

Jack B Yeats: Painting & Memory Schools Competition Primary Resource Pack



Introduction

This resource pack explores paintings in the Gallery's exhibition *Jack B. Yeats: Painting and Memory*. The aim of this resource is to provide access to images from the exhibition, prompts to look and respond to the paintings in class and suggestions on how you can apply the themes of memory and place to the class's final artwork submission.

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Jack B. Yeats. *A Morning*, 1935/1936. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London, IVARO Dublin, 2021. Photo © National Gallery of Ireland.

About the exhibition

Jack B. Yeats: Painting and Memory

"No one creates. The artist assembles memories." – Jack B. Yeats

Coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the birth of one of Ireland's most important artists, this exhibition explores the role of memory in Jack B. Yeats's life and work. From his earliest forays into oil painting, Yeats was unusually reliant on memory and retrospection. Memories of childhood in Sligo inspired many of his works, and particular motifs – music and horses prominent among them – recur in his paintings. In a selection of oil paintings spanning more than 40 years, view places and people Yeats remembered, his observations of humanity, and reflections on life and loss in his later years.

About the Competition

Happily supported by Key Capital

We wish to offer schools the opportunity to engage more deeply with the themes of place and memory in Yeats's work, in a unique competition celebrating the diverse communities of Ireland.

Working as a team, each school will create an artwork inspired by the theme **'Memories of our Local Area'**. Schools can choose to create their artwork in any form. The finished artwork must be photographed and submitted digitally to the Gallery for judging.

Go to the [Yeats Schools Competition](#) page of our website for full details on how to enter the competition.



How to use this resource

This resource provides you with:

- A PowerPoint slide show for you and your class to read through
- Images of key artworks from the Gallery's exhibition *Jack B. Yeats: Painting and Memory*
- Information about the paintings and the artist
- Looking and responding questions to ask your class
- Discussion points
- Suggestions on how to apply the themes of memory and place to your final artwork





Jack B. Yeats, *Leaving the Far Point*, 1946. The Niland Collection, Donated by the artist 1954. Courtesy of the Model, Home of the Niland Collection. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021.

Jack B. Yeats

Jack B. Yeats was born in London in 1871, one hundred and fifty years ago!

Jack B. Yeats was the youngest member of a very creative family. His father, John Butler Yeats, was a portrait artist. His brother, William Butler Yeats, was a poet and playwright and became the first Irish person to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. His sister Lily ran an embroidery studio and Elizabeth established a printing press called Cuala Press.

Download a visual history of [Jack B. Yeats' life and work](#)



Jack, B. Yeats, *A Giant Reading*, 1942. Collection of Denise Coates and Richard Smith. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 202. Image courtesy of Bonhams 1793.

Jack B. Yeats and Sligo

When Jack B. Yeats was 8 years of age, he moved to Sligo to live with his grandparents, William and Elizabeth Pollexfen.

This was a very happy time for Jack. While he was there, he enjoyed attending fairs, sporting events, races and circuses. His memories of his childhood in Sligo gave him ideas for his paintings for the rest of his life. In fact, Jack B. Yeats said he rarely painted a painting **“without a bit of Sligo in it.”**

He lived in Sligo until he was sixteen years of age and then returned to his family in London to attend art college.



Jack B. Yeats, *A Summer Evening, Rosses Point*, 1922. Private Collection, Courtesy of Adam's. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.

Jack B. Yeats and his sketchbooks

Early in his career as an artist, Jack B. Yeats kept sketchbooks where he drew scenes of what he saw around him.

Like visual diaries, he kept a record of the landscapes, people and events that he saw.

The National Gallery of Ireland has over 200 of his sketchbooks. Drawings from his sketchbooks often gave Jack ideas for his oil paintings.

Carry a sketchbook with you for a week and draw the interesting things you see!





Jack B. Yeats, *The Child of the Sea*, 1948, Jim Lloyd and Janet Gough Lloyd OBE. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Courtesy of Sotheby's.

