

# Resources for primary schools

A guide for teachers

GAILEARAÍ  
NÁISIÚNTA<sup>na</sup>  
hÉIREANN



NATIONAL  
GALLERY<sup>of</sup>  
IRELAND

# Overview

At the National Gallery of Ireland we have many brilliant resources that you can use in the classroom. You can find them in lots of different places on our website, and we've listed them here so you can find them easily. For some resources, we have provided additional notes and guidance to help you structure a lesson or activity.



## Contents

On our website .....	3
Schools resource packs .....	4
Virtual exhibitions .....	10
Creative activity videos .....	11
Sensory videos .....	15
Other resources and activities .....	18
Contact us .....	21



# On our website



- Our [Explore and Learn](#) section has loads of interesting articles including bite-sized guides, in-depth looks at the collection, and peeks behind the scenes.
- Listen to [Audio Guides](#) of key works on display.
- [Through a Lens](#): self-guided tours of the collection.
- [Mindfulness & Art](#): a series of paintings from the collection with prompt questions to help you to slow down and reflect. Why not use with your class at the beginning of the day to help them connect and focus?
- [In Focus](#): a series linking works from our collection with key art historical, theoretical or philosophical texts. Aimed at third level students, but could be shared with LC groups or used for your own CPD.
- You can search our [online collection](#) or browse our [collection highlights](#)
- Watch videos of inspirational speakers from our [Creative Careers Day](#)
- We have a vast array of resources from our [Library & Archives](#)
- Listen in depth to our fascinating [Podcasts](#)
- Find out more about some of our [Conservation projects](#)
- Watch curator talks and more on our [YouTube](#) channel
- Follow the Gallery on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Sign up to the Teachers & Schools [email newsletter](#) to be regularly updated with new ideas and resources

# Schools resource packs





# Medium, Materiality & Magic: Photography at the Gallery

## What's in the resource?

- A brief history of photography, with lots of links to interesting videos
- Research activities
- Hi-res images of five key works from the Gallery's collection, with key information and activity ideas
- A glossary of key terms
- Hints and tips for creating your own photographs (you can use a camera or your phone!)

## Who is it for?

Primary & Post-Primary

## How do I use it?

This is a very rich resource with lots of ideas for activities that you can pick and mix, or use to set a larger project

## Curriculum links

**Primary:** Visual Arts; Cross-curricular links with History, Geography, Science, Language & Literacy, SESE, SPHE.

**Junior Cycle:** Visual Art

**Leaving Certificate:** Art; Cross-curricular links with History, Geography, Physics and Chemistry

**Leaving Certificate Applied:** English and Communication, Arts Education

## Link to resource:

[English version](#)

[Irish version](#)



# What is a Portrait?

## What's in the resource?

- An introduction to portraiture
- Hi-res images of 11 key works from the Gallery's collection, with key information and activity ideas
- Discussion questions

## Who is it for?

Primary & Post-Primary

## How do I use it?

This is a very rich resource with lots of ideas for activities that you can pick and mix, or use to set a larger project.

## Curriculum links

**Primary:** Visual Arts \ Drawing \ Paint & Colour \ Looking & Responding \ Potential to work across all six strands of the Visual Arts Curriculum  
Cross-curricular links with history, language & literacy

**Junior Cycle:** Visual Art \ Critical and visual language \ 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 Visual culture and appreciation \ 1.7, 1.8, 1.9 Art elements and design principles \ 1.10 Media \ 1.13

**Leaving Certificate:** Art History and Appreciation of Art \ Irish Art



## Link to resource:

[English version](#)

[Irish version](#)



# Landscapes in Irish Art

## What's in the resource?

- Hi-res images of key works of Irish landscape art
- Five cross-curricular lesson plans inspired by the works

## Who is it for?

Primary

## How do I use it?

Follow the lesson plans.

