Name: _____ Date: _____

Chiaroscuro: Painting with a Spotlight

Circle group

Picture a face glowing in the dark. It is lit from one side, as if by a candle. Painters have done this for hundreds of years. The way has an Italian name, chiaroscuro. It joins two older words that mean light and dark.

In a painting, chiaroscuro means strong bright spots and deep shadows. A flat shape does not look solid. If one side of an arm is bright and the other is dark, it looks round. Artists call this modeling.

Caravaggio worked in Italy around the year 1600. Rembrandt worked in the Netherlands a little later. Both were famous for this style. Their scenes often have a nearly black background. A beam of light falls on the key part, such as a face or hands. Your eyes go right to it.

Light can tell a story too. A bright spot may show hope. A dark corner may show that something is hidden. Try it at home. Put a lamp by a pear in a dim room. The shadow side turns deep, and the bright side stands out.

Questions

1. What does chiaroscuro mean?

_____

_____

2. What do artists call making a flat shape look round?

_____

_____

3. Where did Caravaggio work?

_____

_____

4. What kind of background do the scenes often have?

_____

_____

5. Why do your eyes go to the lit part of the picture?

_____

_____

6. How can light and dark help tell a story?

_____

_____

Words to know

chiaroscuro: a painting style that uses strong light and deep shadow
shadow: a darker area where light is blocked
modeling: using light and shade to make a flat shape look round

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Chiaroscuro: Painting with a Spotlight

Triangle group

Imagine a face glowing in the dark, lit from one side as if by a single candle. Painters have created that effect for hundreds of years, and the technique has an Italian name, chiaroscuro. The word joins two older words that mean light and dark.

In a painting, chiaroscuro means using strong differences between bright areas and deep shadows. A flat shape on a canvas does not look solid. When one side of a cheek or an arm is bright and the other side fades into shadow, it begins to look round, as if you could reach out and touch it. Artists call this modeling.

Two painters famous for the style are Caravaggio, who worked in Italy around the year 1600, and Rembrandt, who worked in the Netherlands a little later. Their scenes often have a nearly black background. A beam of light falls on only the most important part of the picture, such as a face or a pair of hands. Your eyes go right to that spot.

Light can also tell a story. A bright spot may suggest hope, or a dark corner may hint that something is hidden. You can try the same idea at home. Set a lamp beside a pear on a table in a dim room, and notice how the shadow side turns deep and the bright side stands out.

Questions

1. What does the word chiaroscuro mean?

_____

_____

2. What do artists call the effect that makes a flat shape look round?

_____

_____

3. Where did Caravaggio work?

_____

_____

4. What kind of background do many chiaroscuro scenes have?

_____

_____

5. Why do viewers look first at the lit part of the picture?

_____

_____

6. How can light and dark help a painting tell a story?

_____

_____

Words to know

chiaroscuro: a painting style that uses strong light and deep shadow
technique: a special way of doing something
canvas: the cloth surface that many artists paint on
shadow: a darker area where light is blocked
modeling: using light and shade to make a flat shape look round

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Chiaroscuro: Painting with a Spotlight

Square group

Imagine a face glowing out of the darkness, illuminated from one side as though by a single candle. Painters have produced this dramatic effect for hundreds of years, and the technique carries an Italian name, chiaroscuro, which combines two older words meaning light and dark.

In a painting, chiaroscuro refers to the deliberate use of strong contrasts between brilliant highlights and deep shadows. A flat shape on a canvas does not look solid by itself. When one side of a cheek or an arm is bright while the other side fades into shadow, however, it begins to look round, as if you could reach out and touch it. Artists describe this effect as modeling.

Two painters renowned for the style are Caravaggio, who worked in Italy around the year 1600, and Rembrandt, who worked in the Netherlands somewhat later. Their scenes frequently feature a nearly black background, with a single beam of light falling only on the most important part of the picture, such as a face or a pair of hands. The viewer's eyes are drawn immediately to that spot.

Light can also contribute to the story a painting tells. A bright spot may suggest hope, whereas a dark corner may hint that something is hidden. You can experiment with the same idea at home by setting a lamp beside a pear on a table in a dim room, and noticing how the shadow side deepens while the bright side stands out.

Questions

1. What does the word chiaroscuro mean?

_____

_____

2. What do artists call the effect that makes a flat shape appear round?

_____

_____

3. Where and when did Caravaggio work?

_____

_____

4. What kind of background do many chiaroscuro scenes feature?

_____

_____

5. Why are viewers drawn first to the lit part of the picture?

_____

_____

6. In what way can light and shadow add to the story a painting tells?

_____

_____

Words to know

chiaroscuro: a painting style that uses strong light and deep shadow
technique: a special way of doing something
canvas: the cloth surface that many artists paint on
shadow: a darker area where light is blocked
modeling: using light and shade to make a flat shape look round

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Chiaroscuro: Painting with a Spotlight

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Chiaroscuro: Painting with a Spotlight

Easier · 177 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.6

1. It joins two older words that mean light and dark.
2. Modeling.
3. In Italy, around 1600.
4. A nearly black one.
5. The beam of light falls only on the key part, so it stands out from the dark.
6. A bright spot can show hope, and a dark corner can show something hidden.

Triangle: Chiaroscuro: Painting with a Spotlight

This passage · 225 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.9

1. It joins two older words that mean light and dark.
2. Modeling.
3. In Italy, around the year 1600.
4. A nearly black background.
5. The beam of light falls only on the most important part, so it stands out against the dark.
6. A bright spot can suggest hope, and a dark corner can hint that something is hidden.

Square: Chiaroscuro: Painting with a Spotlight

Harder · 242 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.6

1. It combines two older words meaning light and dark.
2. Modeling.
3. In Italy, around the year 1600.
4. A nearly black background.
5. The beam of light falls only on the most important part, which stands out against the darkness.
6. A bright spot can suggest hope, and a dark corner can hint at something hidden.