

Art Docent Lesson: Winslow Homer Seascape

Supplies:

- Watercolor paper
- Wax Pastels (blue and light blue, yellow and red vermillion, orange and red)
- Paint brushes
- Water cups
- Paper towel to blot water puddles!
- Black construction paper (cut to small size for tracing and cutting)
- Cardboard templates for boat cut-out (boat, sail, pole)
- Cardboard circle template for round sun
- Scissors (one per student)
- Glue sticks
- Project Information Labels

Winslow Homer

Winslow Homer was never properly trained as an artist but he learned to become one and spent most of his early career doing advertisements and illustrations for magazines. So like many of our books have illustrations, or pictures that go with the words, these various magazines also had hand drawn illustrations (as opposed to photographs).

Then a very important part of our history took place. It was the Civil War. **(Show a civil war picture)** This was a very scary and upsetting time in America and Homer Winslow told many of the soldiers' stories through his paintings. Not everybody liked his paintings of the war, probably because they just didn't like the war, but nonetheless, those paintings made him famous.

After the war was over, Homer spent the next several years exploring other styles, techniques, and landscapes to paint. He moved around a lot, spending much of his time in island and ocean front communities. We can see in many of his later paintings, a fascination of the sea and of boats in particular. **(Show several seascape pictures)** His watercolor paintings of harbors, boats, oceans, and sunsets are among the most impressive watercolors of all time.

Put your name on the back of the paper.

Step 1 Divide the class into 2 groups. If possible, physically move desks to divide the class. Have materials on each desk ahead of time.

Group 1 will work on tracing and cutting out boat shapes from black construction paper.

Group two will work on coloring background. Follow steps 2-5

Step 2 Use the yellow wax pastel to draw a horizontal line through the center of the paper. Use a yellow wax pastel to draw the sun on either the left or right side of the paper with $\frac{1}{2}$ above the line and $\frac{1}{2}$ below the horizontal line. **(Adult helpers will need to help center the sun). You might want a template for this so the sun isn't the size of a quarter.**

Step 3 Use the yellow/orange wax pastel to color in the sun. Press hard and fill it in completely. This is the hardest part.

Step 4 Use the Red or Red Vermillion wax pastel to color in all the white above the yellow line. **You don't need to press down hard for this. Use nice long strokes.** When finished, use your red to go LIGHTLY over the top part of the sun.

Step 5 Use the Blue pastel to color in all the white below the yellow line. **You don't need to press down hard for this. Use nice long strokes.** When finished, use your blue to go LIGHTLY over the bottom part of the sun.

(Side note) Tell anyone who finishes early to go back over the red and blue colors again.

Switch groups!

After both groups have completed both parts, complete steps 6-9 as one large group.

Step 6 Clear the tables of all pastels. Distribute water and brushes to students.

Step 7 Use a little water at a time to “paint” over the red, then the blue, then the sun to make a sunset. Be sure to rinse your brush between colors.

CAUTION! Do NOT use too much water. Be sure to have paper towel ready to blot water puddles!

Step 8 To add highlight to the “water” below the sun, lightly swipe your brush through the lower part of the sun to pick up some of the yellowish color on the brush and then swipe the blue “water” below the sun in a side-to-side or squiggle motion.

Step 9 Glue your boat to the painting adjacent to the sun. Be sure that the bottom of the boat is in the water!

Project Information:

Winslow Homer (1836-1910) was an American landscape painter and printmaker, best known for his marine subjects and seascapes. He is considered one of the foremost painters in 19th century America and a leading figure in American art. Largely self-taught, Homer began his career working as a commercial illustrator. He later took up oil painting and also worked extensively in watercolor, primarily recording his vacations and homelands (most of which were ocean and seaside locations).

In today's project, the students used wax pastels to “draw” a seascape sunset. They then brushed over the art with water to blend the color and create a watercolor-like painting.

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