## Curriculum links

**Geography:** 1st-6th Class \ Strand: Natural Environment \ Strand Unit: The Local Natural Environment

**History:** 1st-6th Class \ Strand: Continuity and Change Over Time, Local Studies \ Strand Unit: Homes and Houses, Buildings, Sites or Ruins in my Locality

**Science:** Jnr Infants-5th Class \ Strand: Living Things \ Strand Unit: Plant and Animal Life

**Art:** 1st-6th Class \ Strand: Making Art \ Strand Unit: Construction

**English:** Jnr Infants-6th Class \ Strand: Competence and Confidence in using Language \ Strand Unit: Developing Competence and Confidence in using Oral Language

## Link to resource:

[English version](#)

[Irish version](#)



# Exploring the Renaissance

## What's in the resource?

Animated introduction to the Italian Renaissance

## Who is it for?

Aimed at Primary level, but is a useful introduction/revision tool for all ages and stages.

## How do I use it?

Watch, learn & enjoy! You could use this to introduce the topic, and then use some of the Gallery's other activity ideas to continue your lesson.

## Curriculum links

**Primary:** History \ 5th-6th Class \ Strand: Eras of Change and Conflict \ Strand Unit: The Renaissance; Art \ Looking and Responding  
**Junior Cycle:** Visual Art \ Visual culture and appreciation

**Leaving Certificate:** Art History and Appreciation of Art \ European Art

## Link to resource:

<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/explore-and-learn/explore-renaissance-cozimo>







# Resources for past exhibitions

## What's in the resource?

Teachers' notes and resources for past exhibitions, including:

- Bauhaus 100: The Print Portfolios
- Sorolla: Spanish Master of Light
- Curious Creatures: Frans Post and Brazil
- Perspectives: World War I stories from the National Gallery of Ireland
- Leaving Certificate Resource Packs: Canaletto and the Art of Venice (resources section from p.9 onwards will be most useful)
- Emil Nolde: Colour is Life (resources section from p.10 onwards will be most useful)
- Roderic O'Connor and the Moderns (resources section from p.10 onwards will be most useful)

## Who is it for?

Varies - Primary & Post-Primary

## How do I use it?

Some of this information won't be relevant, however if you go to the 'before your visit' and 'after your visit' sections you will find lots of activity ideas. Leaving Certificate resource packs can be used as revision tools for Irish & European art history

## Link to resources:

<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/what-we-do/education-department/schools/resources-schools-acmhainni-do-scoileanna/primary-past-exh>



# Virtual exhibitions



## What's in the resource?

Digital exhibitions allow us to visit museums and galleries across the world from the comfort of our own homes or the classroom. Some, like the [Gallery's virtual tours](#), attempt to replicate the experience of physically visiting the Gallery. We can navigate through the rooms, see where paintings are placed on walls, and experience the architecture of the building. Others, like [Drawn from Nature](#), present a selection of digital images alongside text written by a curator.

## How do I use it?

If you are unable to take your class on a visit to a Gallery, then you could set up a virtual tour in your classroom.

- **Make it interactive** - use look and respond questions & pair with other resources such as audio guides to aid your students in exploring the gallery.
- **Set a treasure hunt** - have students explore in pairs or small groups. Give them three things to find. These could be general items like 'a hat' or 'something blue', or more specific 'a painting by Joshua Reynolds'. They could then use the Gallery website to research their artworks and present to the class.
- **Discuss the architecture of the galleries** - how does visiting a virtual exhibition compare with going to a gallery in real life?

# National Gallery at Home: step-by-step activity videos

## What is the resource?

Step by step activity videos inspired by works from the national collection. The videos were designed as at-home family activities, but can be adapted to be used in the classroom.

## Who is it for?

The majority of the videos are aimed at Primary level, Junior Infants - 4th class, but may be adapted for different ages and levels.

## How do I use it?

In this guide, we have provided links to a selection of videos, alongside looking and responding questions, further activities and

curriculum links. All materials and activity instructions can be found by clicking the link to the video. We are regularly adding more videos, and you can find them all on our [website](#).

## Look & Respond

These questions are designed to help introduce students to the artwork. See what clues you can find in the image to help you find the answers. Often there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer as everyone will see different things in an image. A good prompt question to help students look closer is to ask 'what can you see in the picture that made you say that?'





Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), Rooftops in Paris, 1886. Photo © National Gallery of Ireland.

