MARY CASSATT
Lesson For Ages 8 - 9
Step 1 - Introducing the Master Artist: Slideshow Guide

MOTIVATION

BEGIN READING HERE

Have you had your picture taken by a photographer? Did you have to hold still for a very long time? (NO)

I want you to pretend you are a child living about 90 years ago, way back before your grandparents were even born. You have an appointment to have your photograph taken, and you are very excited because the camera is a new invention, being talked about all over town. You dress up in your very best clothes, all starched and ironed. Your mother fusses endlessly with your hair, and finally you arrive at the photographer’s studio.

Soon your excitement turns to disbelief! The photographer poses you carefully and tells you to stand straight and tall. He clamps both sides of your head to a pole so you can’t move. Leaving you in this position, he readies his camera. It seems you’ve been standing there forever, and you think you can’t bear it one more second. Finally, with hot lights shining on you, he says, "Smile."

How do you think this photo will turn out? Do you think you will look natural and relaxed? (NO) Have you seen old black and white photos of people who look as if their heads were being held in a clamp?

I want you to look at a PORTRAIT painted about as many years ago as the photograph we were describing. Tell me if this mother and child look like they are stiff and tense, like the people in old photos.

Click Start Lesson To Begin

1. YOUNG MOTHER SEWING

Do you think this mother and daughter look tense and stiff? (NO) Can you give me a word to describe how they are feeling? (RELAXED, HAPPY, QUIET) That is the way artist Mary Cassatt liked to show people she painted. She simply saw people being people, not people sitting for portraits.

Do you like to be around your mother when she is quietly working? Is it a good time to talk and be alone with her? That is what Mary Cassatt shows us here, a quiet, relaxed time between mother and daughter.

Where is the child looking? (RIGHT AT THE ARTIST) Does she look as if the artist is bothering her? (NO) Mary Cassatt must have made her feel very comfortable while
painting her portrait. More and more Mary was turning to children as models. They might wiggle and squirm when she tried to draw them, but at least they did not complain about the size of their noses, as some adults did!

Look at the clothes the mother and daughter are wearing. What do you see on the mother’s dress? (BLACK AND WHITE STRIPES, BLUE APRON) Use your eyes to follow a path with me: (POINT OUT IN SLIDE) Start at the mother’s face, go down to the stripes, on to the plain apron, and around to the child’s white dress and face. Did you know Mary Cassatt planned that path for our eyes to follow? What did she do to make our eyes travel on that path? Let’s go on a search for clues to answer that question. Who is most in the center of the picture? (MOTHER) Who has on more colorful clothes? (MOTHER) So we notice the mother first, and her striped dress. Is anything in front of the mother, or OVERLAPPING her? (CHILD) The black and white stripes are like arrows that point down to the daughter’s face. And Mary Cassatt had taken us on a wonderful walk through her painting. Let’s see if the next child Cassatt painted is looking right at the artist also.

Click Next To Change Slide

2. BREAKFAST IN BED

Is anyone looking at the artist in this painting? (NO) But the mother is giving a very loving look to her child. Mary Cassatt again invites us to share a private moment between mother and child. Do they look stiff and formal or relaxed? (RELAXED) Have you ever treated your mother or father to breakfast in bed. Have you surprised them on a special day, such as their birthday, Mother’s or Father’s Day? Was it a fun thing to do? Do you think this is an everyday moment or a special occasion? Why? (ANSWERS WILL VARY)

What did you notice first in this portrait? (MOTHER, CHILD) How did Mary make sure we would notice them first? (SKIN COLOR STANDS OUT AGAINST WHITES OF BED AND CLOTHING) In art we use the word CONTRAST to say that one color is very different from another like we see here. Pink sheets would not give the same focus on the people as the white background.

Let’s have our eyes take a walk through this painting. (POINT THE WAY) Let’s start with the young child with those rosy cheeks. Now let’s move down to her hand holding what she’s eating, maybe a biscuit. Her elbow points us to the arms of the mother gently holding her daughter. The mother’s hand touches the long line of her daughter’s leg. What do we call a line that goes from side to side? (HORIZONTAL) Our eyes now travel from the daughter’s feet that are pointing up to the mother’s face. We have finished our walk. What was the shape of our walk? (A CIRCLE) Yes, Mary Cassatt created a circular COMPOSITION. Composition is how an artist arranges things in a painting.
Tell me if you see contrasting colors and overlapping in this next portrait.

