

Nationalism and Romanticism Student Page

Introduction:

In the 19th century, artists and authors were moved by a spirit known today as “Romanticism.” As the name suggests, this was a spirit of intense emotions that were reflected in paintings, poetry, novels, and music. However, not all the emotions expressed in “romantic” art were positive. In this lesson, you will study four different works of art. You will see that the artists addressed very different kinds of themes in their work. Some of these works of art evoke intense positive emotions, while others evoke fear or even terror.

All Web links for this lesson can be found at:
<http://www.socialstudies.com/worldlinks.html>.

Directions:

J.M.W. Turner, *Vale of Ashburnham*

http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_image.aspx?image=ps145081.jpg&etpage=21577

1. What does this painting depict (show)?
2. How far into the distance does the horizon seem to recede?
3. Compare the enormous size of the landscape overall to the small size of the figures in the lower left. What feelings does this difference in scale evoke in you?

Jean-Louis-André-Théodore Gericault, *Evening: Landscape with an Aqueduct*

<http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/110000897>

4. Compare the relative size of the figures and the landscape in this painting. How is it similar to the scale of Turner’s *Vale*?
5. The figures in this painting seem to be alone in the evening. What mood does their solitude convey to you, the viewer?
6. Study the sky in the direction of the setting sun. Describe the way Gericault used light and color in this part of the painting. Notice the contrast with the righthand part of the sky. What emotional effect does his use of light and color have on you, the viewer?
7. Based on your study of Turner’s *Vale* and Gericault’s *Evening*, how do you think these artists felt about the landscapes they observed around them? How might these feelings have supported nationalist beliefs?

Eugene Delacroix, *Christ Asleep during the Tempest*

<http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/110000616>

8. Describe the appearance of the ocean and the sky. What colors did Delacroix use? What mood did Delacroix create by painting the ocean and sky in this way?

9. Describe the men in the boat (not Christ). What gestures are they making? What feelings does their body language communicate?

10. This painting is based on a biblical story. In the story, Christ awakens and scolds the men for doubting their safety; then he calms the lake's waters. While Christ can calm the lake, ordinary men cannot. What does this story suggest about the relationship of human beings to nature? How does this painting depict (show) this relationship?

Honoré Daumier, *Rue Transnonain, le 15 Avril 1834*

http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pd/h/honor%c3%a9_daumier_rue_transnonain.aspx

In the Romantic era, painters also dealt with political themes in their art. This lithograph shows a scene in Paris after riots on April 5, 1834.

11. Describe the scene in this lithograph.

12. What objects are in the lithograph? Where did this massacre apparently take place?

13. Based on your study of this lithograph, what would you say Daumier's opinion was of the soldiers who killed these people? How did he convey his point of view through his art?

14. Review the works of art you studied in this lesson and the ways in which you analyzed them. Choose ONE of the following options:

- Write a response to the following question: How do these works of art reflect the spirit of nationalism and/or the events of the 19th century?
- Write a response to the following question: Imagine that you are Turner, or Gericault, or Delacroix, or Daumier, and you have been asked to explain your work of art. What did you create and why? What effect do you hope your art will have on the people who view it? Include specific details from the image you are discussing.
- Write a response to the following question: Imagine that you are in one of these paintings. Identify which work of art you are thinking about, and which figure you are. Describe what you see, hear, smell, and experience. Include details from the work of art.
- Draw or paint your own "romantic" work of art. Choose a scene from nature, a

biblical or mythical story, or a political event. Create a work of art that conveys intense emotions—either positive or negative.