

Dance at Bougival

By Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Print Facts

- Medium: Oil on canvas
- Date: 1883
- Size: 71 5/8" x 38 5/8"
- Location: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
- Period: Rejection of Impressionism
- Style: Impressionism
- Genre: Genre Painting
- Renoir used models to pose for this painting. The woman is Suzanne Veladon, a fellow painter and friend, and the man is his brother.
- The original of this painting is almost life-sized (71 5/8 x 38 5/8 in).
- Bougival is a city outside of Paris and this scene is an open-air café that was a popular recreation spot for city dwellers, including Renoir himself.
- Pronounced (BOO-zshe-vahl)
- Go to <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/32592> to listen to a fun audio about the painting.

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

- **Emphasis** establishes the order of importance for the visual components of a design. Artists may call attention to specific parts of an artwork by using a combination of elements and principles to draw the viewer's eye to a particular part of the work. The center of interest, or focal point, is the area that first attracts attention in a composition. This area is dominant because it is more important when compared to the other elements in a composition.
- Renoir uses emphasis to draw the viewer's eye to the faces of the dancing couple.

Possible Questions and Suggestions to Teach Emphasis

- How does the artist use color to draw the eye to (or emphasize) the dancer's faces? (Most of this painting uses cool, receding colors except the woman's red bonnet which comes forward and draws the attention of the viewer to her face.)
- How does the artist use line to keep the viewer involved in (and to emphasize) the dancers? (Renoir uses line to keep the viewer's eye rotating around the faces of the dancers. Follow the woman's face down her arm to her elbow up the rest of her arm to her hand, to the man's face which is looking at the woman's face and draws the viewer back to her face and around again.)
- How does the artist use the background to emphasize and keep the viewer focused on the dancers' faces? (The artist also blurs the background to keep the viewer's attention on the dancer's faces.)

Keywords

- Emphasis, cool/receding colors, line

Other Possible Questions and Suggestions

- Cover the dancers so only the background can be seen. What is this scene? What are the people doing here or what would people do here? (Eat, talk, socialize). Uncover the dancers and let the kids see they also danced at these outdoor cafes (or garden cafes). (A piece of paper is in the packet to cover the dancers.)
- Cover the woman's bonnet. What colors does the artist use? Cool or Warm? Uncover the bonnet. What does the color red do? (A transparency is in the packet to cover the bonnet.)
- What sounds do you think you would hear if you were in this painting? Wind in the trees, birds chirping, dishes clanking, people chatting, laughing, fabric moving, music, feet tapping. Perhaps you could assign certain children parts to recreate the sounds using their voices (birds chirping, people chatting) or props (dishes clanking, fabric moving).