**Lesson 3**

**Impressionism**

*Before you read*

**Warm-up questions**

What do you know about Impressionism? What are the crucial factors in an

Impressionist painting? Can you name some of the renowned Impressionist

artists? How did Impressionism show itself for the first time?

**Skimming the text**

Read the text’s title (headings and subheadings) and

• Write some of the text’s keywords in the following blanks.

……………… ……………… ………………… ………………

• Write the names of some important people and places given in the

reading passage.

……………… ……………… ………………… …………………

• Read the first sentences of each paragraph. What do you think the

reading is probably about?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

**Group work (classroom activity)**

Discuss the following terms in groups and compare your answers with

your partners.

• Impressionism • Color theory

• Nature’s role • Japanese painting

• Conservation of the Académie • Painting outside

*Part Ι. Reading*

**Impressionism**

[1] Impressionism is the name given to a style of painting in France at the end

of the 19th century. The Impressionist artists were not a formal group but

more a collective of artists seeking recognition for their innovative

techniques and approach to using color in art. Many artists contributed to

the first exhibition of Impressionist painting in 1874.

*Claude Monet* (1840-1926), *Pierre Auguste Renoir* (1841-1919), *Camille Pissarro*

(1831-1903), *Edgar Degas* (1834-1917), *Alfred Sisley* (1839-99) and

*Henri Marie Raymond de Toulouse-Lautrec* (1864-1901) were the main

figures who formed the core of Impressionism.

**Image: CLAUDE MONET (1840-1926)**

[2] Impressionism explored contemporary developments in color theory

which led to a more exact analysis of the effects of color and light in

nature. The Impressionists abandoned the conventional idea that the

shadow of an object was made up from its color with some brown or black

added. Instead, they enriched their colors with the idea that the shadow of

an object is broken up with dashes of its complementary color. For

example, in an Impressionist painting the shadow on an orange may have

some strokes of blue painted into it to increase its vitality.

[3] Impressionism sought to capture the atmosphere of a particular time of

day or the effects of different weather conditions on the landscape. In order

to capture such fleeting effects Impressionist artists had to work quickly.

They applied their paint in brightly colored strokes which meant sacrificing

much of the outline and detail of their subject. Their painting technique put

them at odds with the conservative Académie of the French artistic

establishment who valued subtle color and precise detail which was

carefully crafted with great skill in the artist's studio. What the Académie

failed to appreciate was the freshness of Impressionist color and the energy

of their brushwork which revealed a spontaneity that had only previously

been valued in the sketches of the old masters. However, the public grew to

love the vitality of the impressionist technique and in time Impressionism

grew to become the most popular movement in the history of art.

[4] The bold designs of Japanese paintings, popular in France at the time,

were another influence on impressionism. Their asymmetrical arrangements,

contrasting large areas of flat color with patches of intricate pattern, offered a

compositional format that the Impressionists could use to develop their ideas

about color. Sometimes, even the most avant-garde artists need the security of

knowing that the path they have chosen to follow has some roots in tradition.

The compositions of the *Ukiyo-e* masters such as Hokusai and Hiroshige

offered the Impressionists this confidence, albeit from another culture.

**Image: ANDO HIROSHIGE (1797-1858)**

[5] Impressionism was the first movement where artists embraced painting

‘en plein air’ (painting outside). This was partially due to the introduction

of paint in tubes which, for the first time, enabled artists to carry all their

studio equipment around in a case. They also found it necessary to paint

outdoors because they were committed to observing the effects of light on

color in nature. Consequently landscapes, both in the town and

countryside, became their most natural and influential subject and is what

we immediately associate with Impressionism today.

[6] Still life was not a popular subject matter in Impressionism, mainly

because it was not a ‘plein air’ subject suited to capturing the atmospheric

qualities of light and color. However there are a few outstanding examples

such as *Renoir*'s 'Fruit of the Midi' whose fruit and vegetables are carefully

chosen to create a range of prismatic colors that span the ‘Impressionist’

spectrum.

