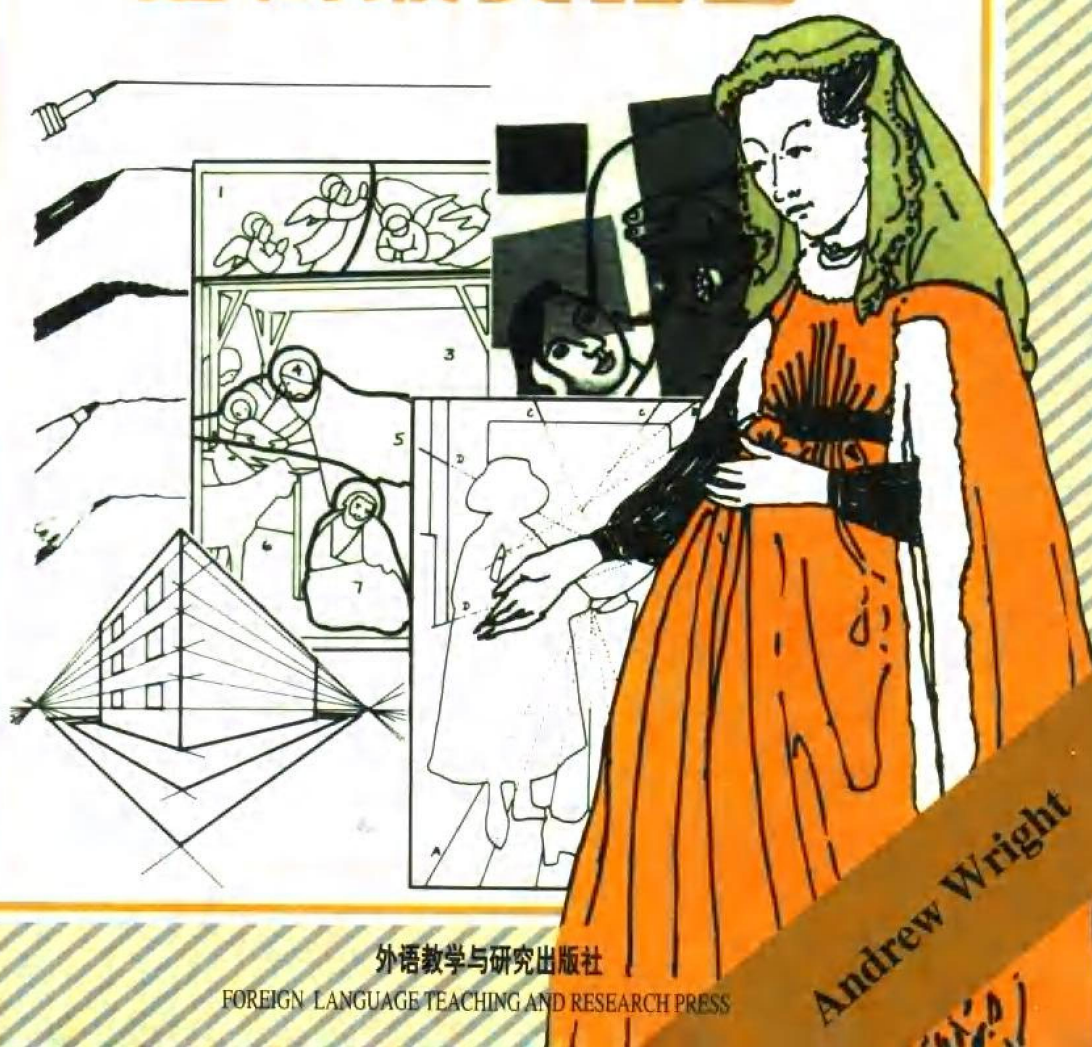


# How to ENJOY PAINTINGS

## 如何欣赏绘画



外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

Andrew Wright

(京)新登字 155 号

京权图字 01-97-0706  
图书在版编目(CIP)数据

如何欣赏绘画: 英文/(英)赖特 (Wright, A.) 著; 徐强注.  
- 北京: 外语教学与研究出版社, 1998. 5

ISBN 7-5600-1454-2

I. 如… II. ①赖… ②徐… III. 英语-语言读物 IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(98)第 12522 号

© Cambridge University Press 1986

This edition of *How to Enjoy Paintings* by Andrew Wright  
is published by arrangement with Cambridge University Press.

