his parents’ attempts at establishing household rules. He passed time in school by doodling in the margins of his books, often capturing the facial features of his teachers. His self-imposed distractions and frequent days of absenteeism to enjoy the outdoors were controlled enough that Monet was still able to complete a basic education and earn a reputation as the local caricaturist. Business as a caricaturist was good and fifteen-year old Monet was able to charge well for his highly-sought after sketches.

Claude Monet’s teen years were saddened by the death of his mother in 1857. His father thought it best for the sixteen-year old Monet to leave school and live with Marie-Jeanne Lecadre, his aunt. The army drafted Monet and sent him to Northern Africa for a few years. Upon his return, he settled in Paris and took painting lessons at the Academie Suisse. At this time Monet became friends with well-known painters Auguste Renoir, Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Carmille Pissarro, Frederic Bazille and Alfred Sisley.

While his early years produced figure drawings and traditional paintings, among his new artist friends Renoir, Brazille and Sisley, Monet experimented with a new approach to painting. Monet and his friends spent time painting outdoors near the Fontainebleau forest where they experimented painting the same subject matter with varying light conditions throughout the course of the day. For Monet, the air and the light which surrounded the subject matter were of greater importance than the object itself. Canvases were painted, sometimes simultaneously, as Monet watched the light shift. Whether producing professional paintings or those in his new styles, Monet’s financial success fluctuated. After a rejection from the Salon in 1867 and additional financial difficulties, Monet returned home to Le Havre leaving his mistress, model Camille-Leonie Doncieux, in Paris, pregnant with his child. After the birth of their child in 1870 and Monet’s re-

turn, the couple married. They took refuge in London from the Franco-Prussian War. Here, Monet further experimented with his new style of applying paint to the canvas and some innovative studies of color. The Monet family moved back to France in 1871 and settled in Argenteuil where Monet executed some of his best works. The painting *Impression, Sunrise* was exhibited in the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874 organized by Manet, Degas, Cezanne, Renoir, Pissarro, Sisley and Monet. Unfortunately, the exhibition was not well received which placed a further burden on the already financially strained Monet family. Monet turned this disappointment into determination to advance his style and to continue the quest to study the effects of light on a subject. He made three trips to London between 1899 and 1901 to paint various views of the Thames River, resulting in a series of fine work.

Monet met a wealthy department store owner and patron in London named Ernest Hoschede who recognized Monet’s financial situation and invited the Monet family to move into one of his homes. Camille’s health was beginning to deteriorate at this time and she was further weakened by the birth of their second child. In 1879, at age thirty two, Camille lost her life to tuberculosis. In the meantime, Hoschede had gone bankrupt and left his family. His deserted wife, Alice, decided to move out of the family home and relocate with Monet to a new home. She cared for Monet’s sons, Jean and Michel, along with her own six children.

Claude Monet joined other Impressionists in exhibitions during the 1880s where their work was better received as well as exhibiting solo at major venues, continuing to build his reputation as well as his style. Monet completed more than one hundred fifty paintings during the 1880s. Monet exhibited his first series of paintings, *Grainstacks*, which met with great success. Income from his exhibitions and the sales of his paintings came on a regular basis now and in 1890 Monet could afford to purchase the home he rented in Giverny, France. With continued income from his paintings, Monet improved the two and a half-acre property with the addition of gardens, a greenhouse, a lily pond with a Japanese bridge and a second studio near his precious gardens. From here, he could paint the outdoors while he sat indoors. In 1891, Alice Hoschede’s estranged husband passed away and in 1892, Monet married Alice. Monet continued to paint and executed his well-known series of twenty-five *Haystacks*. Other series paintings included his *Poplars*, *Cathedrals*, *House of Parliament*, *Mornings on the Seine* and *Water Lilies*. Monet used this time to travel to London, Italy and throughout the Mediterranean.

His wife, Alice, died in 1911 and three years later, his eldest son, Jean, died. Jean had married Alice’s daughter, Blanche, and upon her husband’s death, Blanche moved nearby and continued to care for the aging Monet who was now nearly blind from cata-

## Discipline-Based Art Education

The following components are integral to students having a complete, well rounded art experience.

### Art Aesthetics

Providing opportunities to develop perception and appreciation of visually expressed ideas and experiences.

### Art Production

Providing opportunities to develop skills and techniques for creative visual expressions of emotions and ideas.

### Art History

Providing opportunities to develop an understanding of the visual arts as a basic component of personal heritage.

### Art Criticism

Providing an opportunity to develop an intellectual basis for analyzing and making aesthetic judgments based on an understanding of visual ideas and experiences.