Click Next To Change Slide

3. THE CUP OF TEA

Good for you! Where do you see contrasting colors? (COLORS OF CHAIR, CLOTHES, FLOWERS)

If you were an artist, would you paint portraits of your family? (YES) Mary painted her family many, many times. She painted her private world, including her father, mother, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, her servants and their dogs. Can you guess who this is? This is her sister, Lydia. Lydia was the joy of Mary’s life. They were very good friends, and enjoyed being together. Mary never married, so she and Lydia lived together as adults.

What is Lydia doing in this portrait? (HAVING A CUP OF TEA) How can you tell she is not alone? (ALL DRESSED UP, SMILING, LOOKING AT SOMEONE) Does she look like she is comfortable and enjoying herself? (YES)

When we hang a painting on a wall in our home, what does it have around it? (A FRAME) Did you know a frame could be inside a picture, as well as around it? Let me show you the frame inside this portrait. (POINT OUT ON SCREEN) The flower stand at the top, the back of the chair on the side, and the arm of the chair on the bottom make a frame. What is missing in making the framing complete? (THE RIGHT SIDE) Cassatt left that part of the frame open towards the rest of the room that we can’t see. That missing side invites our eyes to go where Lydia is also looking, into the room. What do you think we would see if we could really look into the room?

Do you think it would be hard to paint your family members over and over again in the same places and have your pictures turn out new and interesting? (YES) Let’s see if Mary shows Lydia in a different way in the next portrait.

Click Next To Change Slide

4. LYDIA CROCHETING

Lydia was clearly the joy of Mary’s life, but that joy had a sad ending. Lydia was very sick with a disease. During her illness Mary gave up all thoughts of painting to take care of Lydia full time. Mary was very sad when she died, but she gave this portrait to her brother, so he could remember Lydia. It was passed along among family members until it was donated to a museum.

Do you notice how pale Lydia’s face looks? Mary shows her crocheting in the pretty garden and enjoying the fresh air.
Would you like to go on another path with me through this painting? What white object catches your attention? (HER HAT) With what does it contrast? (GREENERY BEHIND HER) Now see if you can find something else that is white and also contrasts with green. (HOUSE, WINDOWS, GREENERY) Very good! Now, what in the picture leads your eyes to travel between these two white areas? (THE PATH, OR ROWS OF FLOWERS)

Mary Cassatt spent most of her life painting portraits. Besides using her family as models, she used friends, children of friends, and farm women. But nearly always she selected either women or children, as you've seen here today.

In Mary’s day the life of women by themselves or with other women was pretty much hidden. But in Mary’s paintings, we are invited to share those special moments.

This will surprise you. Cassatt’s best friend was not a woman. He was a man, Edgar Degas (day-GAH), who was a famous artist, and he became Mary’s good friend.

Mary was an American girl born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She went to Paris, France to study art. That’s where she met Degas. They both had seen each other’s work, and liked it very much. Degas invited Mary to show her paintings in an exhibition he and other artists were planning. She accepted gladly.

The artists that Mary Cassatt joined were called the IMPRESSIONISTS. These artists were painting in a new way. They did not carefully blend their colors on the canvas. Their brushstrokes were short dabs and dashes. Some of these IMPRESSIONIST artists liked to paint outdoors, because they wanted to show color and light. But as we have learned today, Mary Cassatt painted beautiful portraits of women and children. Mary Cassatt was the only American ever to display her work with these famous master artists.

Do you think Mary was thrilled to exhibit with Degas and the other impressionist artists? (YES) She was honored to be included, but she detested the term “impressionist” and never used it. To the end of her days, she called herself and her fellow painters “independents.” What does the word “independent” mean? (BY YOURSELF) How would that apply to artists? (THEIR OWN STYLE, DIFFERENT)

Would you like to see a portrait of Mary Cassatt painted by her best friend, Edgar Degas? Click Next To Change Slide

5. MARY CASSATT (by Degas)

Degas thought she was a very talented artist, and Mary thought Degas’ work was outstanding. Cassatt and Degas had a wonderful time working together. Sometimes they even worked on each other’s paintings! Even though they worked so closely together, their artistic styles were different.
Her friends said she was always beautifully dressed in the latest fashions of the day. She was quite tall and usually wore dresses with high necks, as Degas pictured her in this portrait. Do you think hats were in fashion? (YES) Hats were worn everywhere, even at home sometimes if you were expecting company.