# Van Gogh's Rooftops in Paris

## Introduction

Van Gogh painted the view from his window in Paris, using perspective to show buildings close up and far away. He painted the muted colours of the buildings and sky on an overcast day in Paris. This activity takes inspiration from van Gogh's painting and enables students to create their own artwork based on their view from a window.

## Look & Respond

- What can you see in this painting?
- Where do you think it is set?
- What perspective/point of view is it painted from?
- What colours can you see in the painting?
- What time of day/year do you think it is?

- Is this somewhere you would like to visit?
- Do you like this painting? Why/why not?

## Further activities

- Use some cardboard to create a simple viewfinder. Go outside and use it to frame more 'windows' to make views from.
- Turn your picture into a postcard and write a letter to a friend to tell them about what you think about when you look out of the window.

## Curriculum links

- Visual Arts: Paint and colour; Looking & Responding
- Primary Language: Oral language

## Link to resource:

<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/what-we-do/education-department/national-gallery-home-van-gogh>

# Make your own camera obscura



Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675), 'Woman Writing a Letter, with her Maid', c.1670. Image © National Gallery of Ireland

## Introduction

This activity enables students to make a simple camera obscura, inspired by the early type of camera used by artists. Light came through a tiny hole and flipped the image upside down. Johannes Vermeer may have used one when he painted Lady Writing a Letter with her Maid.

## Look & Respond

- What can you see in this painting?
- What are the people doing?
- What do you think the woman sitting at the table is writing about?
- What do you think the lady stood by the window is thinking about?
- What are they wearing?
- What can you see in the background?
- What title would you give to this painting?
- Do you like this painting? Why/why not?

## Further activities

- Find out more in our [Medium, Materiality & Magic](#) photography resource
- Experiment with light and [make a photogram](#)

## Curriculum links

- Visual Arts: Paint and colour; Looking & Responding
- Primary Language: Oral language
- Science: Energy & Forces - Light

## Link to resource:

<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/what-we-do/education-department/make-your-own-camera-obscura>





Antonio del Pollaiuolo (1431/32-1498) or Piero del Pollaiuolo (c.1441-c.1496), 'Profile Portrait of a Young Man', c.1470-1475. Image © National Gallery of Ireland

# Profile Portraits

## Introduction

Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo were brothers who ran one of the most successful workshops in Florence, Italy, in the fifteenth century. They worked as painters, sculptors, engravers, goldsmiths and designers of embroidery. They often worked together on projects, so we're not 100% sure which brother made this drawing of a young man. It was drawn some time between 1470 and 1475—that's over 500 years ago! It is a "profile portrait" which means it shows the side of the man's face, not the front. Your profile is the outline of your face, seen from the side.

## Look & Respond

- What is this artwork? Is it a drawing or a painting?
- What can you see in the drawing?

- What colours can you see?
- What is the person wearing?
- What do you think they are looking at?
- What might be hidden on the other side of their face? Use your imagination!
- Do you like this drawing? Why/why not?

## Further activities

A profile only shows one side of your face. Use a mirror to flip the image and use your imagination to draw what might be hidden!

## Curriculum links

- Visual Arts: Drawing; Looking & Responding
- Primary Language: Oral language





# Sensory Activities: step-by-step videos

## What's in the resource?

Step by step activity videos inspired by works from the national collection. The videos were designed as at-home family activities, but can be adapted to be used in the classroom.

## Who is it for?


These activities will engage the senses and are particularly suitable for those who seek out sensory input. They may be adapted for different ages and levels.

## How do I use it?

In this guide, we have provided links to a selection of videos, alongside looking and responding questions, further activities and

curriculum links. All materials and activity instructions can be found by clicking the link to the video. We are regularly adding more videos, and you can find them all on our [website](#).

## Look & Respond

These questions are designed to help introduce students to the artwork. See what clues you can find in the image to help you find the answers. Often there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer as everyone will see different things in an image. A good prompt question to help students look closer is to ask 'what can you see in the picture that made you say that?'. 



