Analyzing Visuals

Objectives

Students will
- analyze style in paintings
- use academic vocabulary to describe style

Preteach

Connect to the Literary Skill

- Tell students that contrasting literary works by two authors on the same subject can help them analyze each author's style. An author's style is revealed in details such as sentence length and punctuation.
- Then, explain that students can also analyze details in two paintings of the same subject to determine each painter's style.

Direct Teach

Guided Practice

Artists' Styles

- Tell students that **Gilbert Stuart** (1755–1828) was one of the most famous portraitists of his time. His subjects included many early American leaders.
- Then, explain that **Alfred Maurer** (1868–1932) was influenced by a French painting style known as Fauvism.

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Literary Skills
- Analyze style.

Analyzing Visuals

How Can You Analyze Style in Paintings?

A writer's style is created by elements such as word choice and tone. A painter's style, on the other hand, is created by the use of line, color, shape, and use of light and shadow. As you compare these paintings, consider the elements and effect of each artist's style.

1. Is the subject of this painting depicted in a realistic or an abstract manner?

2. What are the dominant colors of the portrait? What mood do these colors evoke?

3. Gilbert was Washington's official portraitist. How is the style of this painting suited to a historical portrait?



George Washington (c. 1797), by Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828). Oil on canvas, (30" x 24").

Resources

Teacher One Stop™, on-level lesson plans and all print resources

Analyzing Visuals Transparencies, Collection 4

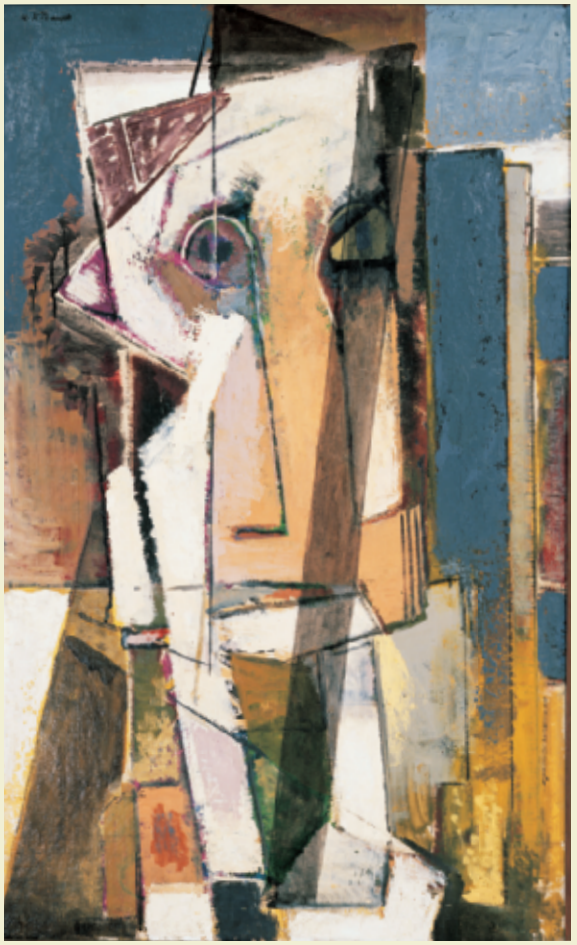
Differentiating Instruction

English-Language Learners

Help students acquire vocabulary to describe style by introducing them to the following terms:
- Write on the board the words *realistic, abstract,* and *expressive*.
- Underline the root words *real* and *express*. Explain that a *realistic* painting is one in which the subject appears real, or lifelike.
- Then, tell students that in an *expressive* painting, the painter tries to express, or show, a strong emotion.
- Point out that *realistic* and *abstract* are antonyms. An abstract painting does not portray a subject as it appears in life.

4. This painting, an example of cubism, breaks subjects into geometrical shapes. Is Washington portrayed realistically or abstractly?

5. What elements of the artist's style are most prominent? What is the effect of the painter's style?



George Washington (1932), by Alfred Maurer (1868–1932). Oil on composition board, (40" x 24"). Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Graaff. *Portland Art Museum*.

Analyzing a Painting's Style

Use these guidelines to help you analyze style in a painting.

1. Identify the painting's subject. Is the work realistic or abstract?
2. Study the composition. Is the work full of details or more spare? Is the subject close up or at a distance?
3. Observe the artist's color choices. Are the colors bright and vibrant? dark and muted?
4. Look at the lines in the painting. Are there sharp outlines, or do they blur into an image? Are the lines rough or fine? curved or straight?
5. Ask yourself, "How do these style elements help reveal the artist's purpose?"

Your Turn Write About Style

Study the two portraits of George Washington, and compare their styles. What does each painter's style reveal about his purpose? How do the artists' styles affect the mood and tone of each portrait?

Advanced Learners

Acceleration Have students work in small groups to research painting styles used in portraiture. Students may choose to focus on a particular artist or movement, or they may create a time line highlighting changes in portraiture throughout history. Invite students to share their research in brief oral presentations. Conclude by holding a whole-class discussion in which students compare and contrast their favorite painting styles.

Guided Practice

Style

Possible responses:

1. *The subject is painted in a realistic manner. The painting looks like George Washington.*
2. *Brown/black and white/gray create a solemn, or formal mood.*
3. *Stuart's style is suited to a historical portrait because it portrays the subject in a lifelike, dignified manner.*
4. *Washington is portrayed abstractly.*
5. *The most prominent elements are the geometric shapes and the use of color. This causes the viewer to see a well-known historical figure in a new way.*

Assess

Independent Practice

Your Turn

Alternative Listening and Speaking Assignment

Have students discuss the two portraits using as a framework the guidelines for Analyzing a Painting's Style. Then, have students share their analyses in a class discussion.