Degas painted this when Mary was forty years old. Do you think she liked this portrait? (YES OR NO) If you thought no, you are right! She didn’t like it at all! Degas gave it to her as a present, and she later tried to give it away without letting him know. Nobody seems to know why she disliked it so. Can you guess why? (PERHAPS BECAUSE SHE WAS PLAYING CARDS WHICH WASN’T PROPER FOR WOMEN TO DO DURING THAT TIME IN HISTORY)

This next painting takes place somewhere that brought joy to Mary throughout her lifetime, even when her eyesight was becoming weak.

6. AT THE OPERA

Can you tell me the setting of this picture? (THEATRE) Can you guess what the woman in black is watching at the theatre? They didn’t have motion pictures then! She is watching an opera at a grand theatre in Paris. Cassatt loved the opera. She attended musical performances of all kinds in America. When she came to paint scenes at the Paris Opera, she was again doing what she did at home, painting what she knew best, painting what made her comfortable and happy.

Do you think Mary knew this woman? This was an unusual painting for Cassatt, because the woman was a stranger, a model that posed.

I want you to let your eyes wander around the entire COMPOSITION. There is something funny about what she painted. See if you can find it. (MAN LOOKING AT WOMAN THROUGH BINOCULAR WHILE SHE LOOKS AT SOMEONE ELSE THROUGH BINOCULARS) Is either of them watching the opera? (NO) Their opera glasses would have been pointed down at the stage if they had been looking at the performance. Going to the opera was an important social event during Cassatt’s time. You not only went to see the show but to see each other!

Now let’s look more closely at how Mary arranged this composition. Do you see what the lady and the gentleman are leaning on to steady their opera glasses? (VELVET-COVERED RAILING) Notice how the railing seems to connect them.

What contrasts did Mary include in this painting? (BLACK, WHITE, RED) What differences can you point out between the foreground and background? (BACKGROUND VERY SKETCHY, NO DETAILS)
Let’s focus more closely on the woman in black as we step in to get a better view of Mary’s impressionistic painting style. Before we do, take a good look at the woman’s hand holding the opera glasses.  

**7. YOUNG GIRL IN BIG HAT**

Let me show you something interesting about her hand, now that we have a better view. Notice the coloring of her hand, can you tell why those colors and lines are there? Let me give you a clue. A lady of that time would never go out in public without her hat and _________. **(GLOVES)** That’s right, she is wearing see-through black gloves. Isn’t it interesting to see how Mary painted that impressionistic play of light on those transparent gloves?

Do you think painting those transparent gloves was difficult for Mary? I’ll let her answer that. Listen to her words, “I doubt if you know the effort it is to paint! The concentration it requires to compose your pictures, the difficulty of posing the models, of choosing the color scheme, of expressing the feelings and telling your story. The trying and trying again and again and of the failures, when you have to begin all over again! The long months spent in effort upon effort, making sketch after sketch. Oh, my dear! None but those who have painted a picture know what it costs in time and strength!”

Let’s look at one of those sketches she mentioned. This one she did in preparation for the painting titled, “At the Opera,” that you have just seen.

**8. SKETCH - AT THE OPERA**

What do you notice in this sketch? **(NO DETAILS, IN PENCIL, QUICKLY DONE, IN BLACK AND WHITE)** Even though it isn’t in color, can you tell which areas will be very light, darker, and finally black? **(YES)** From what she said about the difficulty of painting, do you think this was her only sketch? **(NO)**

**9. YOUNG GIRL IN BIG HAT**

Hats were very much in fashion during Mary Cassatt’s time for both adults and children. Would you want to wear a hat like this today? **(NO!)** It is so big you can hardly see the young girl’s face! As Mary Cassatt became older, she started to lose her eyesight. It became difficult for her to paint with brushes and oil paints. She began to use soft chalk PASTELS. It gave her pictures a softer look, not as detailed. Unlike oil paints, pastels don’t need to dry. Can you find colored chalk marks in this picture? **(BLACK LINES ON DRESS, END OF CURLY LOCKS, BACKGROUND COLOR, HAT BRIM, FLOWERS)**
Her eyes got worse and she eventually went blind. The last ten years of her life were a little sad, because she could no longer do any artwork. They were also a little lonely, because so many of her friends, like the artist Edgar Degas and family members, had already passed away. She died in France at the age of 82.

Click Next To Begin Review Game With Pierre
Use the mouse to select the correct answer to each question.

