



Students discover the meaning of Symbolism through an investigation of Marc Chagall's painting. They also learn how their classroom literary studies can help them analyze art.

As a boy Chagall loved geometry. Upon his arrival in Paris as an adult he was inspired by the cubist paintings he saw and used the technique in his art. In his powerful painting, *and Village*, Chagall uses cubism and many symbols to evoke memories of his childhood village in Russia. Not only does this painting reflect his personal experience but also conveys larger themes of the interdependence of humans, animals, and nature.

Symbolism: This important technique, found in both literature and art, can convey powerful ideas. Here, Chagall uses varying sizes of figures and shapes to illustrate the importance he finds in the relationship of humans, animals, and nature.

Form, size, placement: While the use of cubist techniques seems simple it is actually a complex task of placement and size.

Map Skills: Locate Russia on the classroom map.

Curriculum connection. Approach this painting as the students do their literary studies: An author plans out the structure of their story as an artist plans out their canvas.

SYMBOLISM.

IN CLASS ACTIVITY SUGGESTION: BRING PICTURES OF BASIC SYMBOLS SUCH AS A HEART AND PEACE SIGN, TO ILLUSTRATE

Some questions to pose:

- Why do you think Chagall made some figures small and some large?
- What do you think the circular shapes represent? (Sun, earth, and moon - also notice the eclipse).
- What types of lines do you see? Do they divide up the painting in some way? Are they in a sense symbolic too?
- What are some of the contrasts found in this painting? Light / Dark, Large / Small, People / Animals, Sun / Moon, Nighttime / Daytime.
- What do you see in the background?
- Why do you think the buildings in the background are positioned on a slope?