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IMPRESSIONISM

‘Impressionism’ was an artistic movement that drew inspiration from the simplicity of everyday life. The name **‘Impressionism’** was given by an art critic at the first exhibition of this art group in 1874. The artists of impressionism followed a style or movement in art concerned with the effect of light on objects. They came out of the studio to paint in open air, working quickly to create an impression of what they felt in visible universe. These artists attempted to capture freely and spontaneously the natural, ever changing effects of light and colour. Impressionism came to represent a major break between classical and modern painting. For impressionism, like most movements, was a rebellion against the conventional and academic standards, which in every age seem to have the support of the masses. Here, the artists were more attracted to subjects, such as rivers, pools, harbours, cityscape and human forms. Some of the pioneering artists of this movement were **Claude Monet, Eduardo Manet, Auguste Renoir and Edgar Degas.**

Post Impressionist was both an extension of impressionism and a rejection of their limitations. Though Post Impressionist continued the use of distinctive brush strokes applying vivid colours. The selection of subjects were from real life, but they gave more importance to geometrical forms or distorted forms to express feelings of their inner version. **George Seurat** and his followers concerned themselves with pointillism; the systematic use of tiny dots of colour. **Paul Cezanne** introduced a sense of volume and structure to painting, while **Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh** used colours and vibrant swirling brush strokes to convey their feelings and their state of mind.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, the learner should be able to:

- identify the main features of these art movements;

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WATER LILIES

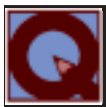
- differentiate the different stylistic approach of paintings done by impressionists;
- mention the style of enlisted artists;
- describe the formation of “**impressionism**”.
- state the pioneers of these Art Movements.

6.1 WATER LILIES

Title	–	" Water Lilies "
Artist	–	Claude Monet
Medium	–	Oil colours
Period	–	1899
Style	–	Impressionism
Collection	–	National Gallery, London

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Among the entire Impressionists, **Claude Monet** was the most dedicated and spontaneous artist to capture ever changing moods of nature. He was born in Paris on 14th November 1840. Most of his life, he travelled tirelessly seeking new settings and effects of nature to paint. He is widely regarded for his enchanting flower - landscape, river with boats, seascape and rock coast. He endlessly painted the wonderful water-garden which gave him his final great public recognition. In the series of “**Water Lilies**” in 1899-1900, the ‘Japanese Bridge’ across the pond acted as the central features of the paintings. In almost all these paintings the sky was barely absent but he freely painted its brilliant reflections in many vibrant colours to add extraordinary depth. The fresh blossomed **Lilies** of various sizes add to the beauty of the painting.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.1

1. Who did paint the "**Water Lilies**".
2. What is the style of **Monet's** technique?
3. What did **Monet** want to capture in his painting?
4. What is the role of sky in his paintings?



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MOULIN DE LA GALETTE



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6.2 MOULIN DE LA GALETTE

Title	-	Moulin de la Galette
Artist	-	Auguste Renoir
Medium	-	Oil on Canvas
Period	-	1876
Style	-	Impressionism
Collection	-	Musee De L'impressionnisme, Paris

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) was a French Artist. He painted '**Moulin de la Galette**' in 1876. The painting shows young people enjoying life, picnics, dance and party. **Renoir** was a creator of soft, sentimental and charming paintings. While painting he used his sharp observation to register the movement, atmosphere and images of Parisian society. He used shades of purple, white and blue tones to unite the modelling of figures dressed in fashionable clothes. He added delight and freshness in colour which sparkles life in his painting. His works show tenderness and harmony in perfectly balanced and pleasant compositions. **Renoir** prefers to paint group composition, portraits and female model studies. He was expert to communicate the impression of joy of life through his paintings.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.2

1. What is the name of the painter of **Moulin de la Galette**?
2. Mention the style of the painting **Moulin de la Galette**.
3. What was his preference in choosing a theme?
4. What do his works show besides pleasant composition?

6.3 DANCE CLASS

Title	-	Dance Class
Artist	-	Edgar Degas
Medium	-	Oil on Canvas
Period	-	1873-1876
Style	-	Impressionism
Collection	-	Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio (USA)

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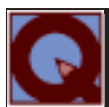
DANCE CLASS



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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The painting ‘**Dance Class**’ was created by a French painter **Edgar Degas** born in Paris, (Naples) in 1834. Unlike other impressionist **Edgar Degas** refused to paint from nature. He was interested mainly in human presence. Among his most notable achievements are his paintings of ballet dancers in frills skirts practicing, getting ready or just revolving around the stage. His off centred composition gave impression of spontaneity to capture gesture or a pose full of life. In most of his paintings he preferred to play with artificial light of the theatre, than to sunlight. His most favourite medium was pastel. Sometimes he used different mediums in the same picture or else he would superimpose coats of pastel in order to obtain transparencies between layers. Other than painting, **Degas** also took up sculpture to express rhythmic movements of dancers in real space.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.3

1. Why was **Degas** different from other impressionist painters?
2. Which medium of colours did he prefer to use?
3. Why did **Degas** make sculpture?
4. When did he paint "**Dance Class**"?