[7] Impressionism was the first movement in the canon of modern art and

had a massive effect on the development of art in the 20th century. Like

most revolutionary styles ‘Impressionism’ was gradually absorbed into the

mainstream and its limitations became frustrating to the succeeding

generation. Artists such as *Vincent Van Gogh*, *Paul Cézanne*, *Paul*

*Gauguin* and *Georges Seurat*, although steeped in the traditions of

Impressionism, pushed the boundaries of the style in different creative

directions and in doing so laid the foundations of art in the 20th century.

For historical convenience these artists have been labeled as ‘Post-

Impressionists’ but, apart from their ‘Impressionist’ influence, they do not

have much in common. *Van Gogh* pushed art towards ‘Expressionism’,

*Cézanne* towards ‘Cubism’, and *Gauguin* and *Seurat* towards ‘Fauvism’

and ‘Divisionism’.

*Part ΙΙ. Word study: Pronunciations, definitions and examples*

**Embrace (v.) /**ɪmˈbreɪs/

(1) Hold (someone) closely in one's arms, esp. as a sign of affection. (2)

Accept or support (a belief, theory, or change) willingly and enthusiastically.

*We should all* ***embrace*** *that concept.*

**Enrich (v.) /**ɪnˈrɪtʃ/

(1) Improve or enhance the quality or value of. (2) Make (someone)

wealthy or wealthier.

*The intrinsic motivation of academic education is to* ***enrich*** *one's life awareness.*

**Fleeting (adj.) /**ˈfliːtɪŋ/

Lasting for a very short time.

***Fleeting*** *glances conveying warmth cannot sustain the relationship.*

**Frustrating (Adj.)** /frʌˈstreɪtiŋ/

(1) Preventing (a plan or attempted action) from progressing, succeeding,

or being fulfilled. (2) something that causes (someone) to feel upset or

annoyed, typically as a result of being unable to change or achieve

something.

*The initial attempts to defend her were* ***frustrating****.*

**Innovative (adj.)** /ˈinnvetiv/

(1) (Of a product, idea, etc.) Something that features or brings about new

methods, advances and developments. (2) Original.

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*Wow, that was a great* ***innovative*** *idea you have given to the boss.*

**Intricate (adj.) /**ˈintrikit/

Very complicated or detailed.

*These* ***intricate*** *paintings contain a mystical concept.*

**Prismatic (adj.)** /ˈprizmætik/

Of, relating to, or having the form of a prism or prisms.

*It is a large piece of bone,* ***prismatic*** *in form and slightly curved in length.*

**Recognition (n.) /**rɛkəɡˈnɪʃ(ə)n/

(1) The action or process of recognizing or being recognized, in particular. (2)

Identification of a thing or person from previous encounters or knowledge.

(3) Acknowledgment of something's existence, validity, or legality.

*Their first task is vital to gain diplomatic* ***recognition****.*

**Spectrum (n.) /**ˈspektrəm/

(1) A band of colors, as seen in a rainbow, produced by separation of the

components of light by their different degrees of refraction. (2) Used to

classify something, or suggest that it can be classified, in terms of its

position on a scale between two extremes.

*This is something true across the ideological* ***spectrum****.*

**Steep (v.) /**sti:p/

Soak (food or tea) in water or other liquid so as to extract its flavor or to

soften it.

*It has been a* ***steep*** *learning curve.*

**Vitality (n.) /**vʌɪˈtalɪti/

(1) The state of being strong and active, energy. (2) The power giving

continuance of life, present in all living things.

*This document has lost its* ***vitality*** *due to the new confessions of the*

*prisoner.*

*Part ΙΙΙ. Exercises*

**A. Open questions**

Based on the text you have read, answer the following questions orally.

1- Why is ‘Impressionism’ the most popular school of art?

2- What do you know about the impressionistic technique of painting?

3- How did Japanese paintings affect ‘Impressionism’?

4- What was the favorite subject matter for impressionist?

5- Can you name some of the forerunners of ‘Impressionism’?