Licensed edition for sales in the People's Republic of China only.  
Not for export elsewhere.  
只限中华人民共和国境内销售 不供出口

04

### 如何欣赏绘画

Andrew Wright 著  
徐 强 注

\* \* \*

外语教学与研究出版社出版发行  
(北京西三环北路 19 号)

北京新华彩印厂印刷

新华书店总店北京发行所经销

开本 787×965 1/16 6.75 印张

1998 年 11 月第 1 版 1998 年 11 月第 1 次印刷

印数: 1-30000 册

\* \* \*

ISBN 7-5600-1454-2

H·822

定价: 11.90 元

93

## “How to”丛书出版说明

学习语言离不开阅读。对缺乏英语语言环境的中国英语学习者而言,广泛的阅读尤其重要。许多传统的英语阅读材料语言艰深,信息性局限,趣味性不高,往往与实际生活相脱节。读者很难从中直接获取生活的灵感从而提高自身素质。

为了使英语学习更富知识性和趣味性,使英语学习者由被动地接收信息到主动提高自身素质,外语教学与研究出版社与剑桥大学出版社合作推出了这套“*How to*”丛书。本丛书用简洁的英语,在轻松愉快的语言环境中就如何欣赏绘画、外出旅游、开发智力、与人交流、游戏娱乐等日常生活话题娓娓道来,并且配有大量活泼有趣的插图和著名绘画作品的图画。读者在通过阅读掌握活泼的当代英语的同时,也能丰富自身的生活常识,提高艺术欣赏水平,从而把所学知识直接付诸生活实际。而且,有生动精美的图片相伴,英语学习就不再只是生硬的记忆,也许您会惊喜地发现读英语变成了一件乐事,一种享受。衷心希望本丛书能助您早日达到这种境界。

---

CA1/04

# Contents

Thanks vii  
About this book viii  
Some thoughts about art ix

## Art is a selection of what we see and feel i

*Painting is language* i  
Many languages i  
Learning to see i  
Expression 2

## How to recognise illusions 3

*Some painters play with us* 3  
*Your mind searches for meaning* 5  
Try these experiments 6  
Can you recognise these drawings? 7  
*One thing at a time* 7  
*I thought she was real* ii

## How to understand the language of paintings 14

*Paint is your partner* 14  
Fresco painting and oil painting 14  
What can different pens and pencils do? 17  
Reproductions of paintings 18  
*Shape* 18  
The living shape 18  
Shapes people like 19  
The golden rectangle 20  
Which is the friendly house? 21  
Shapes show thoughts . . . even woolly thoughts! 25  
An artist's shapes 25  
The shape belongs to the object and to the artist 26  
*Lines people like* 27  
Taking a line for a walk 29

More walking lines 30  
*Space and volume* 30  
The grammar of depth 30  
Pictures with and without perspective 33  
Perspective 33  
Can you read depth? 37  
Into the picture or across the picture . . . or both? 38  
The grammar of volume 42

## *Tone* 45

## *Colour* 49

Some ways of using colour 49  
Helping people to recognise things 49  
Expressing feelings 49  
Directing attention 50  
Symbolising an idea 50  
Thousands of colours! 50  
Primary colours 51  
Secondary colours 51  
Tertiary colours 51  
Complementary colours 51  
Matisse loved colour 52

How other artists used colour 52  
Which colours do you like? 52

## *Design and composition* 53

The spot lives! 53  
Boring balance and interesting balance 54  
Giotto and Hokusai control your eyes 55  
Composition 55  
Six compositions 58

## How to read a picture 60

*Looking at pictures* 60  
Art doesn't improve . . . it changes 60  
France 62  
Greece 62

Rome	62	<b>How to judge a picture</b>	78
Germany	62	<i>Your collection of pictures</i>	78
England	62	Form and content in painting	78
France	63	Characterless forms	78
<b>A famous painting</b>	63	Is detail important?	78
Content of the picture	64	Isn't he clever?	79
Form in the picture	64	£7,200,000! Is it worth it?	80
How did he do it?	66	Here is one of mine!	81
<b>Modern art</b>	67		
One point of view?	68	Last thoughts	82
Different 'languages'	69	Answers	82
René Magritte	69	Acknowledgements	85
Jackson Pollock	71	Index of paintings	86
Henri Matisse	72		
Paul Klee	73		
Francis Bacon	74		
Fernand Leger	75		
Mark Rothko	76		



# Thanks

I would like to acknowledge my teacher of art at secondary school, Mr Clarence Helliwell, my teachers at the Slade School of Art in London and particularly Professor E.H. Gombrich who helped me to understand more about the language of painting.