6.4 STILL LIFE WITH ONIONS

Title	-	Still Life with Onions
Artist	-	Paul Cezanne
Medium	-	Oil on Canvas
Period	-	1895-1900
Style	-	Post Impressionism.
Collection	-	Musee d’Orsay, Paris

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Paul Cezanne (1839-1906) was a post–impressionist who explored new means of expression. His paintings show simplification of natural forms. According to him everything in nature could be reduced to solid geometrical such as cone, cylinder, and cube. He tends to turn recognised or real forms into structural impression. Thus he was said to start ‘**abstract painting**’, which later gave birth to **Cubism**. He is known as ‘**Father of Cubism**’. Whether it was his still life, landscape, portrait, or familiar humble folk, all his paintings convey intense study of the selected

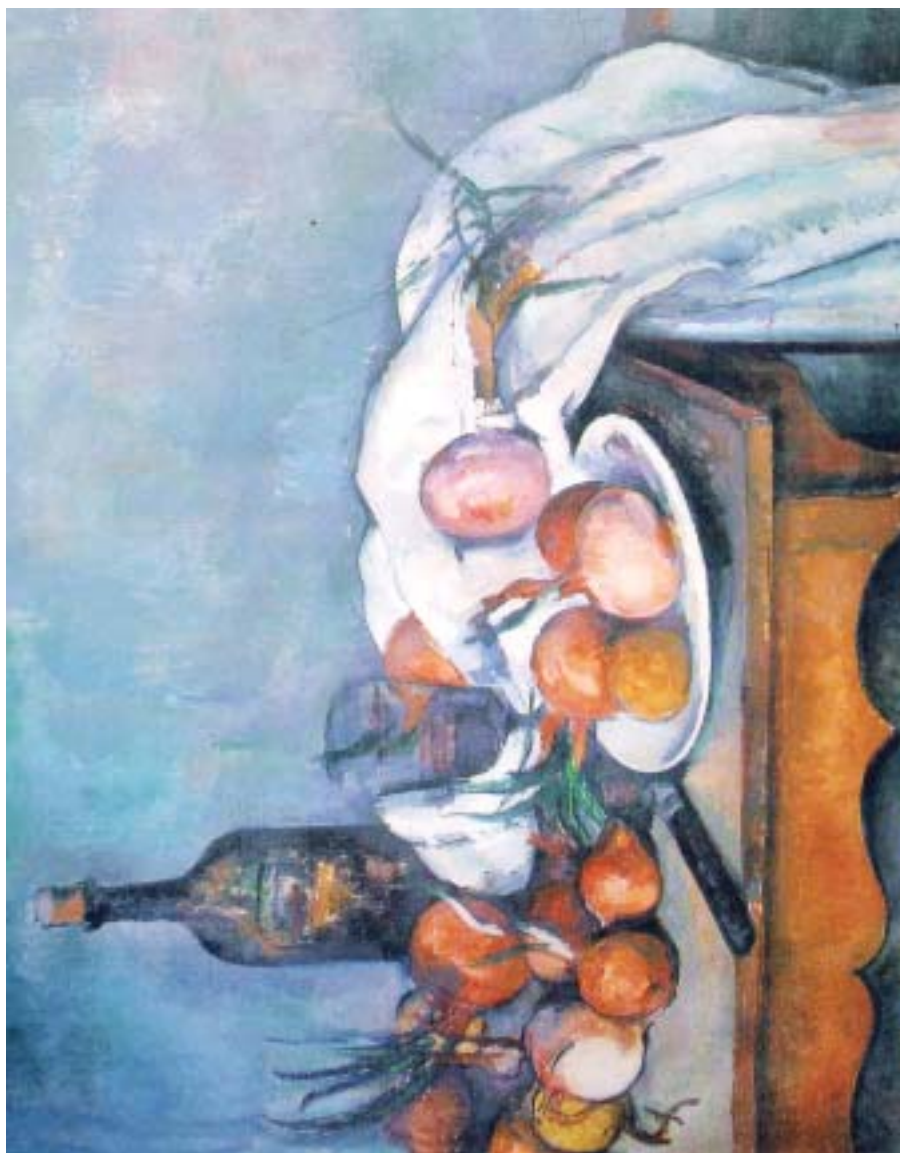
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STILL LIFE WITH ONIONS

subject. In his painting ‘**Still Life with Onions**’, he rendered forms by interpreting the light and shade of an object in varying tones of same colours. He used plane colour strokes to depict colour relations. His composition shows perfect vertical and horizontal breaks with interesting arrangement of three-dimensional forms in space. With the use of red and yellow, the vibration of light is reproduced, while sufficient quantity of blue and white drapery adds the feeling of air and space. **Cezanne** would be always regarded as the father of modern painting as his style forms the bridge between the late 19th century **impressionism** and the early 20th century **modernism** or **cubism**.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.4