## ELEMENTS OF ART

- Line: A continuous mark
- Shape: Area enclosed by a line
- Color: Hue, reflection of light.
- Texture: Surface quality, real or implied
- Form: 3D shape or illusion of 3D
- Value: Graduated areas of light/dark
- Space: Illusion of depth

## PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

- Repetition: Imagery repeating pattern
- Variety: Contrast/variation
- Rhythm: Issues of eye movement
- Balance: Even visual weight
- Emphasis/Economy: Dominance/minimalism
- Proportion: Compare size relationships

## COMPOSITION

- Symmetrical: Mirrored imagery
- Asymmetrical: Random placement
- Radial: Mirror image from center point
- Repetition: Repeating pattern, motif

## ARTISTIC STYLES

- Realism: Realistic representation
- Abstraction: Personal interpretation
- Non-Objective: No recognizable depiction

## ELEMENTS OF DESIGN IN PICTURE BOOKS

Children's literature that relate to this lesson due to elements of art or story content are:

- *Claude Monet* by Ann Waldron
- *Claude Monet: The Magician of Color* by Stephan Koja and Katja Miksovsky
- *Claude Monet: Sunshine and Waterlilies* by True Kelley and Steven Packard
- *Linnea in Monet's Garden* by Christina Bjork
- *The Magical Garden of Claude Monet* by Laurence Anholt

## REFERENCE/BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Art Institute of Chicago. *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism*. Chicago, IL. The Art Institute of Chicago. 2000
- *Biography for Claude Monet*, Guggenheim Collection. January 6, 2007
- Charles Merrill Mount. *Monet, A Biography*. Simon and Schuster. 1966.
- Claude Monet by Himself. [www.intermonet.com/biograph/autobigb.htm](http://www.intermonet.com/biograph/autobigb.htm). Accessed 1/8/2008

racts. Surgery improved his sight, however Monet faced another challenge. Rheumatism in his hands made painting difficult. His paintings during these years were focused on what he could see from his studio— his gardens and a large pond of water lilies.

Claude Monet died from lung cancer on December 5, 1926, at the age of eighty-six. Prior to his death, Monet requested his family to plan only a simple funeral—no religious service and no flowers. He wanted to be buried locally next to his wife in the Giverny church cemetery. As per his request of no flowers, the family place a simple sheaf of wheat on his coffin. In time, his beloved home was given by his heirs to the French Academy of Fine Arts and is open to the public to this day.

## About the Art

*The Water Lily Pond* was painted with oil on canvas by Claude Monet in 1899. It measures 34.5 x 36.5 inches and is in the permanent collection of The National Gallery, London.

## Directed Observation

Show students an image of *The Water Lily Pond and Bridge* and tell them it was painted with oil paint on canvas by Claude Monet in 1899. Invite students to quietly study the work. After some time for thinking, encourage students to share what they see. Welcome all comments. The following questions are provided to help students use art vocabulary to talk about the work.

1. The scene in this painting was on Monet's property in Giverny. He planted the garden, developed the pond and added a bridge over it. Monet loved nature and wanted to reference the close relationship the Japanese people have to nature—thus the style of the bridge and oriental garden. Name some of the plants they see (water lilies, weeping willow tree).
2. Guess the time of year and the time of day this painting was made and explain why.
3. Imagine what it would look like if it were painted in autumn or if it were painted in the early evening. Share your thoughts.
4. Learn about color schemes to identify the color scheme Monet used in this painting. (*Cool colors* of greens, blues, violets)
5. Claude Monet's style of painting was called Impressionism. This style of painting is a bit blurred as colors are put on with rough brushstrokes. It also focuses on the natural light and air around the subject matter. Compare *The Water Lily Pond* to an early Monet painting such as *Terrace at the Seaside Sainte-Adresse* to see the shift of styles. Discuss the difference of lighting and brushstrokes.
6. Monet painted this scene symmetrically. There is a mirror image—the left side is (almost) identical to the right side with a few differing plants.
7. Notice how Monet cropped the image. He eliminated the ground to the left and right as well as below the pond. Why do you think he did this?
8. Why do you think *The Water Lily Pond* is one of the world's most famous paintings?

## Things to Do

1. Create a painting similar to Monet's but use only warm colors (yellows, oranges, and reds). How does this color scheme change the feel compared to Monet's use of cool colors (greens, blues, violets)?
2. Imagine you are standing on the Japanese bridge over the lily pond. What would you see in front of you? Draw that image.
3. Use a camera to capture the same outdoor scene in the morning, noon and afternoon light. Use the photos to create a series of paintings highlighting the various shifts of light.
4. Take a walk and look for imagery that is symmetrical or flip through magazines to find symmetry in a landscape. Then, create a landscape painting using symmetry.
5. Lightly sketch a landscape onto a piece of sturdy paper. Apply white tempera paint onto a small section of the drawing. Dip the end of a piece of colored chalk into a shallow dish of water and quickly draw directly on top of the wet paint. Change to another piece of wet colored chalk and continue. Watch the colors blend. Repeat the process until the entire page is covered. The texture of the paint and blended colors will create an impressionistic look. When completely dry, frame and display.
6. Push a small piece of sponge into the open end of a clothes pin. Dip the sponge into watercolor or tempera paints and then onto paper to create a beautiful, impressionistic landscape.
7. Write a story about visiting the lily pond and garden on Monet's property. Add illustrations to show what you would do.
8. On a nice day, gather paint brushes, watercolor paints, small cups (or small squirt bottles) for water and drawing boards (or clip boards) and visit a lovely park, preferably one with a lake or pond. Tape watercolor paper to the board and use watercolor to paint what you see. Do a series of small paintings capturing the landscape. Observe and capture how the shifting sunlight changes the colors of the landscape and reflective lake water. Lay wet paintings in the sun to dry. Choose your best works to display at school.