

# Art as Inspiration: Mini-Scheme of Work for Children

*With What Adults Don't Know About Art*

## OVERALL AIMS / CURRICULUM LINKS:

1. Understand what we mean by 'art'
2. Explore why art is important
3. Understand the value of art to health and happiness
4. Describe the ways that art can have personal meaning and impact
5. Promote creativity and imagination

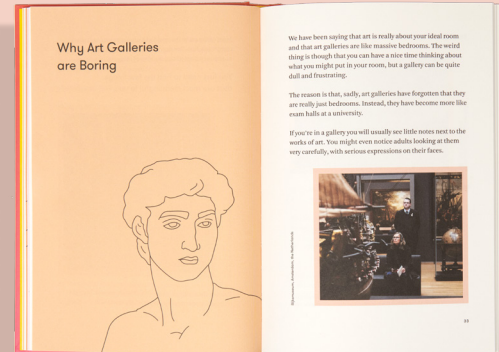
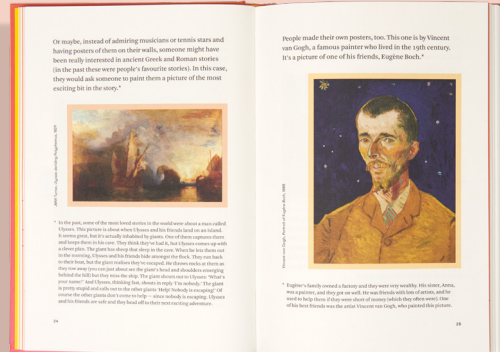


Supporting activities and ideas for Teachers & Students

*For use in the classroom or at home.*

Suitable for ages 8+





## What Adults Don't Know About Art: Inspiring Young Minds To Love and Enjoy Art

Everyone tells children that art matters — but the truth is that very often it's hard to know why it really does. Museum visits can feel like a chore as does having to learn the names of the big artists we're meant to love, but perhaps don't quite in the way we're supposed to. This is a huge pity because, grasped the right way, art has a deep capacity to improve our lives and offer us a sense of joy and wellbeing.

Here is a guide to art for children with a difference. In a tone that's kindly, informative, unstuffy and at times rightly irreverent, this book explains how art can fit into our lives. We learn where the impulse to make art comes from, what art to look at in certain moods, how to visit a museum without getting bored and why — without even realising it — we become experts in art by decorating our first bedrooms.

This is the ultimate guide to the importance of art, told in a way that will enchant children and teach their favourite adults one or two vital things as well.

Suggested for curious minds aged 8+.



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Identify the value of art; explore the ways that works of art can be seen as tools for the brain.
2. **ART HELPS US REMEMBER THINGS** with Degas ..... 7  
page reference: 50–52  
**OBJECTIVES:**  
Understand how art helps us remember special people, moments, scenes and feelings.
3. **ART HELPS US APPRECIATE THINGS AND PEOPLE** with Picasso .... 12  
page reference: 58–61  
**OBJECTIVES:**  
Identify how objects and people take on new meaning as pieces of art; understand the value of portraying the world around us.
4. **ART GIVES US HOPE** with Renoir ..... 16  
page reference: 78–89  
**OBJECTIVES:**  
Explore how art can ‘bottle happiness’; create a scene that preserves hope or happiness.

This Mini-Scheme of work can be used with children either at home or in the classroom. It includes material for between 4–6 lessons. The lessons can be completed in sequence or children can dip in and out of activities as they wish.

**NOTE:**

It is advised that teachers, parents or carers read through this Mini-Scheme and complete any tasks before students, to ensure that everyone is comfortable with its themes and activities.



# 1. WORKS OF ART ARE TOOLS

Pages 39–41

## BIG PICTURE:

*'The Wood Sawyers'* by Jean-Francois Millet.

- What can you see?
- What is happening?
- What or who does it remind you of?
- How does it make you feel?

