

**THE MUSEO DEL PRADO:  
CRITIQUING THE  
COLLECTION**



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## Description

Students in this lesson will critique masterpieces from the Museo del Prado, both objectively and subjectively, using art vocabulary in the target language (Spanish), then research biographical information on the artists that created them.

## Subjects

Spanish

## Grade Level

9-12

## Duration

60 minutes

## Tour Links

- [Museo del Prado, Madrid](#)

## Essential Questions

- What are the physical, emotional, and inferred aspects of art?
- What terms can be used to critique art in Spanish?

## Academic Summary

- For a moment, envision the history of the United States. What do you see? Founding Fathers in powdered wigs, gathered around the Declaration of Independence? A pilgrim in a wide-brimmed black hat, sharing a meal with a barely-clothed Native American? There is no photographic proof of these happenings, yet we can visualize them clearly. This is because we have seen them in paintings or other artistic interpretations of events. Books and documents have their place in documenting history, but art has provided a unique perspective of years past.
- Art reflects the values, issues, and overall identity of a society. Viewing a piece of art is seeing the world through another person's eyes. Because of its subjective nature, art spurs conversation and discussion. Because of its emphasis on analysis and criticism, the study of art as a whole helps to develop critical thinking skills in students.
- Spanish art is unique because of its Christian, Jewish and Muslim influence. Spain's largest and most visited art museum is the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid. Based on the former Spanish Royal Collection, the museum (at this time) includes about 7600 paintings, 1000 sculptures, 4800 prints, and 8200 drawings.
- Students in this lesson will critique masterpieces from the Museo del Prado, both objectively and subjectively, using art vocabulary in the target language (Spanish), then research biographical information on the artists that created them.

## Objectives

1. Students will construct complete sentences in the target language using art vocabulary.
2. Students will critique masterpieces from the Museo del Prado, both objectively and subjectively.
3. Students will summarize biographical information about a famous Spanish artist in history.

## Materials

- Blank Paper (one sheet per student)
- Colored Pencils, Crayons or Markers
- Critique Sheet
- Prado Masterpiece Printouts
- Spanish-English Dictionaries
- Poster Board (*optional*)
- Artist Biography Worksheet

## Procedure

### I. Anticipatory Set (5 min)

- Hand out one blank sheet of paper and one coloring utensil to each student. Instruct the students to write their name on the back of their sheet. Then, have the students draw a single line on the front of the sheet. The line can take up as much space as they want, and can be squiggly, straight, etc.
- Pause the exercise. After this, students will pass their piece of paper to their left. Each student will have a new sheet of paper in front of them. Students will have 30 seconds to create a design, picture or scene using the line on the paper. The class will repeat this process three times, each time passing the paper to their left after 30 seconds, then continuing where the last student left off with their new sheet. After the activity is done, return the papers to their original owners so they can see how their drawing transformed from a line to a masterpiece!

Note: This activity works back with the desks arranged in a circle or square.

### II. Body of Lesson (50 min)

- Art Vocabulary Introduction: How can we critique these drawings in Spanish? What words do we already know that may be useful? Introduce a list of art vocabulary words. Say each word aloud in Spanish, and have the students repeat the correct pronunciation as a class. Clarify translations and pronunciations as needed.
- Have the students write three sentences describing their drawings, using at least three new vocabulary words. Then, switch drawings with a partner and do the same for his/her drawing. Compare descriptions. Did the partners have similar or different interpretations of the painting? Why do you believe this is so? Review some examples as a class.
- Explore the idea that artists can be influenced by time periods, locations, events, their personal lives or dreams, etc. So also can the viewer of a work of art be influenced by these aspects, and connect with a work of art in a different way than the artist originally had.
- Group Critique: Break up the class into 10 groups. Choose 10 of the 15 Prado Masterpiece Printouts provided, and hand out a different one to each group. Also provide each group with a Critique Sheet, a colored pencil (try to give each group a different color), and a Spanish-English dictionary. Have each group write their names on their printout with their colored pencil, that way each group's input can be identified on any sheet. In 5 minutes, the groups are to answer (in Spanish) as many questions from the sheet as they can. Once the 5 minutes are up, the groups will rotate, bringing their colored pencil with them. They will then have 5 minutes to continue where the last group left off. Groups are not allowed to repeat any information already on the sheet, only provide additional information. Repeat this process 5 times (i.e. each group should critique 5 different paintings). After the activity, review overall opinions as a class.

Note: This activity works for a group of any size. Adjust the number of students

in a group by adding or removing works of art. Teachers may also choose to paste each image on a poster board and write the questions on it as well, that way the students have more room to write. Poster boards can then be placed on a table, or taped on the wall for a smoother class rotation.

### **III. Closure (5 min)**

- Homework: Choose one of the artists reviewed in class and research him in order to complete the Artist Biography worksheet.

### **Extension**

#### **On tour: Museo del Prado, Madrid**

The Museo Nacional del Prado is the largest and most visited art museum in Spain, and famous for its extensive collection of Spanish art. Explore the museum with a partner, and stop at any works of art that pique your interest. What do you see? How does it make you feel? What do you think the artist is trying to tell you? Exchange opinions with your partner. Keep an eye out for any paintings from the lesson as well!

### **Web Links**

- [www.museodelprado.es/en/visit-the-museum/15-masterpieces/](http://www.museodelprado.es/en/visit-the-museum/15-masterpieces/)  
“Visit the Museum: 15 Masterpieces” – Museo Nacional del Prado, 2013. Features the images of 15 of the most popular works of art from the Prado, accompanied by a short description and other facts about the masterpiece, including, but not limited to: title, year created, name of creator, etc.
- [www.museodelprado.es/visita-el-museo/15-obras-maestras/](http://www.museodelprado.es/visita-el-museo/15-obras-maestras/)  
The Spanish version of the above website.
- [www.biography.com/people/groups/famous-spanish-painters/all](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/famous-spanish-painters/all)  
“Famous Spanish Painters, A-Z”, a collection of mini-bios and videos from bio.com. Includes information about Salvador Dalí, Francisco de Goya, Francisco de Zurbarán, El Greco, Joan Miró, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Pablo Picasso and Diego Velázquez.

## Key Terms

- **a través de** through
- **abstracto, -a** abstract
- **el autorretrato** self-portrait
- **destacar(se)** to stand out
- **la cerámica** pottery
- **la escultura** sculpture
- **exagerar** to exaggerate
- **expresar(se)** to express (oneself)
- **la figura** figure
- **el fondo** background
- **el gesto** gesture
- **identificarse con** to identify with
- **la imagen** image
- **influir** to influence
- **inspirar** to inspire
- **la interpretación** interpretation
- **interpretar** to interpret
- **mostrar** to show
- **el mural** mural
- **la naturaleza muerta** still life
- **la obra de arte** work of art
- **parecerse (a)** to look, seem (like)
- **la pintura** painting
- **el primer plano** foreground
- **representar** to represent
- **la reseña** review
- **el retrato** portrait
- **el sentimiento** feeling
- **el siglo** century
- **el tema** subject
  
- **al lado de** next to, beside
- **cerca de** close to
- **debajo de** underneath
- **delante de** in front of
- **dentro de** inside of
- **detrás de** behind
- **encima de** on top of
- **enfrente de** in front of
- **entre** between
- **hay** there is, there are
- **lejos de** far from
- **sobre** over, above



