

Characteristics of Impressionism

Impressionism is a late 19th-century art movement that originated in Paris, France. Innovative for their time, Impressionist painters broke the traditional rules of painting by changing the techniques, composition style, and subject matter of paintings. The movement got its name when critic Louis Leroy saw Claude Monet's *Impression, Sunrise* and stated that it looked more like an "impression" of a painting than a finished piece.

Characteristics of Impressionism:

- Visible brushstrokes and thick paint (impasto)

Emphasis on changing light—one painting might show multiple angles and brightness of sunlight

Capturing everyday life, ordinary subject matter, and the outdoors
- Sense of movement

Vibrant colors—colors are mixed on the canvas

Colorful shadows and light—black and pure white are rarely used

Choose four characteristics of Impressionism. For each characteristic, find an artwork (galleries 351, 355) and describe how the artist's use of the characteristic affects the artwork.

Characteristic	Artist and title	How does it affect the artwork? How does it affect the viewer (you)?
Capturing everyday life, ordinary subject matter, and the outdoors	Paul Signac, <i>Snow, Boulevard de Clichy, Paris</i> , 1886	The people walking in the snow make the painting easy to understand. I feel like I am in the snow scene.

Characteristic	Artist and title	How does it affect the artwork? How does it affect the viewer (you)?