**B. Comprehension check**

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. Write “T”

before true statements and “F” before false ones.

…..... 1. The Impressionist artists were a formal group in 19th century

in France.

……. 2. The Impressionists abandoned the conventional idea that the

shadow of an object was made up from its color with some

brown or black added.

……. 3. Académie of the France supported the impressionist

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technique of capturing the fleeting effect of light on nature.

……. 4. Asymmetrical arrangements of Japanese paintings were an

influential effect on impressionism.

……. 5. Gauguin and Seurat laid the foundations of art in the 20th

century.

**C. Multiple choice questions**

Read the reading passage carefully and select the most appropriate

answer for each of the following multiple-choice test items.

1- ‘Impressionism’ has largely focused on …………….

A) self-expression of the artist.

B) the objective depiction of the subject matter.

C) the exact analysis of the effects of color and light in nature.

D) emotionalism.

2- ‘It’ in paragraph 6 refers to …………….

A) subject matter. B) Still life.

C) Impressionism’. D) ‘plein air’.

3- What was the most common subject matter for ‘Impressionist’

paintings?

A) landscapes B) Still life

C) Sordid aspects of life D) Biblical themes

4- What the Académie failed to appreciate was …………….

A) the freshness of ‘Impressionist’ color.

B) the energy of ‘Impressionism’.

C) the spontaneity of ‘Impressionism’.

D) all of the above.

5- Introduction of paint in tubes caused the ‘Impressionist’ to embrace

…………….

A) painting outside the studio.

B) painting in the studio.

C) painting quickly.

D) painting with bright colors.

**D. Word formation**

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from the following table.

Make necessary changes.

**Noun Verb Adjective Adverb**

frustration frustrate frustrating frustratingly

innovation innovate innovative innovatively

vitality vitalize vital vitally

enrichment enrich

1- Iran does not suspend uranium …………. under any

circumstances.

2- Definitely, the boss will accept your …………. design.

3- I really like the professor but to tell the truth his class is very

………….

4- Listen to me! This is …………. important.

5- Plants lose their …………. when lacking enough water and sunshine.

**E. Synonym finding**

Find a single word in the passage which means:

1 show, fair (para.1) ……………………..

2 shade (para.2) …………………….

3 momentary (para.3) …………………….

4 complicated (para.4) …………………….

5 safety (para.4) ……………………..

6 somewhat, partly (para.5) ……………………..

7 instantly, right away (para.5) ……………………..

8 following, subsequent (para.7) ……………………..

9 ease, comfort (para.7) …………………….

10 huge, very big (para.7) ……………………..

**F. Matching**

Match the words in column Ι with their appropriate equivalents in

column ΙΙ. Insert the letters in the parentheses provided. There are more

choices in column ΙΙ than required.

**column Ι column ΙΙ**

1 embrace (……) a. central part

2 enthusiastically (……) b. distinct, opposite

3 core (……) c. catch, record

4 contrasting (……) d. excitedly

5 due to (……) e. growth, expansion

6 capture (……) f. hold closely

7 development (……) g. subjectivity

h. revolution

**G. Cloze test (classroom activity)**

There are some missing words in the following text. Find the best

choice for each blank and mark it in your book.

Radicals in their time, early Impressionists …. (1)….. the rules of

academic painting. They constructed their pictures from freely brushed

colors. They also painted realistic scenes of modern life, and often painted

…..(2)….. Previously, still life and portraits as well as landscapes were

usually painted in a …..(3)…... The Impressionists found that they could

capture the momentary and transient effects of sunlight by painting ‘en

plein air’. They portrayed overall visual effects instead of ….(4)….., and

used short "broken" brushstrokes of mixed and unmixed color — not

blended smoothly or shaded, as was customary — to …..(5)….. an effect

of intense color vibration.

**1**. A) changed B) supported C) accepted D) violated

**2**. A) outdoors B) indoors C) mountains D) families

**3**. A) house B) studio C) room D) hall

**4**. A) concepts B) generalities C) realities D) details

**5**. A) fail B) achieve C) send D) pass

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