Jack B. Yeats, the artist

Jack B. Yeats started his career as an artist doing illustrations for newspapers and magazines. He first started painting in watercolour but later worked with oil paints.

As Yeats got older his work with oil paints became more expressive. His brushwork became faster and looser, he started applying the paint with a palette knife and painted it thickly on to the canvas, this is known as impasto. His use of colour changed from realistic tones to brighter colours expressing his emotions and memories.

Try experimenting with new colours or techniques for your own artwork.



Jack B. Yeats, *A Summer's Evening, Rosses Point*, 1922. Private Collection, Courtesy of Adam's. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.

The Workshop

Also available as an adaptable PowerPoint slideshow



A Summer Evening, Rosses Point, 1922

Oil on canvas

Private Collection, Courtesy of Adam's. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.



Jack B. Yeats, *A Summer's Evening, Rosses Point*, 1922. Private Collection, Courtesy of Adam's.
© Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.



Jack B. Yeats, *A Summer's Evening, Rosses Point*, 1922. Private Collection, Courtesy of Adam's. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.

Look & Respond

- Where is the painting set?
- Who can you see in the painting?
- What do you think is happening?
- What colours has the artist used?
- What kind of day is it?
- How did the artist use his brush?
- Did he paint fast or slow?



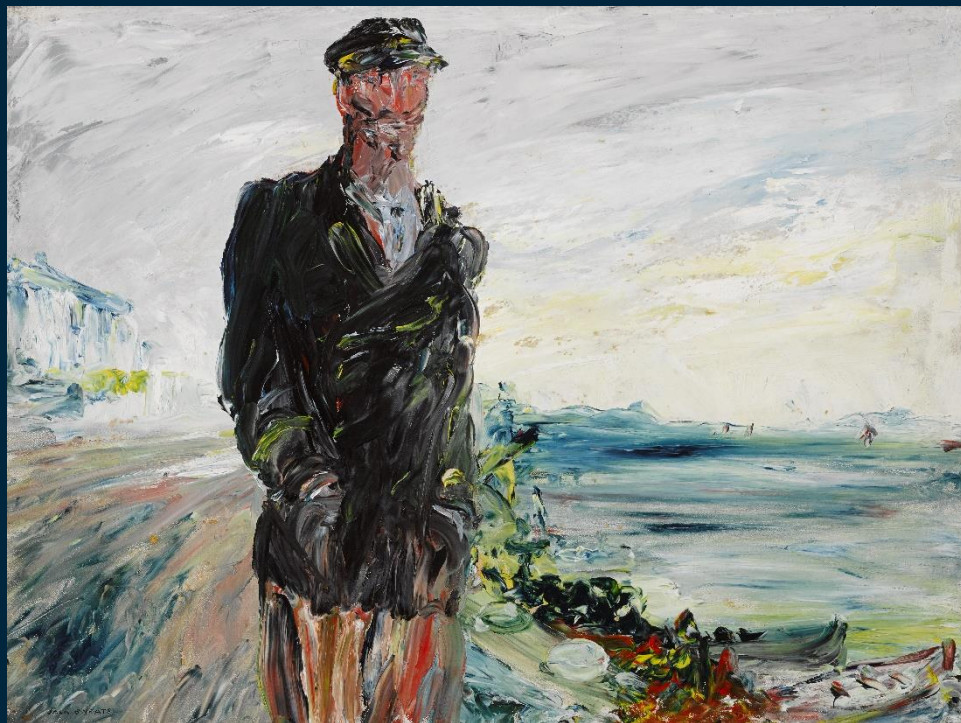
Jack B. Yeats, *A Summer's Evening, Rosses Point*, 1922. Private Collection, Courtesy of Adam's. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.

Investigate

Jack B. Yeats was a keen observer of his surroundings. From his childhood in Sligo, where his grandfather owned a shipping business, Yeats became fascinated by the sea and the daily life of the sailors who worked in Sligo harbour.