I would like to thank Alison Silver, the editor of this series who has made a significant contribution to each book in terms of content and presentation. I would also like to thank Monica Vincent for her valuable advice, Peter Donovan for his support during the long period of writing and Peter Ducker for his concern for the design and typography. I am also grateful to the teachers and students of Nord Anglia for trying out samples of the texts and giving me useful advice for their improvement.

In a book of this kind one is naturally influenced by a large number of writers, lecturers, friends and acquaintances. However, I should like to acknowledge the following writers and their books in particular: J.M. and M.J. Cohen, *Modern Quotations*, Penguin; *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, Oxford University Press; *The International Thesaurus of Quotations*, Penguin; Ted Hughes, *Selected Poems 1957-1981*, Faber & Faber; E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, Phaidon; Rudolph Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception (New Version)*, University of California Press; R.W. Pickford, *Psychology and*

*Visual Aesthetics*, Hutchinson; Will Grohman, *Paul Klee*, Lund Humphries; Paul Klee, *Pedagogical Sketchbook* 1918, translated by Sibyl Moholy Nagy, Praeger; G.T. Buswell, *How People Look at Pictures*, Chicago University Press; Bernard Shaw, *Visual Symbols Survey*, Centre for Educational Development Overseas.

# About this book

*How to Enjoy Paintings* is one in a series of five books. There are five different chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of art and paintings; there are several different sections in each chapter. I hope you will find it all interesting, even entertaining, and that your reading of English will improve as well as your understanding and enjoyment of paintings.

- ★ Indicates that there is a question you should think about on your own.
- ★★ Indicates that if you are reading the book with another person you should talk about this particular question with him or her.

You may be reading the book while studying English in a class, with a teacher, or you may be reading it at home in the evenings, or on a train, or anywhere else – it doesn't matter!

What I do hope is that you enjoy reading about art and paintings – in English!

# Some thoughts about art

★ Do you agree with any of them?

*The carpenter is preferable to the artist.*

(Plato, c. 350 BC)

*You use a glass mirror to see your face: you use works of art to see your soul.*

(George Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah*, 1921)

*Art is meant to disturb. Science reassures.*

(George Braque, *Pensées sur l'art*, c. 1920)

*In art, as in love, instinct is enough.*

(Anatole France, *Le Jardin d'Epicure*, 1895)

*Thought that can merge wholly into feeling, feeling that can merge wholly into thought – these are the artist's highest joy.*

(Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*, 1913)

*He is the true enchanter, whose spell operates, not upon the senses, but upon the imagination and the heart.*

(Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, 1819–20)

*Art, like life, should be free, since both are experimental.*

(George Santayana, *The Life of Reason: Reason in Art*, 1905–6)

*The aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that a hundred years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life.*

(William Faulkner, *Writers at Work: First Series*, 1958)

*The world of sight is still limitless. It is the artist who limits vision to the cramped dimensions of his own ego.*

(Marya Mannes, *More in Anger*, 1958)

*If you ask me what I came to do in this world, I, an artist, I will answer you: 'I am here to live out loud.'*

(Emile Zola, *Mes Haines*, 1866)





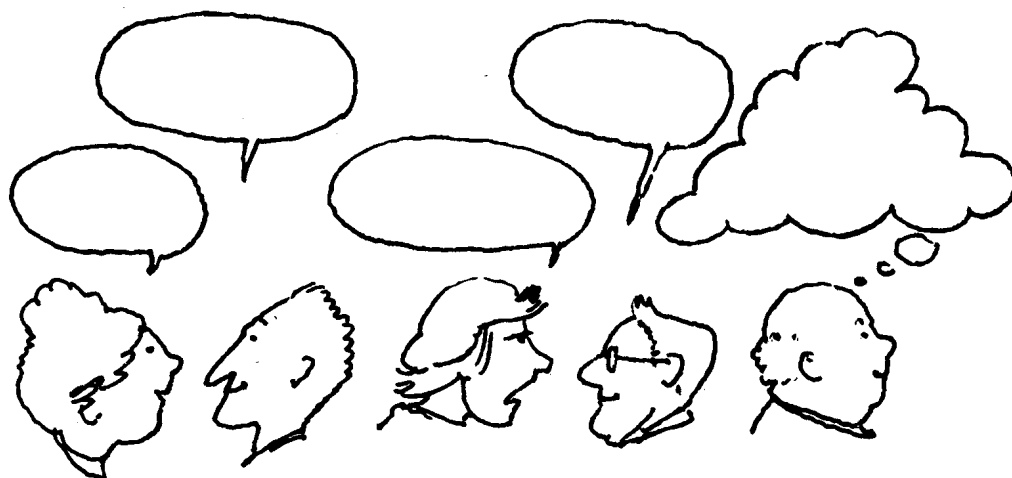
*Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669) Detail of  
'The Artist's Son Titus'  
See page 43 for the complete picture.*



