Academic Content Standards
Grades K–12: English Language Arts (Writing): Writing Processes
Grades K–12: English Language Arts (Writing): Writing Applications
Grades k–12: English Language Arts (Writing): Communication: Oral and Visual

Common Core Standards
Grades K–5: Writing: Text Types and Purposes
Grades K–5: Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing
Grades K–5: Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
Grades K–5: Language: Conventions of Standard English
Grades K–5: Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
Grades 6–12: Writing: Text Types and Purposes
Grades 6–12: Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing
Grades 6–12: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration
Grades 6–12: Language: Conventions of Standard English
Grades 6–12: Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

The subject of this work by Claude Monet is his wife, Camille. He captures an image of her through a window during a fleeting moment in time. Use this painting to have students start their own stories. What does Camille see through the window? Where is she going? What will she do?

Leaving the Oasis, 1880s. Jean-Léon Gérôme (French, 1824–1904). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Noah L. Butkin 1977.126

Ask students to imagine they are a character in this painting. Have them write or tell a story in the first person point-of-view. Where are they going in the desert heat? Who are the people traveling with them? What will they do when they reach their destination?


Tissot painted a series of works to illustrate the months of the year. What is the setting in this painting? Ask your students to describe the environment in writing. Have them pretend the reader will not be able to see this artwork and try to appeal to all of the reader’s senses.


This work by Degas captures multiple views of one dancer. Have students use each of these views to create a character for a story. Who is this dancer? What is she thinking? What is she feeling? What can you tell about her from each angle?


Look at the little boy resting in this painting. Imagine that he is dreaming. Work together as a class to describe what’s happening in his dream. Have each student in the class come up with an adjective, and work each of those descriptive words into the class’s story.

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Adeline Ravoux, 1890. Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853–1890). Bequest of Leonard C. Hanna Jr. 1958.31

Van Gogh illustrates Adeline Ravoux, the 16-year-old daughter of an innkeeper, in this work. Discuss with the students what Adeline may be thinking. What is she feeling? Why do they think that? How do the colors of this work influence their responses?