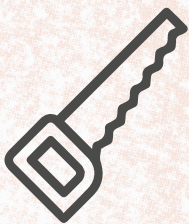




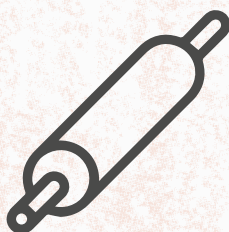
**START:**

The picture depicts two men sawing a large trunk while another is chopping trees in the background.

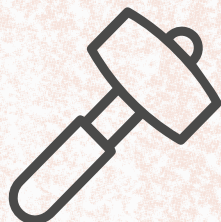
Ask students to draw, describe or present a 'tool' of their choice. Children might describe hand-tools such as the ones pictured below. Looking at the objects described and/or the images, ask them to consider the purpose of these tools.



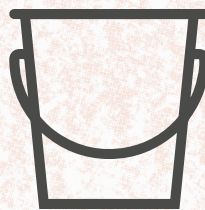
- What is it?
- What is it useful for?
- Why do we need it?



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'Our hands are really bad at carrying water, so people invented a tool – a bucket – to help us with the job.'

Page 39

Encourage students to see that we normally understand tools as objects that help our bodies to do things. How does Jean-Francois Millet explore this idea in 'The Wood Sawyers'?



**DEVELOP:**

There are other tools that don't necessarily help our bodies: they help our brains.

Can students match the different 'needs' below to the brain tools that fulfil them?

**Needs**

To know whether or not you're on time for the start of class.

To be able to remember all the items you need from the shop.

To figure out directions to an unknown location.

To work out difficult sums in a Maths exam.

**Brain Tools**

**CALCULATOR**

**MAP**

**CLOCK**

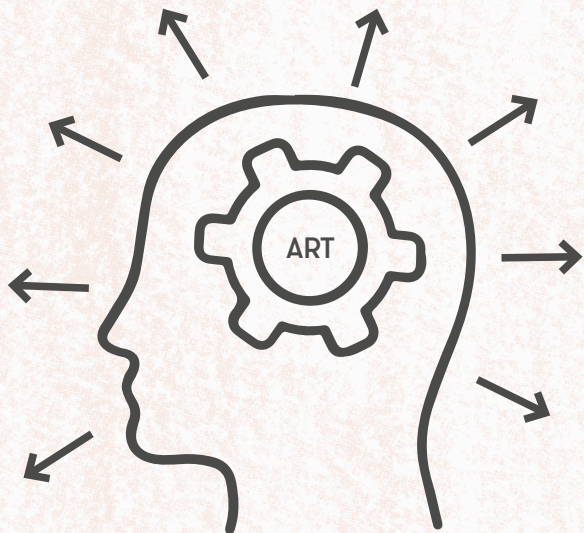
**SHOPPING LIST**

'Some of the most interesting and useful brain tools are actually works of art.'

Page 41



How might art be considered a brain tool? What different needs does art fulfil?

**CREATE:**

Use *'The Wood Sawyers'* by Millet as inspiration . . .

Encourage students to use the categories on the next page to develop their thinking about how art can also be a brain tool. Students can draw, write down single words or paragraphs, or create a collage to show their ideas.



Remembering

Appreciation

Hope

Sadness

Balance

Making sense of money



**DISCUSS**

- Which of these categories is most important to you or makes most sense to you? Why?
- If you were an artist, which category would be most important to you?
- How do you think art can be *inspiring*, based on what you've learned?

**REFLECT**

Ask students to think about how their opinions about art have changed. They might create two pictures side by side: one that represents their understanding of art before the lesson, and one that represents their understanding of art at the end of the lesson.



## 2. ART HELPS US REMEMBER THINGS

Pages 50–52

### BIG PICTURE:

'Beach Scene' by Hilaire-Germaine-Edgar Degas.

- What can you see?
- What is happening?
- What or who does it remind you of?
- How does it make you feel?





