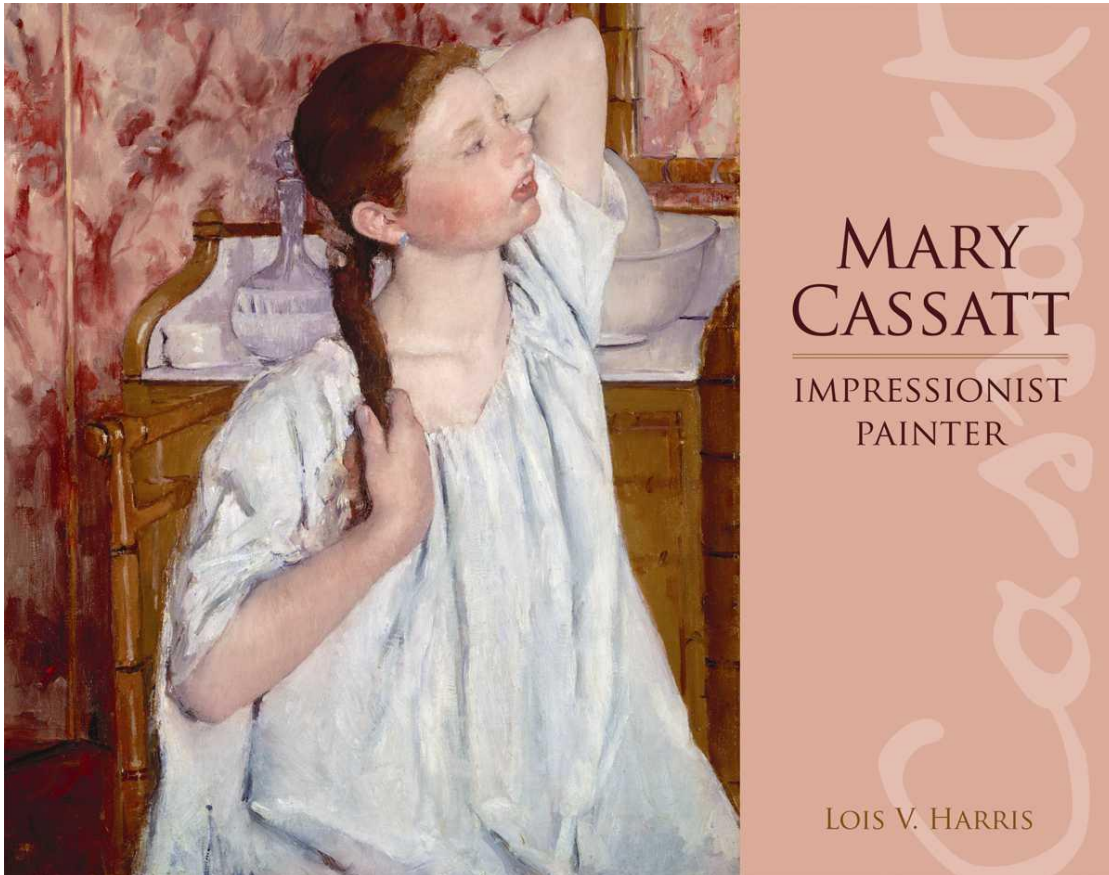


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DISCUSSION GUIDE for



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Mary Cassatt: Impressionist Painter

By Lois V. Harris

**Guide created by Rebecca Van Slyke
Reproducible worksheets**

Discussion Questions

Answer the questions below on a separate piece of paper.

1. Mary turned painting, a common hobby for young women in those days, into a career. What hobbies or interests do you have that could turn into a career someday?
2. Should Mary have changed her style of painting to please the judges? Why or why not?
3. Mary Cassatt and other Impressionists chose not to follow the judges' rules. When can following rules be a bad idea?
4. Is it ever all right to copy someone else's work? Why do you think Mary wanted her students to spend a year studying and copying the works of the great masters?
5. Mary painted mothers and their children, but was never a mother herself because most women did not work and raise children at that time. How have women's lives changed since then?
6. What characteristics did Mary have that made her a successful artist?
7. Mary traveled to many countries. Which countries would you like to visit, and why?
8. Read about Mary's home in Beaufresne, near Paris, on page 26. Draw a picture of the gardens surrounding her home. Don't forget to draw the vegetables she grew for her dinner parties!
9. Mary Cassatt and Edgar Degas were good friends. Write about one of your good friends. What makes him or her such a good friend?
10. Look at artwork in several different styles, like gothic, realistic, impressionistic, abstract and surrealist. What styles do you like best, and why? Are there things you appreciate about each style?



