

# PAINTINGS OF THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE

Rembrandt & Vermeer



**Primary Focus:** Light

**Secondary:** Etchings

Art flourished during the Dutch Golden Age in 17th century Holland. Dutch painting of this era is famous for its ability convey the essence of light. Vermeer and Rembrandt were the masters of their trade.

There are many similarities to be found in Vermeer and Rembrandt's paintings. Their similar treatment of light, the quiet, domestic interior scenes, and the ability to find beauty in everyday life are all qualities found in both artists work. It is most likely that Vermeer was influenced by Rembrandt as Delft and Amsterdam, their respected cities, were in close proximity to each other. But each had their own unique approach and when studied their work becomes unmistakable for its originality.

Define and discuss The Dutch Golden Age: The Dutch economy boomed during this era producing immense wealth that continues to this day. Holland became a powerful trading nation and the city of Amsterdam was the busiest port in Europe. With this great wealth came patrons of the arts from all incomes. Wealthy businessmen and craftsmen alike bought art for their homes. Science, philosophy, and literature also flourished.

Locate on the classroom map the country of Holland and the cities of Delft and Amsterdam.

Social Science curriculum: The Dutch Golden Age was also a time of colonization. Mention New Amsterdam - especially if you know the colonies have already been discussed in class. (New Amsterdam was founded in 1625 as a Dutch Colonial settlement. Known today as New York City!)

Etchings are a type of medium. (like oil painting, pastels, collage, ect..) An etcher is a very skilled drawer. Briefly, it involves scratching the image onto a copper plate to be printed. There is no room for error in this medium.

**Some questions to pose:**

- Slide 2. Rembrandt was a very talented etcher. Do you know what an etching is?
- Slide 3. Rembrandt painted his self portrait over 100 times. How does he portray himself in the previous etching and in this painting? Realistic?
- Slide 4. What is the setting of this painting? What about the use of color and placement? How is light used here? Does it contribute to the dramatic atmosphere?
- Slides 5 & 6. Where is the light source coming from? How does light play a roll here? Does it work differently than in Rembrandt's work? Are these paintings calm or active? And why.
- These interior settings were commissioned to hang in someones home. Can you envision them in a house? In which room?