Detail from Paul Signac, The Terrace, Saint-Tropez, 1898. Image © National Gallery of Ireland

# Sensory Spots

## Introduction

Inspired by Paul Signac's *The Terrace, Saint Tropez*, students will be enabled to create their own spotty masterpiece, using paint made from natural ingredients. Signac developed a style called Pointillism. He used lots of little dots of colour to make his painting. When you look from a distance the colours blend together and you can see the whole image.

## Look & Respond

- What can you see in this painting?
- What colours can you see?
- How has the artist added colour to the painting?

- Look closely at the painting. Now step back and look from a distance. How does the painting change?
- Where do you think the painting is set?
- Do you like the painting? Why/why not?

## Further activities

Experiment with different materials to create other pointillist pictures - what effects can you make using paint, chalk, or even collage?

## Curriculum links

- Visual Arts: Paint and colour; Looking & Responding
- Primary Language: Oral language
- Science: Materials



## Link to resource:

<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/what-we-do/education-department/national-gallery-ireland-home-sensory-spots#na>





Evie Hone (1894-1955), 'Resurrection', c.1954. Image © National Gallery of Ireland

# Create your own 'stained glass'

## Introduction

In this sensory activity, students will be enabled to create their own 'stained glass' artwork inspired by the work of Irish artist Evie Hone.

## Look & Respond

- What can you see in this artwork?
- What is it made out of of?
- What colours can you see?
- What shapes can you see?
- Where might you find an artwork like this?
- Do you like this artwork? Why/why not?

## Further activities

Explore light and colour using a torch and different coloured sheets of acetate. Shine the torch onto a wall and observe how it changes when you shine it through different colours. How do the colours change when you layer them on top of each other?

## Curriculum links

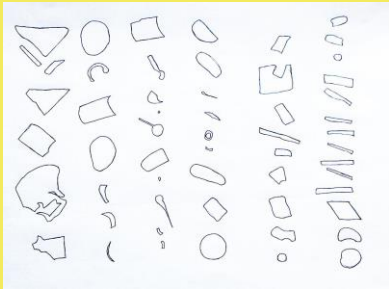
- Visual Arts: Paint and Colour; Looking & Responding
- Primary Language: Oral language
- Science: Materials; Light

## Link to resource:

<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/what-we-do/education-department/sensory-workshop-create-your-own-stained-glass>



# Other resources and activities





# Colouring the Collection

## What is the resource?

Colouring sheets of key works from the collection.

## Who is it for and how do I use it?

- A colouring activity for younger children - begin with looking and responding questions and then explore colour. Replicate the colours in the paintings, or encourage students to use their imaginations!
- A mindfulness activity for all ages.
- A sketching demonstration for LC students - some teachers have used these resources to show students how to use sketches in their LC exams.

## Link to resource:

<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/explore-and-learn/colouring-collection>



# The Wonder of Weeds

## What's in the resource?

Discover the mysterious and surprising qualities of plants that emerge from crumbling buildings, walls, cracks in pavements and the edges of gardens. Field investigation activity with notes and pictures for identifying common weeds.

## Curriculum links

### Primary

**Visual art:** Drawing

**Geography:** A sense of place and space;  
Geographical investigation skills: Observing;  
Recording & Communicating;  
Human environments: Living in the local community;  
Natural environments: The local natural environment;

Environmental awareness and care: Caring for my locality; Environmental awareness; Caring for the environment

**Science:** Working scientifically: Observing;  
Recording & Communicating;  
Living Things: Plants & Animals

## Junior Cycle

**Visual art:** Drawing

**Science:** Biological world

Systems and interactions: Conduct a habitat study; research and investigate the adaptation, competition and interdependence of organisms within specific habitats and communities.  
Sustainability: Evaluate how humans can successfully conserve ecological biodiversity and contribute to global food production; appreciate the benefits that people obtain from ecosystems.

## Link to resource:

<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/art-and-artists/exhibitions/drawn-nature-irish-botanical-art/wonder-weedss>

# Contact us

**Sign up to the Teachers & Schools [email newsletter](#) to be regularly updated with new ideas and resources.**

Catherine O'Donnell

Education Officer

With responsibility for Teachers, Schools & Youth

T: +353 (0) 1 663 3579

E: [codonnell@ngi.ie](mailto:codonnell@ngi.ie)

