



# Art History

## English Lessons



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## **“What is Expressionism?”-Video activity for Advanced levels**



### **Before watching activity:**

- 1. Do you enjoy visiting museums with paintings? Why/why not?**
- 2. Do you know anything about the Art movement of Expressionism and the artists involved?**



### **Now watch the video and answer the questions that follow:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLhDLL3MjSs>

- 1. How did the term Expressionism come to be commonly used in Germany around 1910?**
- 2. What distinguished expressionist art from other forms of art during that time period?**
- 3. Why did artists associated with Expressionism see themselves as breaking free from traditional constraints?**
- 4. How did Ludovic Kirchner's early painting demonstrate the qualities of Expressionism?**
- 5. What was the significance of the group known as "Der Blaue Reiter" or the Blue Rider in the context of Expressionism?**
- 6. How did the new wave of artists after World War I differ from the Expressionists in their approach to depicting the world?**

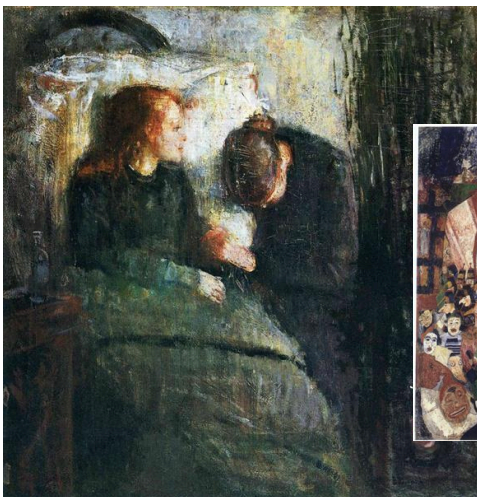


7. Why did Hitler's Nazi Party label modern art, including Expressionism, as degenerate art?
8. Despite facing persecution and exile, how did the influence of Expressionists continue to impact later art movements?
9. In what way did the rediscovery and reclamation of Expressionism in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s contribute to the art scene?



**After watching activity:**

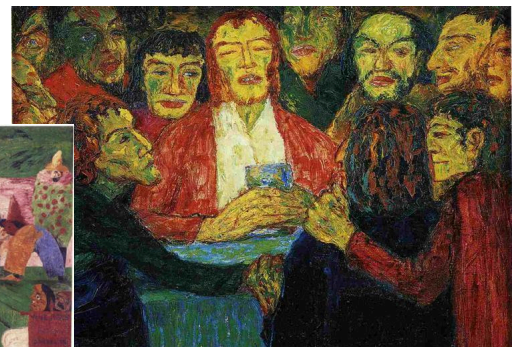
These are three of the most famous paintings by expressionist painters. How do you feel about them? Taking into consideration what you learnt from the video, express your ideas and feelings in a paragraph:



The Sick Child (E. Munch)



Christ's entry into Brussels (J. Ensor)



The Last Supper (E. Nolde)

### 1. How did the term Expressionism come to be commonly used in Germany around 1910?

The term Expressionism became commonly used in Germany around 1910 to describe avant-garde art that emphasized feelings above all else.

### 2. What distinguished expressionist art from other forms of art during that time period?

Expressionist art focused on expressing emotions over realism, contrasting with Impressionism which prioritized capturing light and atmosphere.

### 3. Why did artists associated with Expressionism see themselves as breaking free from traditional constraints?

Artists associated with Expressionism saw themselves as breaking free from traditional constraints by creating art that was emotionally charged and expressive.

### 4. How did Ludovic Kirchner's early painting demonstrate the qualities of Expressionism?

Ludovic Kirchner's early painting demonstrated explosive use of colour and exaggerated form to express exotic qualities, reflecting the essence of Expressionism.

### 5. What was the significance of the group known as "Der Blaue Reiter" or the Blue Rider in the context of Expressionism?

The group "Der Blaue Reiter" or the Blue Rider emphasized the spiritual over the earthbound in their art, taking inspiration from Vasily Kandinsky's painting of the same name.

### 6. How did the new wave of artists after World War I differ from the Expressionists in their approach to depicting the world?

The new wave of artists after World War I rejected the emotional outpouring of Expressionism and turned to a more matter-of-fact depiction of the world, known as new objectivity.

### 7. Why did Hitler's Nazi Party label modern art, including Expressionism, as degenerate art?

Hitler's Nazi Party labelled modern art, including Expressionism, as degenerate for not upholding what they saw as German values, leading to persecution and exile of many artists.

### 8. Despite facing persecution and exile, how did the influence of Expressionists continue to impact later art movements?

Despite persecution and exile, the influence of Expressionists continued to impact later art movements such as Abstract Expressionism and new Expressionism after World War II.

### 9. In what way did the rediscovery and reclamation of Expressionism in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s contribute to the art scene?

The rediscovery and reclamation of Expressionism in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s led to a resurgence of interest in the movement, inspiring a new generation of artists dubbed as new Expressionists.





For more ideas on how to use masterpieces of Art to teach critical thinking, you can read my blog post here:

<https://www.ruthlessteacher.com/how-to-use-works-of-arts-to-teach-critical-thinking/>

And about the use of images in the language classroom, another of my blog posts here:

<https://www.ruthlessteacher.com/the-use-of-images-in-language-learning/>

I have made a pdf with a set of questions that I use a lot with my students when we study all types of images, you can download it here:

<https://www.ruthlessteacher.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Questions-about-images-in-class.pdf>





## Painters

[Expressionism](#) was a [modernist](#) movement, initially in poetry and painting, originating in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. Its typical trait is to present the world solely from a subjective perspective, distorting it radically for emotional effect in order to evoke moods or ideas. Expressionist artists sought to express the meaning of emotional experience rather than physical reality. **(information from Wikiart).**

You can see the painters and their work online here:

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/artists-by-art-movement/expressionism#!#resultType:masonry>

## Paintings

The first painting is called “The sick child” by Edvard Munch (1885-6) and you can see it in the *National Gallery* in Oslo

<https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/collection/object/NG.M.00839>

The second painting is called “Christ’s entry into Brussels” by James Ensor (1888) and you can see it in the *Getty museum* in Los Angeles

<https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103QSA>

The third painting is called “The Last Supper” (1909) and you can see it in the *National Gallery of Denmark* in Copenhagen

<https://open.smk.dk/en/artwork/image/KMS6202>



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For any questions you may have you can message me at [info@ruthlessteacher.com](mailto:info@ruthlessteacher.com)

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