

# AP Art History—Summer Assignment

## Expectations:

- Explore Art History
- Practice research skills in relation to Art History
- Evaluate several historical artworks of your choosing
  - **2 pieces of narrative art**
- Use proper art vocabulary in your writing
- Use proper MLA style
- Bring your completed assignment to turn in on the first day of class

## Questions?

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## Assignment: Exploring Narrative Art

### Directions:

1. Find **TWO** works of art (painting and/or sculpture) by separate artists in separate centuries that focus on narrative art (*art which tells a story or which depicts a scene from a story, either historical or fictional*).
2. Answer the questions below for each of your chosen artworks.

### Specifics:

- Write in complete sentences (except for #2).
- Incorporate proper art terminology
  - When analyzing art, architecture and design, it helps to use art terms to explain art concepts. The ‘elements’ of Art/Design are the basic fundamental ‘ingredients’ of any artwork or architectural design. The ‘principles’ are the method or the way in which an artist combines those ingredients (elements) together.
  - Elements:** Line, Color, Shape, Value, Form, Texture, Space
  - Principles:** Balance, Contrast, Emphasis, Movement, Pattern, Rhythm, Unity
- Use in-text references and a bibliography—MLA style.
- See the Goya example to get you started.
- See the list of suggested artworks and websites to help you.

### 1. Include an image of the artwork.

### 2. Identify the work completely.

Provide:

Artist:

Title:

Patron (who paid for it?):

Date:

Country of origin:

Art historical period:

Medium (what is it made out of?):

**Example:**

Artist: Francisco Jose de Goya

Title: "Execution of the Defenders of Madrid, Third of May, 1808"

Patron: n/a

Date Completed: 1814

Country of Origin: Spain

Art Historical Period: Romaniticism

Medium: oil on canvas

**3. Write a 1-2 paragraph biography of the artist.**

Include detailed information on the artist's life. Cite at least two sources (three if Wikipedia is one of them!).

**4. Summarize in detail the story being depicted in the work of art.****Example:**

Goya's painting refers to the historical story of the French invasion of Spain in 1808. Led by Napoleon Bonaparte, French military troops invaded and occupied Spain. On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the people of Madrid (the capital of Spain) rebelled against the invading French troops and a bloody battle took place. The Spanish rioters lost this battle and were captured. The next day, on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the rebellion leaders were executed by firing squad as a deterrent to other rebels.

**5. Identify the moment of the story being shown and explain why you think the artist chose that particular moment.****Example:**

Goya chose to paint the moment of execution for its psychological and political impact on the viewer. His painting highlights the plight of the revolutionaries and their treatment by the French troops.

**6. What visual details (use of symbolic elements, composition and focal point, use of colour and tone) contribute to the narrative, it's overall mood and its meaning?****Example:**

Goya has painted the victim as the focal point of the composition. This rebel is about to be executed. He appears helpless and defenseless. He stands in stark contrast to the rest of the gloomy dark painting as he is dressed in white and appears to glow with reflected light. The use of white in Western art is traditionally associated with light, purity, goodness. This figure also holds his arms in an outstretched 'crucifixion' gesture to symbolize innocence and to reflect Goya's religious beliefs in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The despair and fear of the victims are clearly expressed on their faces. By contrast, Goya depicts the troops with their backs facing the viewer and heads bent, showing no emotion. Unlike his humanization of the revolutionary victims, the French troops are mechanical and cold. Through use of dark shadows and blood red, the overall mood created is of anguish, despair and brutality.

**7. What seems to be the artist's view of the event or of the major figure? How can you tell?****Example:**

Goya has conveyed his support for his fellow Spaniards and his belief in their innocence and goodness. This feeling is communicated through his depiction of the rebels as defenseless victims against the unfeeling French troops. Goya does this through his use of symbolism, light and dark contrast, composition and mood of the painting.

**8. What theme about life or history is the artist conveying? Explain. If there is no overriding view of life, what seems to be the artist's purpose in creating the work? Refer to**

the social, historical, political context of the work (i.e. What was happening in society at the time that may have been an influence?)

**Example:**

*Goya's artworks reflected the social and political turmoil of the nineteenth century as wars raged across Europe. Most of his work depicts the horror and violence of the Napoleonic wars. This painting conveys the historical moment of the executions of the third of May 1808 but also represents the brutality and futility of war in general.*

**9. What does the artist want you to feel or think? How does he/she do this?**

**Example**

*Goya wants the viewer to sympathize with the rebels in this painting. Goya has successfully conveyed his support for his own countrymen. He wants us to see clearly the pain and terror of the victims and to witness the bloodshed that occurred. He achieves this impact through his use of composition, symbolism, gesture and contrast.*

**10. Why did you choose this painting/sculpture? What attracts you to it? What is compelling about it?**

**Example:**

*I chose this painting because through Goya's powerful image, I can feel the horror of that moment two hundred years after the event happened, and this is what I believe Goya would have wanted the viewers to feel.*

**11. Bibliography.**

List all your sources in MLA format

- At least 2 different sources for your written information (3 if one of your sources is Wikipedia)
- 1 source for your image.

**Useful Resources:**

Two websites on narrative art that might be of help:

- <http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/n/narrative.html>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative\\_art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative_art)

General websites that might be of help:

- SIS library databases: <http://sissecondarylibrary.weebly.com/databases.html>
- [www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)
- [www.artlex.com](http://www.artlex.com)
- [www.smarthistory.org](http://www.smarthistory.org)
- <http://arthistoryresources.net/ARTHLinks4.html>

Museum websites (figure out which museum your artwork is in and then look it up!):

- The Art Institute of Chicago [www.artic.edu/aic](http://www.artic.edu/aic)
- The Louvre, Paris [www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr)
- Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org)
- Museum of Modern Art, New York [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)
- National Gallery of Art, London [www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk)
- National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)
- Philadelphia Museum of Art [www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)
- Tate Britain and Tate Modern, London [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)

**There are lots of different examples of narrative art throughout history. Just a few are listed below:**

*Birth of Venus*, Botticelli

*Venus and Adonis* or *Danae Receiving the Shower of Gold* or *Diana & Actaeon*, Titian

*Daphne and Apollo* or *The Ecstasy of St. Teresa*, Bernini

*Discovery and Proving of the True Cross*, Piero della Francesca

*Tribute Money*, Masaccio

*Last Judgment*, Michelangelo

*Calling of St. Matthew* or *Conversion of St. Paul* or *Christ at Emmaus*, Caravaggio

*Marie de' Medici Landing in Marseilles* or *Raising of the Cross*, Rubens

*Blinding of Samson* or *Joseph Accused by Potiphar's Wife*, Rembrandt

*Rape of the Sabine Women* or *Et in Arcadia Ego*, Poussin

*Death of Sardanapalus*, Delacroix

*Raft of the Medusa*, Gericault

*Burghers of Calais*, Rodin

*Death of General Wolfe*, Benjamin West

*Departure*, Max Beckmann

*Lorenzo and Isabella* or *Ophelia*, John Everett Millais

*The Awakening Conscience* or *Claudio & Isabella*, William Holman Hunt

Almost any work by Jacques-Louis David

*Ned Kelly Series* by Sidney Nolan

*Laocoon and His Sons* – Hellenistic sculpture

*Watson and the Shark*, Copley

*The Problem We All Live With*, Norman Rockwell

*The Bayeux Embroidery*

*The Palette of Narmer*

*Trajan's Column*

*Immaculate Conception and Birth of the Virgin Mary*, Ghirlandaio