



Language through Art: An ESL Enrichment Curriculum (Beginning) Information for Teaching

La Promenade

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (French, 1841–1919)
1870
Oil on canvas
32 x 25 1/2 in.
89.PA.41



Background Information

The artist who uses the least of what is called imagination will be the greatest.

—Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *La Promenade* is a fleeting moment caught by chance—middle-class Parisians immersed in nature, possibly the landscape of the banks and islands of the Seine near Paris, not set before a studio backdrop. The dappled light filtering through the foliage would become a trademark of Renoir's finest Impressionist works of the 1870s and 1880s. He used a thin, oily paint mix, his glazes here floating into each other to create depth.

About the Artist

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (French, 1841–1919)

The son of a tailor in Limoges, France, Renoir saved the money he earned from painting china, fans, and window shades to move to Paris. Gustave Courbet and the old masters in the Louvre were his first major influences. With Claude Monet, Renoir helped found Impressionism in the late 1860s, freeing painting from having to tell a story. Artists could simply capture what they saw. Renoir began using broken brushstrokes, his color became lighter, and he composed his canvases in patches of colored light.

Renoir stopped exhibiting with the Impressionists after 1877, when his portraits were accepted by the Salon, whose wide audience helped him market his work. With success as a portrait painter, Renoir traveled widely. In 1881, having "wrung Impressionism dry," he went to Italy. Under the Renaissance masters' influence, he aimed at classic form while retaining the Impressionist palette's luminosity. In later years, crippled with arthritis and wheelchair-bound, he painted with a brush strapped to his hand. He also created sculptures, dictating to an assistant who worked the clay.