1. What is **Cezanne**’s contribution to the development of ‘**Cubism**’?
2. Write two important features of his painting “**Still Life with Onions**”.
3. What is his style of painting?
4. Why is he regarded as "**Father of Cubism**"?

6.5 STARRY NIGHT

Title	-	Starry Night
Artist	-	Vincent Van Gogh
Medium	-	Oil colours
Period	-	1889
Style	-	Post Impressionism
Collection	-	National Gallery, London

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Vincent Van Gogh (1853 - 1890) was a Dutch painter. Though his life was full of miseries, poverty and discouragement, he was a dedicated painter. In all of **Van Gogh**’s paintings, colour carries greater importance than just the expression of the forms. He tends to depict natural scenes in terms of colours, not light and shade. In his painting ‘**Starry Night**’ there is a night sky filled with stars. His painting shows well balanced compositions with harmony of colours. The painting is composed with various elements like swirling cloud, glowing stars and a bright moon. In the background below the hills lies a small town with a church and small buildings. To the left of the painting there is a massive dark structure depicting top of an isolated cypress tree. The stars in the night sky are surrounded with their own orbit of light.

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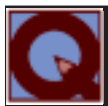


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STARRY NIGHT

This representation of the sky keeps the viewer's eyes moving about the painting, following the curves. His **Starry Night** seems to be a 'whirlpool galaxy' with bold pure slabs of blue and white oil colours. This study of night sky led to convey his own inner conflicts and sleepless nights. **Van Gogh** had an original vision to depict the simplicity and acuteness of expression. His other famous paintings that made him one of the most outstanding painter are **Sunflower, Potato Eater, Wheat Field** and **Cypresses, his own Self Portrait** and his **Own Bedroom**.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.5

1. What does carry most importance in **Van Gogh's** Painting?
2. To which country he belonged?
3. Mention some of his famous paintings.
4. What does "**Starry Night**" convey?



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

Impressionism symbolises an Artistic movement which tends to produce an effect to mark impression of a feeling or imagination. The Artists of Impressionism came out of the studio to paint in the open air, working quickly to create an Impression of what they saw. Some of the famous artists of this movement were **Monet, Manet, Renoir** and **Degas**. While Post-Impressionism was an extension of and rejection of limitation of Impressionism, they gave more importance to the inner feelings, sense of volume and use of vibrant colours. The pioneer of this movement was **Seurat, Gauguin, Cezanne** and **Van Gogh**.



TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What does Artistic movement **Impressionism** symbolises?
2. Write a short note on the painting '**Moulin de la Galette**'.
3. Explain **Van Gogh's** representation in the painting '**Starry Night**'.
4. Describe the painting '**Water Lilies**'.
5. Describe the painting "**Starry Night**" in few words.





Notes



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

6.1

1. Monet
2. Impressionism
3. Ever changing moods of nature
4. Barely absent.

6.2

1. Renoir
2. Impressionism
3. Group composition, portraits and female models.
4. Tenderness, harmony and balance.

6.3

1. His interest was in Human figures, not Nature as of other impressionists.
2. Pastel
3. To express rhythmic movement.
4. 1873-1876

6.4

1. Simplification of natural form into solid geometricals as cone, cylinder and cube.
2. Plane colour strokes, perfect horizontal and vertical composition, arrangement of three dimensional forms in space.
3. Post Impressionism.
4. His style forms the bridge between the late 19th century **impressionism** and the early 20th century **cubism**.

6.5

1. Colour
2. Holland

3. **Sunflower Potato Eater, Wheat Field and Cypresses.**
4. Conveys his own inner conflicts and sleepless night.

GLOSSARY

1. **Acuteness** - Reaching the extreme.
2. **Distinctive** - Different Characteristics
3. **Isolated** - Lonely, Cut off from the society
4. **Literally** - Exactly
5. **Pioneer** - A person who is the first to study and develop a particular area of knowledge, culture, etc.
6. **Spontaneity** - Occurring naturally.
7. **Swirling** - Pattern of twist or curl
8. **Transparencies** - A picture made visible by audio
9. **Whirlpool** - Swinging in circular motion in sea, etc.

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