Activities

Creative Writing:

Write a dialogue between Mary and her parents as she tries to convince her father to let her go to Europe to study art.

Social Studies:

Read about Paris, France. What might you see, hear, feel, taste, or smell if you traveled to Paris?

Art History:

Look at some paintings from the “old masters,” like Raphael, Rembrandt or Da Vinci. Now look at several paintings by Mary Cassatt. How are they similar? How are they different?

Art:

Mary Cassatt painted family members. Have some of your family members or friends pose for you while you draw or paint them. Remember, Mary Cassatt had to keep her subjects entertained when they were sitting still, so be prepared to tell jokes or stories while yours are posing for you.



Art Technique:

Look at several impressionist paintings by Monet, Degas, Van Gogh, Manet, or Seurat. Notice how the artist used short brush strokes or dots of color to show the subject of the painting. Lightly sketch your subject with pencil, and then use the same technique of short brush strokes of color to paint your picture. Use many, many brush strokes so you can no longer see the white paper between the dabs of color.

History & Technology:

Mary was born in 1844. What was happening in the world at that time? Who was the president of the United States? What were some new inventions at that time? Who else was born that year? Use the internet to find the answers.

Math:

Look at the paintings by Mary Cassatt in this book. Make a table or a graph showing how many paintings she did of different subjects, such as children, adults, or pets.

Reading:

Read a biography of another famous artist. Compare and contrast their life to Mary Cassatt's.

Foreign Language:

Mary learned to speak French, German and Italian. Learn to speak some words in these, or other, languages. Here are some words to get you started:

Numbers

<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>German</u>	<u>Italian</u>
One	Un	Ein	Uno
Two	Deux	Zwei	Due
Three	Trois	Drei	Tre
Four	Quatre	Vier	Quattro
Five	Cinq	Funf	Cinque
Six	Six	Sechs	Sei
Seven	Sept	Sieben	Sette
Eight	Huit	Acht	Otto
Nine	Neuf	Neun	Nove
Ten	Dix	Zehn	Dieci



Colors

<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>German</u>	<u>Italian</u>
Red	Rouge	Rot	Rosso
Orange	Orange	Orange	Arancione
Yellow	Jaune	Gelb	Giallo
Green	Vert	Grün	Verde
Blue	Bleu	Blau	Blu
Purple	Violet	Violett	Porpora
Black	Noir	Schwarz	Nero
White	Blanc	Weiss	Bianco
Brown	Marron	Braun	Marrone
Pink	Rose	Rosa	Rosa
Gray	Gris	Grau	Grigio



Cooking:

Mary's guests loved eating her caramel candy. Use this recipe to make your own caramel candy guaranteed to leave a great *impression*. For safety, work with an adult, especially when boiling the candy.

Caramel Candy**Ingredients**

2 cups sugar
1 ½ cups corn syrup
2 cups whipping cream
1 cup butter
1 tsp. vanilla extract

**Directions**

Butter a 9x13 dish. In a large pan, combine sugar, corn syrup, 1 cup of the cream and butter. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. When it boils, stir in remaining cup of cream. Heat, without stirring, to 242 degrees Fahrenheit (116 degrees Celsius), or until a bit of syrup dropped into cold water forms a soft ball.

Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. Pour into buttered pan and refrigerate until cool. When cool, return to room temperature, cut into 1" squares and wrap in waxed paper.

About the book***MARY CASSATT: Impressionist Painter*, By Lois V. Harris**

Mary Cassatt knew from a young age that she wanted to make her living as an artist. She persuaded her parents to send her to the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts at age fifteen, and by age twenty, she had moved abroad to begin her painting career. After several years of study and success, she found her rightful place among the Impressionists, becoming their first and only female American member.

Illustrated with Cassatt's own work and that of other influential Impressionists, as well as photographs of the artist, this book offers children a glimpse at life during the late 1800s and showcases the colorful vivaciousness of Cassatt's work. Her beloved portraits of mothers and children are highlighted here, but the book also includes lesser-known work that shows Cassatt's range of talent. Children will enjoy seeing the warm and loving images of others their age relaxing with pets, enjoying the outdoors, and being held by caring adults.

Inspiring for all children, but especially appropriate for those with artistic interests, this book shows how one girl's lifelong dream to become an artist came true due to an independent spirit, determination, and commitment to her craft. Just as Mary Cassatt was an inspiration to many young artists who moved to Paris to fulfill their dreams, so may this book be a catalyst for young readers to follow their heart and mind towards their creative goals.