*After Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)*

# Art is a selection of what we see and feel

## Painting is language



When we speak and when we write we represent ideas and feelings with words. In painting, ideas and feelings are represented by paint; by colour, shape and line, etc. Painting is language.

pictures, painted at different periods in history and by very different people, so many of these are very different from each other.

## Many languages

There are many different languages in the world. There are the traditional languages of the many countries and cultures (in the United Nations headquarters you might hear up to 290 different languages!), and there are the special languages of scientists, sports lovers and others.

There are just as many styles of painting in the world. In the National Gallery in London there are about 450



## Learning to see

We have to learn to understand and to speak a language. In the same way, we have to learn to understand a style of painting before we can begin to appreciate all its qualities . . . and what the artist is trying to say to us.



Babies have to learn to see and then learn to understand what they see. Seeing and understanding are not like breathing! They are not instinctive. When blind people have an operation in hospital they have to learn to see. At first everything is just a wild pattern of colours and light. They have to learn to see the information which tells them about how near objects are. They have to learn to associate the shape of a cat with what they have previously known through sound, touch and smell!

We are learning to see all the time. Someone who is learning to drive a car may see as much as the other road users, but they may not understand what is important. An experienced car driver has learnt to understand what he or she sees.

### Expression

Here are the first two verses of a poem  
\* by Ted Hughes.

#### *The Thought Fox*

I imagine this midnight moment's forest:  
Something else is alive  
Beside the clock's loneliness  
And this blank page where my fingers  
move.

Through the window I see no star:  
Something more near  
Though deeper within darkness  
Is entering the loneliness:

Ted Hughes is describing how an idea comes to his mind as he sits at midnight in front of his typewriter. He might have written, 'A thought slowly came into my mind.' But his poetry gives us a much richer feeling of the place and the time and the mysterious way in which ideas come to us. His language has form (rhyming or near rhyming, contrasting sounds, rhythm, alliteration, etc.) and Hughes illustrates his ideas with rich and moving details and metaphors.

Painting is like poetry: it has form. This form can be used to represent things we recognise, but it can also be used to express ideas and feelings in the same way as poetry.

This book is about the language of painting. It is an introduction to the ways in which artists have used visual forms; shape, colour, tone, line and composition to represent people, animals, objects and scenes and to express ideas and feelings about them.

Nearly all the examples of paintings given in this book are Western. This is not because I don't value Eastern art, it is because I am more familiar with Western art.

Most recognised artists in the past have been men. For this reason I have used the pronoun 'he' throughout.

This is a personal book rather than an academic book. I am a writer and a painter and I have recorded in the book some of the ideas I think are interesting . . . and I hope very much that you do too!

# How to recognise illusions

## Some painters play with us



\* William Hogarth (1697–1764) 'The Frontispiece to Kirby's Perspective' (British Museum, London)

Hogarth was the first English painter to be famous on the continent of Europe. He was famous for his humour and he used it to comment on English society. Hogarth believed that painting is a language and he produced his

own 'grammar' of visual forms. (Paul Klee, 200 years later, also produced a grammar of visual forms.) The picture reproduced here is Hogarth's examination of the 'grammatical' rules of perspective and what can go wrong if the rules aren't followed. (See also page 33 for more ideas on perspective.)

William Hogarth's picture looks quite natural. We assume that we can look at it and understand it just as we might look at a real country scene and understand what we see. But it isn't a real scene, it is a picture and is in one of the languages of painting. Language can be used to deceive, and Hogarth has shown 14 things which could not happen.