**START:**

A picture preserves a mood or a feeling.

Ask children to consider: what do they think the artist is 'remembering' in the painting? What mood or feeling is Degas 'preserving'? Students might want to use the categories below to organise their ideas.

People

Scenery

Activities

Mood

**DEVELOP:**

Memories can be good, bad, strange or funny – or a mixture of everything.

Encourage students to consider their own important memories by reflecting on the past or looking at photographs. In the boxes, they can write their ideas for each type of memory listed.



My happiest memory

My saddest memory

My strangest memory

My funniest memory



**CREATE:**

Use 'Beach Scene' by Degas as inspiration . . .

Encourage students to now choose one of the memories that they have considered and recreate it as a Work of Art.

Some ideas to focus on:

- **PEOPLE** how will the characters in the scene be depicted? Will you show their faces? Why or why not?
- **SCENE** how will the sights and sounds of the memory be evoked?
- **EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES** how can you plan the composition to show what is happening?
- **MOOD OR TONE** *how can you use colour to show different emotions?*



**DISCUSS**

- Why do you think people take photographs?
- Are photographs also works of art? Why or why not?
- Do you think you could paint or draw a feeling? How would you do this?

**REFLECT**

Ask students to imagine that they each have a 'mind cupboard' of their own. Inside their cupboards, they place all of the things they want to remember. Starting with this lesson, ask them to add some things to their mind cupboards. What would be good for them to remember today?



### 3. ART HELPS US APPRECIATE THINGS AND PEOPLE

Pages 58–61

#### BIG PICTURE:

'Tête de Taureau' by Pablo Picasso.

- What can you see?
- What is happening?
- What or who does it remind you of?
- How does it make you feel?





**START:**

Art is a tool to help our brains find ways of making things more exciting.

Looking at Picasso's '*Tête de Taureau*', ask students to consider what object they can see, and what it has been transformed into. How has the artist made an ordinary object much more exciting – even life-like or dangerous?

**DEVELOP:**

Art helps us to look closer at things, nature and people to see what is beautiful about them.

Ask students to choose an everyday object like Picasso's bike and present it to the class. As a group, consider the following questions about the objects that are presented:

- What or who does it resemble?
- What shapes and colours can you see?
- What will make it more interesting?
- How can it be transformed?



**CREATE:**

Use 'Tête de Taureau' by Picasso as inspiration . . .

Encourage students to create a drawing of an object of choice, transformed or elevated into something else to make it more interesting or to draw out its qualities. Before they begin, they might find it helpful to sketch and plan their ideas. Their challenge: to use the most boring object they can possibly imagine.

My everyday object

Transformed into...



**DISCUSS**

- 'Art can help you appreciate people and things'. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- 'Art can transform the most boring things and make them extraordinary.' Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- Do you think that in everyday life we really look carefully at things? What stops us from looking carefully?

**REFLECT**

Encourage students to think about the idea of looking carefully. Ask them to sketch an image of a leaf, from their memory. Then, ask them to look at a real leaf and draw it again. What are the differences between the two drawings?



## 4. ART GIVES US HOPE

Pages 78–89

### BIG PICTURE:

*'Luncheon of the Boating Party'* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir.

- What can you see?
- What is happening?
- What or who does it remind you of?
- How does it make you feel?





**START:**

Art is a tool for storing hopeful feelings and giving them back when we're feeling low.

- What feelings does the painting by Renoir 'store'?
- How might the painting help you when you're 'feeling low'?

**'Art can bottle happiness.'**

Page 80

Ask students to consider: if they were to 'bottle' happiness, what would that bottle look like? Encourage students to share their ideas by decorating their bottle templates with images, words or pictures to show how they think of 'happiness'.