Did you enjoy learning about our Master Artist? Now it's time to practice the techniques you will use in your art activity

When complete, click Back To Units to Exit
Step 2 - Learning From: Worksheets

Drawing Hats

In the frame below, connect the dots with a curved line. This will be the top of the hat.

Now draw the brim of the hat. Start at one dot, draw a wavy line toward the bottom of the box, and up to the other dot.

Use the two dots in the box below to draw the top and brim of a hat. Use your crayons to color and decorate hat.
Exploring Pattern

A pattern is a set of shapes or lines that repeat.

This is a pattern: △△△△△△△△△△△

This is not a pattern: △△△△△△△△△△△

Put a circle around the group of shapes that is a pattern:

△△△△△△△△△△△△△△△△△△△△△△△

Have you ever worn a plaid shirt or skirt?

In a plaid pattern:
Some lines are horizontal,
They go from side to side.

Some lines are vertical,
they go up up and down.

Use your crayons to draw some vertical lines in the box below.
Draw some horizontal lines on top of the vertical
Lines to create your own plaid. Use 2 or more colors.
In order to paint such beautiful portraits, Mary Cassatt had to study the features of the face. Follow the directions and you will learn some of her secrets.

Lightly sketch a guide line straight down the center of the oval shape in the frame below.

Divide it in half for the eye line.

Divide it half again for the nose line. Divide it in half again for the mouth line.

Draw eyes centered on the eye line.

Draw a hint of a nose on the nose line.

Draw a mouth on the mouth line.
Save this page for your art activity.
Save this page for your art activity.
The last few pages of this section contain the Art Activity for Mary Cassatt. This step-by-step outline will be a guide for instructing your child(ren) through the activity. The parent/teacher should review all steps necessary to complete this project before beginning any work.

Cut out the Artist Profile Slip below and attach it to the back of your completed art project.

Mary Cassatt

(kuh-SAHT) - American (1844 – 1926)

Mary Cassatt was an American who traveled to France to study art. It was quite an accomplishment for a woman, and an American at that, to exhibit with the famous Impressionists. She beautifully painted portraits of women and children.

**ART ACTIVITY EMPHASIS:** Portraits, Hats
**MEDIA:** Pastel on Colored Paper

Mary Cassatt

(kuh-SAHT) - American (1844 – 1926)

Mary Cassatt was an American who traveled to France to study art. It was quite an accomplishment for a woman, and an American at that, to exhibit with the famous Impressionists. She beautifully painted portraits of women and children.

**ART ACTIVITY EMPHASIS:** Portraits, Hats
**MEDIA:** Pastel on Colored Paper
Step 3 - Working With: Art Activity Instructions

CASSATT’S PORTRAITS Ages 8-9

ARTIST
Mary Cassatt (kuh-SAHT)
(1844-1926) American

EMPHASIS
Pastel technique

ART ELEMENTS
Color, line

VOCABULARY
Pastel, stroke, pattern, portrait

MEDIA
Pastel

VISUAL
Print: Young Girl In Big Hat (page xxvii)

TECHNIQUE
Pastel strokes

SUGGESTED MUSIC
Impressionistic Music

MATERIALS FOR INSTRUCTOR AND CHILDREN
- One 9” x 12” sheet of construction paper in any of the pastel colors - pale green, pale blue, pale pink, pale purple
  (Include an assortment of each color within the room.)
- One 9” x 12” sheet of black construction paper
- One 12” x 18” sheet of newsprint
- Paper Towel
- Artist profile slip
- One box of pastels
- Scissors and glue

PREPARATION

Construct an example to become familiar with the procedure. Place the art print and your demonstration papers where they can be easily seen. Arrange materials nearby. Pre-cut your copy of the stencil.

SET-UP [ 5 minutes ]

Distribute the following materials to each child:
SUPPLIES: Pastels
PAPER: One 9” x 12” sheet pastel-colored paper, one 9” x 12” sheet of black paper, one piece of 12” x 18” newsprint, paper towel, and the artist profile slip

ORIENTATION [ 5 minutes ]

What did our artist, Mary Cassatt, like to paint? (Portraits) Mary Cassatt especially liked to paint portraits of women and children. Do you remember the name of the style of paintings
by Cassatt? (Impressionism) Your Learning Packet gave you some guides for drawing portraits and hats. Today you will create an Impressionistic pastel portrait of a lady wearing a hat. Let’s get organized so that we can begin.

