

Dancing at the Moulin de la Galette

By Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Print Facts

- Medium: Oil on canvas
- Date: 1876
- Size: 131 x 175 cm
- Location: Musee d'Orsay, Paris
- Period:
- Style: Impressionistic
- Genre: Exterior
- Pronounced: (moo-LAHN-day-la-gahl-et)
- Renoir often put people he knew in his paintings. The table in the foreground on the right houses his friends.
- Renoir was known for painting joyful paintings of real life.
- The Moulin de la Galette was an open-air café and dance hall frequented by the working class of Paris, including Renoir himself.
- Every Sunday afternoon when the weather was nice people gathered in this courtyard to dance
- A smaller version of this painting was sold to a Swiss collector and although the purchase price is unknown it is listed as the fifth most expensive painting ever sold.

Artist Facts

- Pronounced (rehn-WAR)
- Born February 25, 1841 in Limoges, France
- Died December 3, 1919, France (age 78)
- Renoir grew up in Paris, France.
- Renoir began studying art in Paris, France.
- Grew up in a working class family and as a boy worked in a porcelain factory where his drawing talents led him to paint designs on fine china.
- He married Aline Victorine Charigot, who modeled in his painting Luncheon of the Boating Party.
- Renoir painted approximately 6,000 paintings and painted for nearly 60 years of his life.
- Renoir continued painting late in his life even though he had severe arthritis and had to have an assistant place a paintbrush in his hand.
- Two of Renoir's paintings have sold for more than 70 million dollars each!
- One of Renoir's sons was an actor and another was a filmmaker.
- To view a biography, go to http://www.artble.com/artists/pierre-auguste_renoir

Key Principle of Design to Teach

- **Repetition and Rhythm:** Repetition occurs when an artist repeats an item or element in a work of art. By repeating a particular element or combination of elements (such as color, shape or lines), artists can sometimes create the illusion of motion or stability or represent patterns and

textures. Often this is done to help unify an artwork. The regular repetition of a particular element can make the artwork seem active or suggest visual vibration.

Possible Questions and Suggestions to Teach Repetition and Rhythm

- What items do you see repeated in this work? (The lights, hats, trees, shapes (the hats, lights and faces are all round), dappled sunlight, colors)
- Do dancers need to have rhythm? Do they often have repetition in their dance moves? Renoir made his painting feel like a dance by using repetition and rhythm.
- Repetition and Rhythm create the illusion of movement. Does it look like the dancers are moving? Why? (Their bodies are painted in action.)
- Have you ever been underneath a tree and watched the sun move through the leaves? What does it look like? Point out the light and shadows on the people and things underneath the trees.
- In the past, some of the 4th grade classes learned a dance to perform in the spring. If so, you could bring that experience into the discussion.

Keywords

- Repetition, Rhythm, Movement, Colors, Light, Value

Other Possible Questions

- Cover the painting so only the tree tops show. What do you think this is a painting of? Animals, people, a forest? Uncover the painting. Is this what you would have guessed?
- Is this scene outside or inside? How can you tell?
- Would this be a noisy or quiet place?
- What sounds do you think you would hear if you were in this painting? Wind in the trees, birds chirping, people chatting, laughing, fabric moving, music, feet tapping. You could assign certain groups of kids to make certain sounds and recreate what it would have sounded like to be there. Think orchestra...
- Is this a shady or a sunny spot? How can you tell?
- What colors do you see in this painting? Which colors do you see the most? Do you see any warm colors? Where?
- What is the mood of this painting? Do the people seem happy or sad?
- Would you like to come here?