



Lesson 6: Building Portraits — Interior and Exterior

This lesson explores how buildings can be represented by two-point perspective in paintings.

Support material: Worksheet C4, Information Sheet 25 “Shapes in Buildings” and Information Sheet 28 “Two-point Perspective”. A selection of slides (see Note below).



Spotlight

Two-point perspective



Key Concepts

Creating the illusion of solidity

Review of work

- Discuss the new terms which students learned in Lesson 5.
- Discuss how one-point perspective works.

Discussion — Two-point Perspective

Note: A wide variety of paintings with architectural themes can be used to introduce the concept of two-point perspective. The following images are well documented in art books. Your school’s art teacher should have slides of these images, but other images showing buildings or interiors in two-point perspective will do equally well.

Interior views

- *Bedroom at Arles — Vincent van Gogh*
- *The Chair and the Pipe — Vincent van Gogh*

Exterior views

- *Les Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, also known as The Book of Hours — Limbourg Brothers*
- *Rouen Cathedral— Claude Monet*
- *Drawings and prints of Dublin — James Malton*
- *Lucan House — Thomas Roberts (National Gallery)*
- *Military Manoeuvres — Richard Thomas Moynan (National Gallery)*

1. Everything we look at has perspective, not just roads and railway lines. Perspective, however, is not always this obvious. Some pictures and scenes may have more than one vanishing point. This usually happens when there is more than one view of an image — as with two sides of a house or of a piece of furniture. This is called two-point perspective.

Project one selected painting onto a large piece of white paper/board and using a ruler/marker, map out the direction of perspective lines in the painting.



2. Buildings have been an important part of the human environment for thousands of years. This is reflected in the many paintings in which buildings are important features. Long before photography was invented in the 19th century, paintings were the only visual way of recording property. Wealthy landowners with great estates often commissioned an artist to paint their grand houses and surrounding lands. Later, artists painted buildings simply to express their own delight and appreciation of architecture. The National Gallery of Ireland houses a fine collection of such paintings.

Project the remaining slides you have chosen and continue the discussion. These questions can be adapted to suit the slides.

- What type of building is this?
- When might it have been built?
- What might it have been used for?
- What kind of people would have used it or commissioned its construction?
- How would you describe the style in which it has been designed? (Look back at Information Sheet 25 “Shapes in Buildings”.)
- What materials do you think were used in its construction?
- Why do you think this picture was painted?
- What medium was used to paint it?
- How was the artist able to represent the building as a 3-dimensional form on a 2-dimensional surface?



Activity — Drawing with two-point perspective

Distribute and discuss Information Sheet 28, “Two-point Perspective”.

Students should complete any one of the following activities.

1. Find an object in your school bag or in the classroom — a pencil sharpener/sweet packet/walkman/wallet etc. Make a two-point perspective drawing of it.
or
2. Using two-point perspective, make a drawing of the paper cube/rectangular cuboid or the pyramid constructed in Lesson 4.
or
3. Using two-point perspective, make a drawing of an item of furniture in the classroom.
or
4. Using two-point perspective, make a drawing of one of the school buildings from observation.

Homework — Worksheet C4

This is a research assignment which may need a number of days to complete. Discuss the requirements with the class. Then negotiate an appropriate deadline for completing the work.



Scrapbook and Vocabulary File

Remind students to check Worksheet C4 for their assignments.



Cross-Curricular Connections

1. Art — Make a drawing of an important old building in your community.
2. Art — Select one of the artists studied in class and explore the media and painting techniques used by him/her.
3. Art/Technical Drawing — Using an art book as a reference, make a drawing of a building designed by a Renaissance architect.
4. Model-making — Make a model of the interior space represented in one of the paintings you have looked at in class, or in a painting which you like. Put some miniature human figures in it.
5. History/Art — Collect copies of sketches, paintings, views and photos of buildings in your community in the past.
6. Art/Psychology — The artist Fernand Leger said that “Colour is a human need, like water and fire. It is a raw material indispensable to life.” Investigate the truth of this statement.
7. Mathematics/Aesthetics — For centuries, in trying to understand beauty, people have made a serious study of what makes “the perfect ratio”. Use one of the following questions as the starting point of an investigation into proportion in buildings.
 - The ratio 1:1.618 has fascinating qualities. Who first noticed this? What is this ratio called? How does it relate to the “Golden Rectangle”?
 - Can you find any relationship between the “Golden Section” and this sequence of numbers: 1 1 2 3 5 8 13 21 34 55 89 144?