

Impressionism and “Plein Air” Artwork

En **plein air** is a French expression that means “in the open **air**.”

It is used by artists to describe the art of outdoor painting, capturing landscapes and views in natural light. Famous **Impressionists** in France, such as **Claude Monet** used this technique often to create his beautiful landscapes.

Painting outdoors offers artists the pleasure of being in nature, and the ability to “stop and smell the roses” because of the need to concentrate on a single scene until the painting is completed. Many artists carry a portable easel in their cars or when they travel so they can stop and paint a scene that inspires them.

Impressionism:

Impressionism is a style of painting that focuses on the effects of light and atmosphere on colors and forms. Impressionist artists often used broken brush strokes rather than smooth and unnoticeable ones and also used many colors to paint scenes of every day life.

Claude Monet's , “Sunrise”



Vincent Van Gogh's,
“Starry Night”



What You Will be Doing:

Although typically done in oil paint or watercolor, you can create your own “Plein Air” drawings in pencil.

For this assignment, bring a piece of paper, pencil, eraser, and something to bear down on with you outside. Find a comfortable and visually appealing place to set up. You may also create your painting in watercolor, if you wish.

Begin your drawing by drawing the largest shapes you see to fill the page first.



Once that is done, you may begin shading in the darker areas.

Be sure to use a range of values (light to dark) as well as a variety of textures. Continue adding textures and shades until your work is complete. Your drawing should fill your entire page.

Once done, clean up any stray line with an eraser.

Allow yourself at least 1 hour to create a detailed Plein Air drawing.

Check out some of the examples below:

