

GRADES
5+

Oil Painting



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ABOUT THIS COURSE

Oil Painting consists of six lessons. The course is designed to be completed by the student independently, but parents or guardians can choose to be as involved in the lessons as they would like to be. Students should be aware that their results will not exactly match the results shown in the lessons, which were completed by a professional artist. Painting techniques take time and practice to master, and each individual artist will have their own style. Repeated practice will help students refine their results.

Lesson Overview

Each lesson begins with an overview of a concept or technique used in oil painting, along with a small activity to illustrate that concept. To keep the student focused on the material, “Knowledge Checks” appear every few pages. The bulk of each lesson is a step-by-step walk-through of a full oil painting. Each project may take several hours to complete. The paint *does not* need to dry between steps. In fact, traditional oil paints will take days or weeks to fully dry. In Lessons 2–6, a suggested pause point has been included midway through the project, though students can pause at any point, cover their palette with plastic wrap, and continue the project later. **Note:** The Lesson 1 project is best completed in a single painting session.

Getting Started

The following page includes a list of supplies that will be needed for the full course. Each lesson begins with a supply list showing what is needed for that specific lesson. Students will need a well-ventilated workspace, an art smock or clothing they don’t mind staining, and the correct supplies for cleanup and disposal. (See page 15 for cleanup instructions, and always read product labels carefully.) Check with your local waste disposal facilities about how to properly dispose of oil paint, oil-soaked rags, and cleaning chemicals.

Oil painting is a time-consuming process. Each lesson is designed to be completed in one or two sessions, each lasting over an hour. The amount of time spent on each lesson may vary greatly from student to student. A good rule of thumb is for students to pause their work if they find themselves feeling tired or frustrated. Paint can be saved on the palette (just cover it with plastic wrap), and the student can resume work when ready.

COLORS AND SUPPLIES USED IN THIS COURSE

◆ Paint Colors Needed

Any shade of the listed colors will work, though phthalo blue and green are preferred when listed. If you would like to use the exact colors the artist used in the example painting shown, you will find their names in parentheses. Look specifically for traditional oil paint instead of water-mixable paint. Traditional oils will remain wet longer than water-mixable paints and will lead to better results.

- Red (cadmium red medium)
- Light yellow (cadmium yellow light)
- Medium yellow (Hansa yellow medium)
- Dark yellow (yellow ochre)
- Blue (phthalo [THAL-oh] blue)
- Turquoise
- Magenta
- Orange (cadmium orange)
- Light green (sap green)
- Deep green (phthalo green)
- Burnt sienna
- White (titanium white)
- Black (ivory black)

◆ Brushes Used

For convenience, we recommend purchasing a set of oil painting brushes that includes a variety of sizes and shapes. The brushes listed below are specifically called for in the course.

- Flat brushes
 - Size 1, several in sizes 3–7, and size 10 or 11
- Round brushes
 - Size 1 or 2 and size 4
- Filbert brushes
 - Size 2 and size 5
- Fan brush
 - Size 2 or 3

◆ Additional Supplies

- Pencil and eraser
- Ruler
- Linseed oil
- Glass container (with lid) to hold linseed oil
- Odorless mineral spirits (Gamsol)
- Brush-cleaning jar made for oil paint (with a mesh insert in the base of the jar)
- 6–8 count 8"x10" canvases
- Paper towels or disposable shop towels
- Paper palette or reusable palette
- Palette knife
- Easel (optional)
- Plastic tablecloth or drop cloth
- Washcloth or dishrag
- Dish soap
- 2 found objects (details in Lesson 6)

LESSON 1

COLOR THEORY BASICS: COLORFUL VESSELS

In this lesson you will peer into transparent, or see-through, forms to observe how colors meet, blend, and give birth to new shades.

SUPPLIES

◆ Paint Colors Needed

Any shade of the listed colors will work, though phthalo blue is preferred over other shades of blue. If you would like to use the exact colors the artist used in the example painting shown, you will find their names in parentheses.

- Red (cadmium red medium)
- Light yellow (cadmium yellow light)
- Blue (phthalo [THAL-oh] blue)
- Magenta
- Orange (cadmium orange)
- White (titanium white)
- Black (ivory black)

◆ Brushes Used

- 6 flat brushes (sizes 3 to 7), or brushes that can be cleaned between colors if necessary (See p. 15 for cleaning instructions.)
- Flat brush (size 10 or 11)
- Round brush (size 1 or 2) for outlining

◆ Additional Supplies

- Pencil and eraser
- Ruler (optional)
- Linseed oil
- Glass container (with lid) to hold linseed oil
- Odorless mineral spirits (Gamsol)
- Brush-cleaning jar made for oil paint (with a mesh insert in the base of the jar)
- 8"x10" canvas (used horizontally)
- Paper towels or disposable shop towels
- Paper palette or reusable palette
- Palette knife (optional)
- Easel (optional)

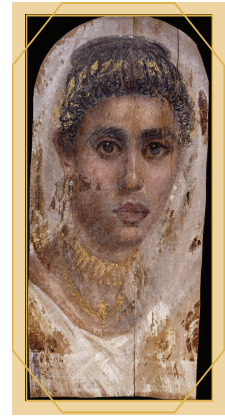


WELCOME TO OIL PAINTING

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OIL PAINTING

For centuries artists searched for a way to make their paintings bright and long-lasting. Since ancient times painters have used egg tempera, which is paint made from egg yolk and pigment. It dries quickly and needs a properly prepared surface to stick to. Because this paint is not very flexible, it cracks easily if bent and works best on stiff surfaces like wooden panels or walls.

By the 11th century, artists were adding oil to the paint—and something incredible happened! Paints became thick, vibrant, shiny, and slow-drying. Oil painting methods were refined over the centuries to become one of the most popular types of painting during the Renaissance.



Fayum Mummy Portrait
by Unknown artist
circa 100–120 AD

GREAT MASTERS OF THE OIL PAINTBRUSH

Read the description of each artist's history and methods below. Using the information provided, match each artist with their famous oil painting.



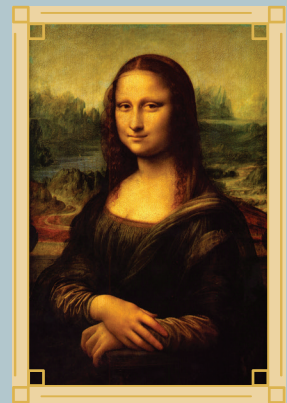
One of the earliest artists to gain fame for oil painting, Jan van Eyck lived in the early 1400s in the area that is now the Netherlands and Belgium. He is known for painting portraits, such as the *Arnolfini Portrait*, that were so detailed that every eyelash could be seen. Van Eyck is also known for his paintings on the Ghent altarpiece, which can be seen in St. Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent, Belgium.



Leonardo da Vinci was a painter, sculptor, architect, and engineer from Florence, Italy. During the early 1500s, he used very thin, translucent layers of oil paint to create one of his most famous works: the *Mona Lisa*. Her smile has glowed from the canvas for over 500 years. It is estimated that around 30,000 people visit the *Mona Lisa* every day at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France.



Vincent van Gogh began experimenting with oil paints in the 1880s. He used thick paint boldly, experimenting with colors and brushstrokes. Even now his brushstrokes seem to dance on the canvas in some of his most well-known works, such as his 1887 self-portrait or *Starry Night*.



LESSON 4

FORM, LIGHT, AND SHADOW: ORANGE STILL LIFE

SUPPLIES

◆ Paint Colors Needed (the exact colors the artist used in the example painting are in parentheses)

- Medium yellow (Hansa yellow medium)
- Red (cadmium red medium)
- Burnt sienna
- Blue (phthalo blue preferred)
- Magenta
- White (titanium white)
- Black (ivory black)

◆ Brushes Used

- Flat brush (size 3 or 4)
- Flat brush (size 7)
- Round brush (size 4)

◆ Additional Supplies

- Pencil and eraser
- Ruler
- 8"x10" canvas (used horizontally)
- Linseed oil in glass container with lid
- Odorless mineral spirits (Gamsol)
- Brush-cleaning jar
- Paper towels or disposable shop towels
- Paper palette or reusable palette
- Easel (optional)

CHOOSING A SUBJECT

In the last two lessons, you learned about painting landscapes, but today you will get to paint a different subject.

The **subject** of a painting can be anything the artist can imagine, from landscapes and seascapes to portraits and figures. Today's project will be a still-life painting of an orange.

What is a **still life**? A still life is a painting of an inanimate object, or something that does not move. This can include human-made objects like a vase or a book or natural objects such as flowers or seashells. In fact, the Caravaggio painting shown at the beginning of Lesson 3 is a still-life painting.



subject:

something that is represented or depicted in a work of art

Painting a still life can help you more closely examine the shape or structure of your subject, which is known as its **form**. It can also help you understand how light and shadow work together in a painting to accurately paint your subject's form.

Look at a few other examples of still-life paintings and how the artists have used different techniques to achieve different results.

COMPARE FORM, LIGHT, AND SHADOW

Study each pair of still-life paintings below and on the next page. In each pair, the two works present a similar subject, but they are painted in different ways. Answer the questions for each painting pair.



Still Life with Mackerel
by Anne Vallayer-Coster (1744–1818)
1787



Fish (Still Life)
by Édouard Manet (1832–1883)
1864

◦ What is the subject of both paintings?

◦ Which painting's subject looks more realistic?

A or **B**

◦ Draw an arrow next to each image to indicate which direction the light is coming from. How can you tell the light's direction?

◦ Notice transitional areas between lighter areas and shadowy areas. Draw a circle around any areas in the paintings that appear to be shiny or reflective.

◦ What do you notice about the paint colors in these reflective areas?



Still Life with Apples and Peaches
by Paul Cézanne (1839–1906)
circa 1905

◦ What is the subject of both paintings?

◦ Which painting's subjects look more realistic?

A or **B**

◦ Draw an arrow next to each image to indicate which direction the light is coming from.

◦ Notice areas in these paintings that are in shadow. What do you notice about the colors of the shadows?



Still Life with Lemons, Oranges, and a Rose
by Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664)
1633

◦ What do you notice about the locations of the shadows?



Still Life with Flowers
by Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750)
1700

◦ What is the subject of both paintings?

◦ Which painting's subject looks more realistic?

A or **B**

◦ Can you tell which direction the light is coming from in these paintings?

A Yes or No **B** Yes or No

◦ How does the use of light and shadow help one painting look more realistic than another?



Sunflowers
by Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890)
1888

It is important to note that the level of realism in a painting does not signify that a painting is "good" or "bad." Instead, the level of realism indicates the painter's style and technique when creating a painting. As you gain experience with painting, you may develop your own preferred painting style, or you may find that you enjoy using a variety of styles.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Which “rule” can help you plan your composition by dividing your canvas into nine equal parts?

- A. The Rule of Nines B. The Rule of Completion C. The Rule of Thirds

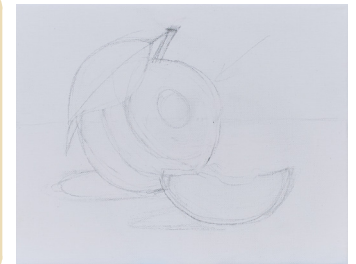
In the still life you will paint today, you will use techniques you learned in previous lessons as you focus on light, shadow, and form. It is time to get started!

START PAINTING

ORANGE STILL LIFE

Step 1: Sketch

- ◆ Before you begin, look at the finished painting. Notice each part of the orange, including the stem, leaf, peel, and wedge. Refer back to this image as needed as you follow the instructions.
- ◆ Begin by dividing your horizontal canvas into nine equal parts using the rule of thirds. Lightly sketch a grid on the canvas. The parts do not need to be exact, but you may use a ruler if you would like.
- ◆ Place your horizon line slightly above the center of the canvas. This will be the edge of a table where the orange will rest.
- ◆ The orange will be slightly left of the center of the grid. As you begin sketching an oval that will become the orange, place its bottom edge near the lower line of your grid. The horizon line that you sketched earlier will fall near the middle of the orange. This will place the top-right quarter of the orange just above the center of the canvas.
- ◆ Add the stem at the top of the oval, angling up and to the right. Then sketch a long, pointed leaf coming down on the left side of the orange from the stem. Notice how there is a small section near the leaf’s point where you can see the underside. Be sure to include this in your sketch. Erase any extra lines as needed.
- ◆ Next, sketch the orange wedge. To make it look like the wedge is sitting in front of the orange on the table, place the wedge slightly lower than the orange. The left end of the wedge will overlap the orange. Make the wedge about the same width as your orange. In your sketch, include an outline of the wedge’s peel and membranes.
- ◆ Imagine the light hitting the orange from the right side of the canvas. Add an oval to the upper-right side of the orange where the light will hit the peel. This oval will eventually be the lightest part of the painting.
- ◆ Next, plan where the shadows will fall on the orange. You will have both a middle shadow and a deep shadow on the orange. The deep shadow will be an angled area nearest to the table. The middle shadow will be the transition area between the main color of the orange and the deep shadow. This portion of the orange will be painted with a gradient to help add shape and form to the fruit.



KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Part of learning a new art form is learning all the vocabulary that goes along with it. Review some of the vocabulary you have learned so far in the course. Draw lines to match the word with its definition.

CONTRAST

gradual change from light to dark or from one color to another

IMPASTO

something that is represented or depicted in a work of art

GRADIENT

visual distance between the background and the foreground

SUBJECT

materials used to create art, such as oil on canvas

FORESHORTEN

difference between light and dark areas in the artwork

MEDIA / MEDIUM

applying thick paint layers to create texture

DEPTH OF FIELD

the arrangement of different components in your painting

FORM

to shrink the size of elements in a painting to make them seem farther away

OIL MEDIUM

the shape or structure of your subject

COMPOSITION

a substance added to oil paint to change its properties