In the foreground of this scene, Yeats paints a sailor and a jarvey. (Task: find out what a jarvey is?!)

Think about where you live. What do you love about your local area? Be observant like Yeats, record what you find interesting by sketching a picture or taking photographs.



Pilot, Sligo River, 1927

Oil on canvas

Private Collection. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Whytes.com



Jack B. Yeats, *Pilot, Sligo River*, 1927. Private Collection. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Whytes.com



Jack B. Yeats, *Pilot, Sligo River*, 1927. Private Collection.
© Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021.
Image courtesy of Whytes.com

Look & Respond

- Who do you see in the painting?
- What is he wearing?
- What is he looking at?
- What else can you see in the painting?
- Where is the painting set?
- What is the man thinking about?

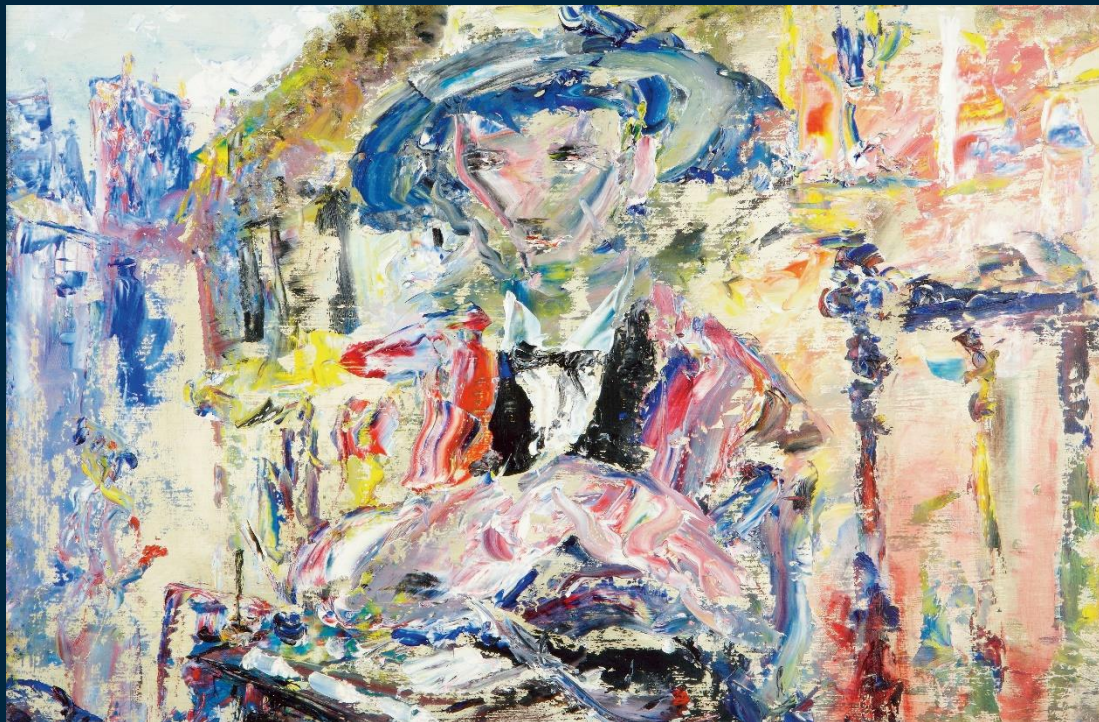


Jack B. Yeats, *Pilot, Sligo River*, 1927. Private Collection.
© Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021.
Image courtesy of Whytes.com

A cast of characters

This is a painting of Michael Gillen, the Sligo River Pilot. Yeats knew him while living in Sligo with his grandparents. His job was to guide merchant ships from Rosses Point along the Garavogue River to Sligo town. He was accompanied on his boat by a fiddler and Yeats features him in other drawings and paintings.

