

Primary Focus: Portrait

Secondary Focus: The Renaissance Era



Portraits. The most famous portrait in the world contains mysteries that art historians have pondered for hundreds of years.

Discuss the definition of what a portrait is. Consider why artists paint portraits. Discuss the various mysteries surrounding the identity of the sitter.

Da Vinci was a master at depicting eyes in all of his paintings. Focus on this area and discuss.

New Art Term: There is an important method of painting that Da Vinci applied called ***sfumato***. This created the foggy or hazy feeling to the painting.

The Renaissance Era: Where did this take place and when. Discuss why Da Vinci is the quintessential Renaissance man. (Students are fascinated by his inventions).

In the **background** there are many things to discuss about the **landscape**.

Locate on a classroom map where Italy is in relation to the U.S.

IN CLASS ACTIVITY: HAVE THE STUDENTS STAND UP IN FRONT OF THE PAINTING AND STARE INTO THE EYES. HAVE THEM GO A FEW STEPS TO THE RIGHT AND THEN A FEW TO THE LEFT. IT WILL FEEL LIKE THE EYES ARE FOLLOWING THEM!

Some questions to pose:

- Is she smiling?
- What colors did Da Vinci use? And how do they help him convey the ***sfumato*** - or the hazy look - in this painting?
- Are the lines strong or smudged? Give an example.
- Do you feel as if the woman depicted here is really looking at you?
- What do you see in the background?
- Are both sides of the background even?
- Do you recall any other portraits you have seen? (They saw American Gothic in Kindergarten).