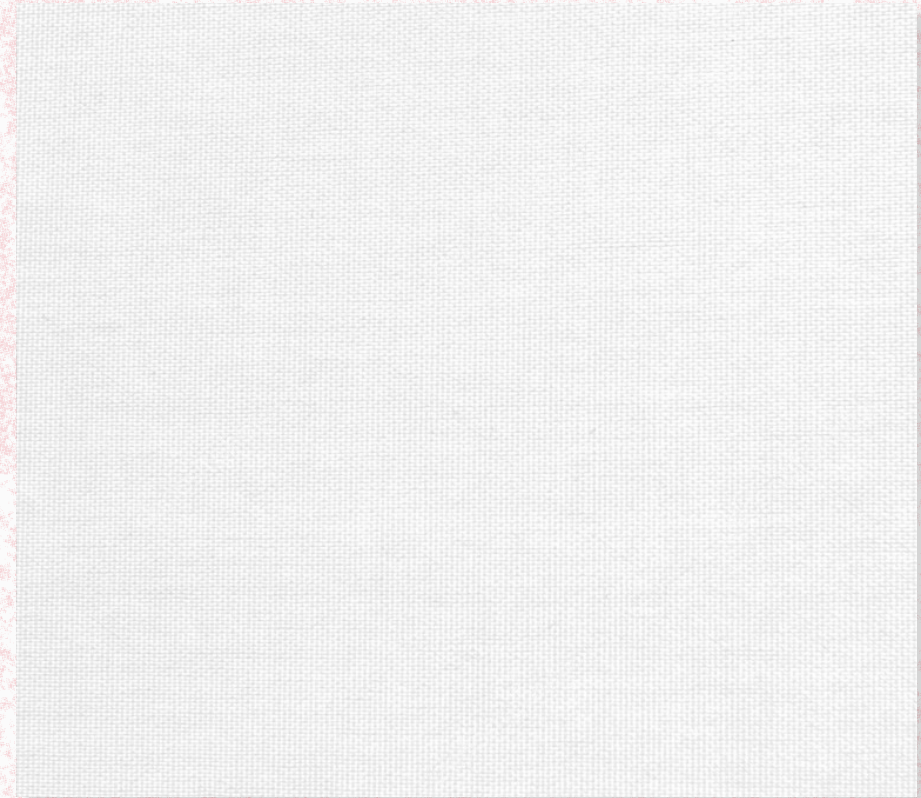
**DEVELOP:**

The idea that the desire to be hopeful comes from life's difficulties.

Bottling or 'freezing' happiness helps with life's ups and downs. We can only appreciate happiness if we also understand its opposite: sadness. To help children think about this idea, ask them to describe or sketch the opposite scene of Renoir's painting.



Original Scene: *Luncheon of the Boating Party*



Opposite Scene: .....



**CREATE:**

Use 'Luncheon of the Boating Party' by Renoir as inspiration . . .

Encourage students to think of a happy moment at home or during the school day. Using Renoir's image as inspiration, can they create a physical freeze-frame in groups to show all the different emotions of the scene?

Some ideas to focus on:

- **LEVELS** how can students use their bodies to show different levels of power or emotion in the scene?
- **BODY LANGUAGE** how can they use their bodies to show action?
- **FACIAL EXPRESSION** how can they use their facial expressions to show mood and emotion?
- **FOREGROUND/BACKGROUND** how can students show what is most prominent in the scene?

Take photographs of each freeze-frame and evaluate them. Which scenes 'store happiness' with the most success? Why?

**DISCUSS**

- What other emotions would you like to 'store'? Why?
- Some adults think that 'cheerful' art is not serious enough. Do you agree?
- 'The desire to be cheerful comes from knowledge of life's difficulties'. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?



**REFLECT**

Students can reflect on everything they have learned about art by creating Reflection Cards to complete and share.

Can students come up with their own Reflection Cards?

I am inspired .....

I wonder .....

Today I asked .....

Next time I visit an  
art gallery I will .....

I want to know  
more about .....

I am most  
interested in .....