



Year 4 Autumn B- Space

Lesson Series:

1. Introduction to space and dimensions
2. Exploring space in painting: foreground, middle ground and background
3. Identifying foreground, middle ground and background
- 4/5. Creating foreground, middle ground and background
6. Using colour and detail to show depth

Name: _____

Class: _____



Lesson 1.

Introduction to space and dimensions



Still Life with a Chocolate Pot, 1900

When the French artist **Henri Matisse** (1869- 1954) married his wife Amélie, the couple received a beautiful silver chocolate pot as a wedding present. Many of Matisse's **still lifes** of this period feature the silver pot, including this oil sketch.

Matisse paid great attention to the **three-dimensionality** of the objects, as well as the effects of **light and reflection**, which highlight the chocolate pot, the orange, and the leather-bound book. Artists can make what they depict look **three-dimensional**, despite working in **two-dimensions**, by creating an illusion of **depth**. Note how Matisse has used differences in **tone** to create the illusion that something is **three-dimensional** despite working in **two-dimension**.

Other examples of 3D still lifes in oil pastels.



Lesson 2.

Exploring space in painting: foreground, middle ground and background



This painting, **The Gleaners** by **Millet** (1857), shows how painters use **foreground, middle ground and background** to create an illusion of **depth**. The painting shows three peasant women gleaning. This means that they were collecting the stray bits of wheat after the harvest for their own use.

To create **depth** in this painting, Millet has made his subjects (the women) **larger** and more **detailed** in the **foreground** and the objects in the **background less detailed and smaller**, to show they are further away. In this way artists create an **illusion of depth of space** in a painting. Note how you can see in the foreground individual blades of wheat, whereas in the background we cannot see such detail.

Lesson 3.

Identifying foreground, middle ground and background

The Dutch painter **Bruegel the Elder** (1525-69) painted **The Peasant Wedding (1567)**. It is a good example of how **depth** has been created (the distance from the front to the back).

The **foreground** refers to the area closest to the viewer, which will almost always be in the lower section of the painting. This area will contain the most **detail and brightest colours**. Find the young boy at the bottom of the painting licking his fingers. He is more detailed than the people at the back of the painting.

Detail and colour intensity will both fade as you look towards the **background**. This dulling of colour and decreasing of detail creates the effect of depth in the room. Also note how the people in the **foreground are bigger** than the people in the **background** of the painting. This is called **foreshortening** and gives you the illusion that the **larger images are closer**.



The Peasant Wedding (1567) by the Dutch painter Bruegel the Elder.

Lesson 4 and 5.

Creating foreground, middle ground and background



Hunters in the Snow (1565) by the Dutch painter Bruegel the Elder.

Here are some great ideas for creating **depth** within a painting. We see more detail in the things that are closest to us. Plants and trees don't have to be very far away before we no longer see every leaf individually. So paint more detail in the **foreground**, less in the **middle distance** and only suggest it for the **background**.

Things further away look smaller than things close to us. By placing a figure or a tree, it instantly gives the viewer something to measure the rest of the elements against, a sense of **scale and distance**. Our brains automatically scale the rest of what's in the painting to this.

Hard edges (or **found edges**) seem closer because they're sharply defined, whereas soft (or lost) edges seem further away.

Lesson 6. Using colour and detail to show depth



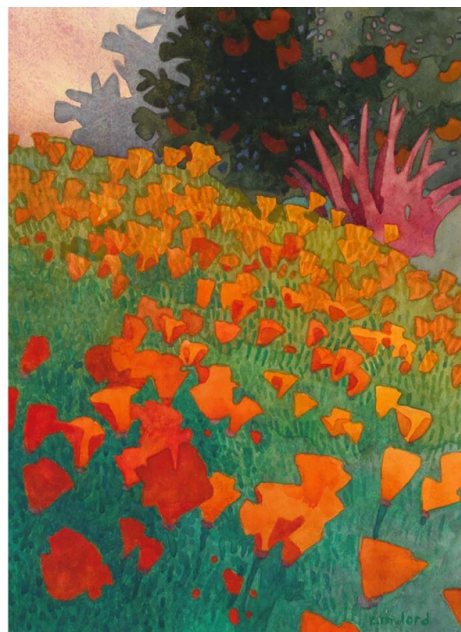
Bonneville, Savoy, with Mont Blanc, 1803 by Joseph Turner

Artists often use stronger, darker colours and more detail in the foreground of a painting. The background will use lighter, more washed out colour and less detail. Turner's landscape painting *Bonneville, Savoy, with Mont Blanc* (1803) is a good example of this.

Artists will also consider colour temperature (warm and cool colours). Warmer colours will appear to come forward and cool colours seem to stay in the background. Many artists will experiment with colour. Modern artist Carol Lord, suggests that from a colour perspective, yellows sit in front of reds and reds in front of blues. Therefore it is worth taking time to experiment with colour when creating depth within a painting.



Sunshine Dahlias, Watercolor, Carolyn Lord



California Poppies by the Orange, Watercolor, Carolyn Lord