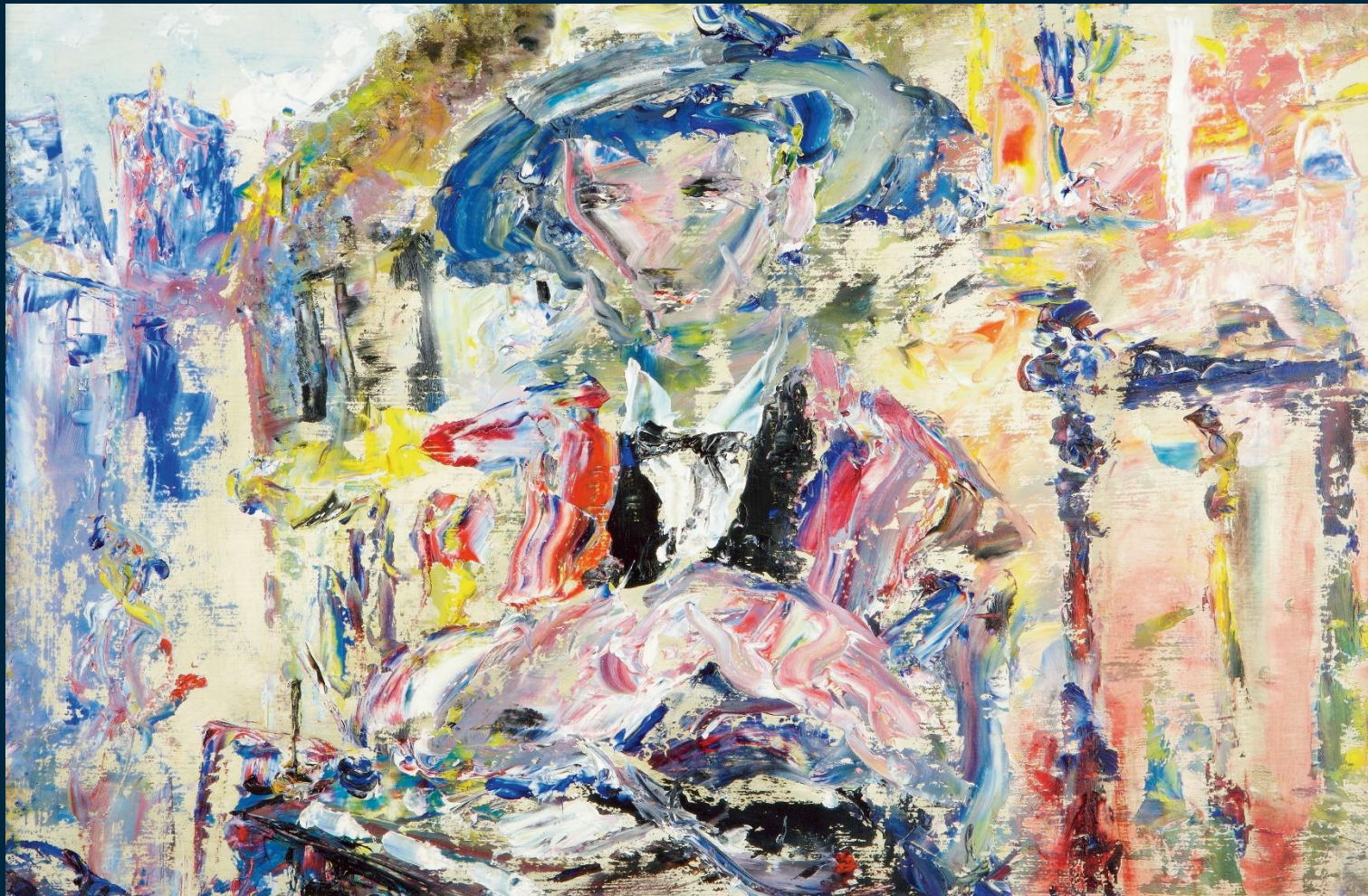
Think about the people in your local area? Do you know people that do important jobs for the community? Have you met an interesting person that sparked your imagination? Discuss this in class. Sketch a portrait or take a photograph.