DEMONSTRATION AND ACTIVITY

ORGANIZE YOUR WORK AREA [ 2 minutes ]
1. Place the newsprint horizontally on your desk.
2. Put the oil pastels, glue, scissors, black paper, and artist profile slip in a corner of your desk.
3. Place the bright-colored paper horizontally in the middle of the newsprint. Have the head profile stencil close by.

DRAW THE HAT [ 15 minutes ]
1. First we will make the top of the hat that fits on your head. Imagine a horizontal line going across the center of the paper. Trace it with your finger. Make two pencil dots on that line. The dots should be about one hand’s width from either side.
2. With your pencil, lightly sketch your hat shape. Use the head stencil to make sure the hat is larger than the head!
3. Sketch lightly so you can change your lines easily.
4. Place the hat drawing out of the way with your black paper.

THE HAT-MAKERS CLOTH, PRACTICE [ 5 to 10 minutes ]

The Flat Stroke (example on next page):
Watch how to make a flat stroke, and then try it yourself on your newsprint. Peel the paper away from the oil pastel. The oil pastel should be broken into halves. Lay the oil pastel on its side and use it to make a “flat” stroke. (Check to see children are holding the pastels correctly and their flat strokes are successful.)
1. With the pastel lying down horizontally on the newsprint, press against the paper and pull the pastel down to the bottom.
2. Hold the newsprint with the other hand so it doesn’t move.
3. Hold your elbows up high above the paper so your arms don’t smear the oil pastel!
4. Practice several flat strokes on your newsprint.

The Edge Stroke (example on next page):
Watch how to make a different stroke:
1. Hold the oil pastel the way an artist does (fingers on top), but instead of resting it horizontally (going across), rest it on its side vertically (up and down).
2. Try several strokes on your newsprint for practice. Start at the top and pull it straight down to make a thin, straight line. (Check student’s lines and technique.)

3. Make this new thin stroke between each of the wide ones. Choose any color.

4. Try overlapping some lines: Choose a color, hold it vertically (up and down) right in the middle at the top of a wide stripe, and pull it straight down the stripe.

**The Diagonal Stroke (example on next page):**
If you hold the pastel at an angle and keep it that way while you move it down the page, you will make a diagonal stroke (demonstrate).

**The Curved Stroke:**
Hold the pastel the same way you did for the flat stroke, but draw it in a curve.

**CREATING THE PLAID** [5 minutes]
Using all of the above strokes, create a plaid pattern on the back of your bright-colored 9”x12” hat drawing. Remember that plaids are a line design that repeats. Encourage the use of three or four contrasting colors. Turn the paper over, and cut out the hat.

**DRAW THE SILHOUETTE** [5 minutes]
1. Place the stencil in the center of the black paper and slide it slightly down and toward the “nose/chin” corner. This will leave some extra room for the hat. Put the hat over the stencil to create the correct placement before tracing.

2. When the placement is satisfactory, remove the hat. Carefully and slowly trace around the stencil with the white or peach oil pastel. Go over your lines again after you remove the stencil to make them show up more clearly.
GLUE THE HAT TO THE BLACK BACKGROUND  [ 3 minutes ]
Turn the hat over. Use small drops of glue and attach it over the head drawing. Place the hat low enough to cover the eye and hair area.

ADD SOME DETAILS  [ 3 minutes ]
Use the practiced pastel strokes to add details to your hat (example on next page).
1. You may want to add a ribbon around the hat (demonstrate). Use the flat pastel stroke and curved stroke to create a ribbon that curves with the crown.
2. You may want to add a feather (only one or two) using edge strokes in a contrasting color that will show up clearly on your hat.
3. Other decorations may be added such as flowers, frills, bows, beads and lace.
4. Draw a line along the bottom of the neckline to “finish” the profile.
5. Draw a line along the bottom of the neckline to “finish” the profile.

MOUNTING THE ARTIST PROFILE SLIP  [ 2 minutes ]
(Profile slips for each artist are provided. They give a brief description of the artist, the technique, and the media used in the art activity. They should be mounted on the back of each art project after it is completed.)
1. Write your name on the front of the artist profile slip.
2. Using glue, mount the profile slip on the back of your artwork.
3. Encourage students to discuss their artwork at home using this artist slip of information.
CONCLUSION
Can you picture Mary Cassatt, her sister, or a child wearing your beautiful hats? Hold your stylish hat up to your head for our Mary Cassatt fashion show! Mary Cassatt would be proud of you!

GUIDANCE
Watch the clock. This project takes the full amount of time!

This Concludes The Mary Cassatt Unit.