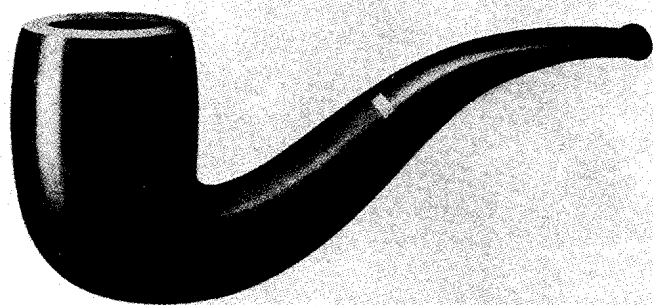
★ How many can you recognise? (They are listed on page 82.)

If you have found more than two or three it is because you are familiar with the style of picture which Hogarth has used. If you have found more than ten you are a fluent reader of pictures! If you haven't found anything wrong with the picture it is because you are not absolutely familiar with this particular language of painting.

We usually expect objects to appear to be smaller and higher up the picture when they are in the distance. In this picture, however, Hogarth has drawn the sheep higher up the picture but he has made them bigger rather than smaller than the sheep which are lower down.

('Ceci n'est pas une pipe' means 'This is not a pipe'.) Magritte, who painted this picture, lived and worked in Belgium. His paintings look real for a moment, then you realise you are being tricked. And he wants you to realise that you are being tricked! He wants us to realise that we don't understand reality very well.

Notice how Magritte has used a neat 'school teacher's' handwriting. Teachers give information about the



*Ceci n'est pas une pipe.*

- \* René Magritte (1898–1967) 'The Treason of Images' (Los Angeles County Museum of Art) The title of Magritte's picture shows us part of what he thought of pictures! He used a
- \* 'naturalistic' style to make the deception more obvious. Plato preferred a carpenter to a painter because a carpenter makes 'real' objects; but

Magritte wanted to show that there is no solid reality in either paintings or in real objects.

Magritte lived all his life in a suburb of Brussels. He looked like an 'ordinary' man and he lived in an ordinary suburb. But his 'ordinary' appearance was a deception too . . . he was a genius!

world to their students. But for a surrealist painter like Magritte, this information may be wrong! What is real? The painting is there, we can touch it. (We can touch the page in this book.) But the pipe is not there; it is only a picture of a pipe. So the sentence, 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe', is true. And yet . . .

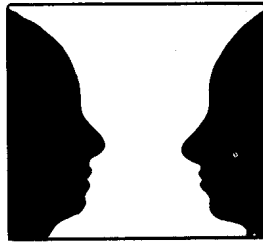
## **Your mind searches for meaning**

Your mind wants to find shapes and recognise depth, but it is also desperate to recognise things! It searches for things to recognise and to name. And once it has recognised something it doesn't want to change.

★ What can you see in this picture? A big vase? Yes. Two trees? Well done! What else can you see?

Do you mean that you can't see four faces? This picture secretly showed the

portraits of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette of France. There are also two other faces, one of whom may be their son, the Dauphin. It was, of course, very dangerous to be a supporter of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette: their heads were cut off in 1793.



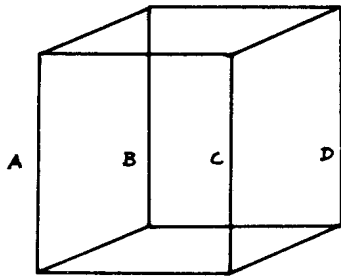
Can you see the vase *and* the two faces? If you can, good! But it is very difficult to see the vase and the two faces at the same time. We look. We try to recognise and when we have recognised something we don't want to change our minds!



*After a Royalist print from the French Revolution (c. 1793)*

## Try these experiments

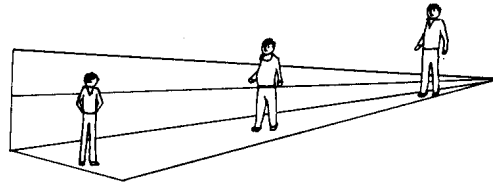
Are these lines flat on the paper or do they make a 'box of space'? Is line B in front of line C or behind line C? Are we looking under the box or on top of the box?



- ★ Can you see both boxes? It is difficult. The mind makes a decision about 'the truth' and then it won't change!
- ★★ Show this picture to your friends and discuss it with them. You will find how unhappy people are to accept that it is possible to see the picture quite differently.