The Public Letter Writer, 1953

Oil on board

A.J. Duncan, courtesy of Adam's. © Estate
of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO
Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.



Jack B. Yeats, *The Public Letter Writer*, 1953. A.J. Duncan, courtesy of Adam's. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.



Jack B. Yeats, *The Public Letter Writer*, 1953. A.J. Duncan, courtesy of Adam's. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.

Look & Respond

- Who can you see in the painting?
- What is he wearing?
- What colours has the artist used?
- Are the colours different to the other paintings you have looked at by Jack B. Yeats?
- How has the artist applied the paint to the canvas?
- What is happening in the painting?



Jack B. Yeats, *The Public Letter Writer*, 1953. A.J. Duncan, courtesy of Adam's. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021. Image courtesy of Adam's.

A cast of characters

Yeats saw this man on the streets of New York in 1904, writing visiting cards 'in a lovely curling hand'.

Yeats has painted this man from memory 49 years later, when he was 82! Here we can see Yeats used very bright colours in this painting. The brushstrokes have become expressive. We see an impression of the man from Yeats' memory.

Are there colours that you associate with the place you live? Think about your use of colour in your final artwork.



Dublin Night (by College Green), 1925

Oil on canvas

Lent by Birmingham Museums Trust
on behalf of Birmingham City Council.
© Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS
London/IVARO Dublin, 2021.



Jack B. Yeats, *Dublin Night (by College Green)*, 1925. Lent by Birmingham Museums Trust on behalf of Birmingham City Council. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021.



Jack B. Yeats, *Dublin Night (by College Green)*, 1925. Lent by Birmingham Museums Trust on behalf of Birmingham City Council. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021.

Look & Respond

- How many people can you see in the painting?
- What do you think is happening in this scene?
- What are the people in the painting wearing?
- What time of day is it?



Jack B. Yeats, *Dublin Night (by College Green)*, 1925. Lent by Birmingham Museums Trust on behalf of Birmingham City Council. © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2021.

City Life

In 1917 Yeats moved to Dublin, he enjoyed life in the city. He liked to capture scenes that only lasted a moment. Here, Yeats uses quick brushstrokes and applies the paint thickly to the canvas (known as impasto) to create the illusion of the horse galloping through the busy city street.

The horse and carriage in this painting echoes an older way of life. Talk to older members of your community to find out what life was like in the place they grew up. What did people wear? Did you notice that everyone in the painting is wearing a hat? How did people get around?

Investigate

Brainstorm ideas for your final artwork

	Memories of our Local Area	How will we find out more?
Does your area have any historical landmarks?		
Is there a park, beach, mountain, forest in your locality that you like to visit?		
Are there any traditions or customs unique to your area?		
Are there any local people that make your area special?		
What is special to you about where you live?		

Making your artwork

Suggestions for creating your artwork

- This is a **collaborative art competition**. The artwork submitted must be a **group work**. Decide whether you are going to submit your work as a class or divide into teams.
- As suggested in this resource, do some **preparatory work**. **Sketch** ideas, memories or portraits. **Collect** old photographs or take photographs of places and people that are important to you in your area.
- Jack B. Yeats liked to collect pictures from newspapers and magazines of things that he found interesting. Try doing the same! Collect old photographs or pictures to help inspire your artwork.
- You are free to choose what art form you want your finished artwork to be! It can be a painting, mural, collage, photograph, 3-D, video or audio work, or something else!
- A digital image of your artwork must be submitted to the Gallery for the competition.



Additional resources

Suggestions for researching your local area

- Visit your local library to find out if they have old photographs of your area.
- Type the name of your town, city or county into the Gallery's [online collection](#) to see if you can find any drawings or paintings of your area.
- Visit the National Library of Ireland [online catalogue](#) to see if they have any photographs of your local area.



Contact us

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

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