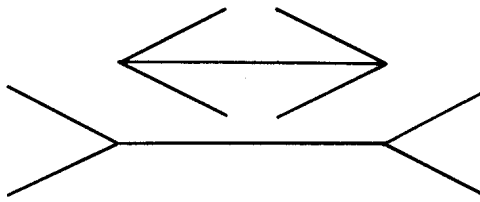
Your mind learns to 'read' lines and shapes. Unfortunately, it can make mistakes! You might be absolutely sure you are right but be absolutely wrong!



- ★ Which is the tallest man? Most people think that the man on the right is the tallest. He is not the tallest. They are all the same height! Measure them!

You have learned that lines which come together and meet at a point are going into the distance . . . not across the paper. And you have learned that people in the distance look smaller than people near you. The man on the right is drawn as big as the man on the left. He seems to be in the distance because of the lines. So you think he is a giant!

This drawing is called an 'optical illusion', a false belief of the eye. There are a lot of optical illusions. Here is another one:



They are not just funny tricks. These illusions show us that our minds have to interpret the information they receive. We have to learn to see and understand and we can be wrong.

Most artists want us to recognise what they are describing and expressing. However, Hogarth and

Magritte wanted to remind us that paintings are paintings and not what they represent.

### Can you recognise these drawings?

Several hundred people in Kenya were shown the drawings below. They were asked to say what the drawings represent. 272 of the people lived in towns and were educated. Another 297 lived in the country; they hadn't been to school and they were illiterate. Try to 'read' the pictures yourself. See if you have any difficulty.

★ Is this a hoe or a man?



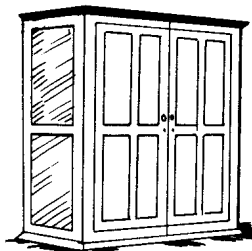
93% of the 272 people in the towns gave the correct answer. It is a hoe! However, 131 people out of the 297 who lived in the country gave the wrong answer or didn't know what to say. They knew what a hoe is but they couldn't recognise this drawing of one. Some of them thought it was an axe (perhaps they couldn't see that the blade is at right angles to the shaft). Some people thought it was a man walking along a road.

★ Can you recognise a hole?



Only 44% of the people interviewed recognised that this drawing represents a hole. Not a single person who hadn't had a school education recognised it!

★ A cupboard, a church or a school?



86% of the town people recognised this drawing as a cupboard. But in the country only 14% people gave the correct answer. The drawing was named as a church or a school. Some people only saw doors.

Was it difficult for you to read any of the pictures? The country people may never have seen a cupboard like the one in the drawing. And perhaps you are not familiar with the hoe? Did you have a problem for this reason? The survey shows that we have to learn to 'read' pictures just as we have to learn to read words.

### One thing at a time

★ Look at an object in front of you, perhaps a book or a pen or some paper. Look at the object for a few seconds. Are there any colours in the object?

Look again. Is the object worn or damaged in any way?

Look again. Is there any light reflected on it?

When you looked at the colour you didn't think about any worn or damaged parts. You chose what you wanted to see. Or rather, you chose what you wanted to think about from what you saw.

Your eye can't see everything. It



records only a very small part of the complicated world in front of it. Then your mind thinks about a very small amount of the information your eye is recording.

I have told you what to look at. Usually you *choose* what to look at. You choose what interests you at the moment. If you are hungry you will only look for a café or restaurant. If you are interested in architecture you will see the shapes of windows or roof decoration when someone else in the  
\* same street will see Volvos and Mercedes.

Our feelings affect how we see: if we are happy or sad we will see different

things or we may see the same things but in a different way.

What about you?

★★ If you are with some friends at the moment ask them what they notice about the place you are in. Or choose a time when you have all been together and ask them to tell you what they remember seeing. (Perhaps going into a class together in the morning.)

The artist also sees what interests him or her. Monet was interested in light and colour and so that is what he painted. Canaletto was interested in architectural detail.



\* Claude Monet (1840–1926) 'The Thames Below Westminster' (National Gallery, London)

\* Monet was one of the French Impressionist painters. He loved light and colour. He visited London twice and painted this picture of the Houses of Parliament in 1900. Note how the dark tone of the sky makes the water seem light.

Monet wanted a strong two dimensional design for his picture: note how he divided the picture up by the line of the bridge and Westminster and by the roadway on the right. The division of about two thirds for the sky, the use of horizontal shapes and the quiet tones give the picture a very still feeling.