

# Normandy

*Love the land. Live the life.*



© J.F. Lange



*Normandy Tourist Board  
Educational Resource Pack*

*Part Two*

## NORMANDY

### *The Home of Impressionism*

# NORMANDY *The Home of Impressionism*

LOOK at the view around you for a split second, then close your eyes. What picture have you got in your mind? General shapes and colours? You won't remember every detail.

How would you paint that moment in time? This is what the ground-breaking artists – who came to be known as the Impressionists – were trying to do in France in the 1800s.

## Impressionism's Birthplace

The word 'Impressionism' comes from a picture by Claude Monet called **Impression, Sunrise**. He painted it in 1872, in the French town of Le Havre, on the Normandy coast.

In the early 19th century, paintings were mostly about important people, historical events or myths. A group of painters, including Claude Monet, saw this type of art as old-fashioned.

They wanted to paint the world, as it was, around them. It was all about giving a spontaneous impression, or a feeling, of what they saw.

In 1874, the artists exhibited their works, including **Impression, Sunrise**, in Paris and became known as the Impressionists.

But they didn't choose that term – it was coined by a journalist, Louis Leroy – and the name stuck!

In those days, 'impression' also meant 'sketch'. Some critics certainly thought the Impressionists could not paint; that they just made rushed sketches or unfinished pieces, not final paintings. Look at **Impression, Sunrise**. Do you agree?



Claude Monet  
*Impression, Sunrise*  
Musée Marmottan Monet

Why do you  
think Monet  
gave the  
painting  
this title?

## Location, location, location!

Impressionism was born at the same time as the railways. Train travel opened up a new world for these painters. They could now break free of stuffy studios, stop off along the Seine River and paint in natural light and *en plein air* – in the open air.



Gustave Caillebotte  
*La Seine à Argenteuil*

Beautiful Normandy was an ideal destination, with its picturesque coastline and countryside. It was also easy to reach by steam train; its historic capital, Rouen, is only 130km from Paris.

The impressionists wanted new subject-matter for their paintings. They believed that any scene was appropriate for painting, a sunrise or a boat on the water. They didn't want to be told what they should paint.

As well as the beauty of the old, Normandy had the energy of the new. Impressionists were attracted by the modernity of the railways, ports, and industry.

They also recorded the growth in leisure activities, with the rise of seaside holidays, watersports and horse racing in the region.

Artists, such as Édouard Manet and Berthe Morisot, painted these everyday scenes of modern life. This included, Parisians enjoying the long, sandy beaches at Deauville and Trouville and Normandy's other fashionable resorts: Dieppe, Honfleur and Le Havre.



## Modern materials

Advances in paint technology also helped the Impressionists to get closer to nature. Paint colours now came ready-mixed in handy tubes, instead of the old powdered pigments which needed to be mixed first. New shades of colours had also been developed.

Artist, Auguste Renoir said, "These tubes of paint, easily transportable, allow us to represent nature completely."



With their  
paints in zinc tubes,  
Impressionists could  
work quickly to  
capture the  
sensation of light.



Monet's *Promenade on the cliff at Pourville*  
The Art Institute of Chicago

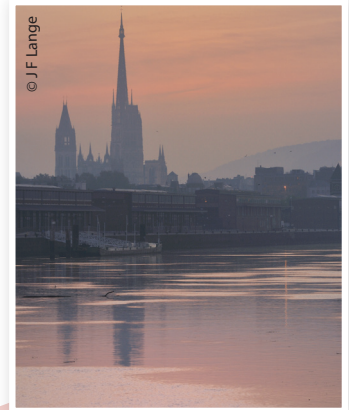


Gone were the made-up backgrounds of traditional paintings. Instead artists painted the real landscapes of Normandy in front of them. And they tried to record the view as it looked at *that very moment* in the day.

## Capturing the sensation of light

Impressionism is all about the instantaneous. Normandy's watery reflections and changeable weather were so much more appealing than the never-ending blue skies of the south. Painters loved Normandy's ever-changing light and they wanted to depict this *fugacité*, or the fleeting changes, with colour.

The wonderful scenery of Normandy was also the perfect subject for experimenting with the new lighter, brighter colours.



The River Seine at Rouen

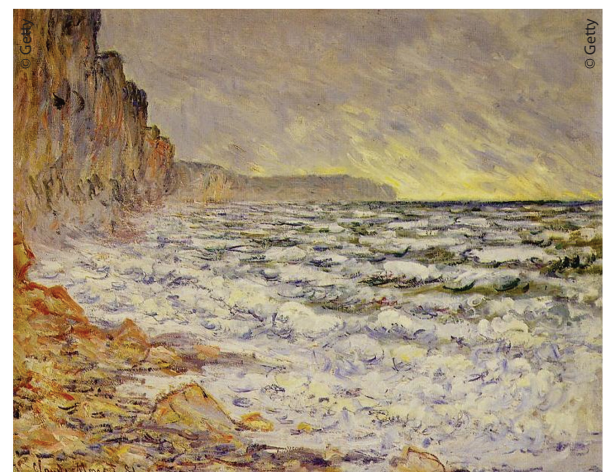
## It's all in the technique

What do you notice about the way the Impressionists painted?

It was very different to that of traditional painters. They tended to blend their colours to produce a smooth, finished style of painting. By applying their colour to the canvas in looser, more distinct brushstrokes, the Impressionists could work more quickly and capture the essence of what they saw.

Artist, Camille Pissarro said: "The eye should not be fixed on one spot but take in everything, observing the reflections, which the colours produce on their surroundings."

The Impressionists' energetic brushstrokes also helped to show movement and action. Can you see this in Monet's seascape, *Fécamp, Bord de Mer*?



Claude Monet  
*Fécamp, Bord de Mer*  
MUMA, Le Havre



## Challenges and breakthroughs

Painting outdoors was exciting and revolutionary. Normandy was like one giant outdoor studio for the Impressionists!

But it brought with it new challenges as Monet noted when he tried to paint the Cathedral in Rouen:

"At 9am there was hail. Then, in 10-minute intervals all day long, we had a procession of rain, sun and snow."

At one stage, Monet had 14 canvases of the Cathedral on the go at the same time. This was so he could keep switching between paintings to show how the changing light affected the building.

Monet said he wanted to paint, "The beauty of the air in which ... objects are located."

If the subject didn't matter as much anymore, Monet was making even more of a break from the paintings of the past. He was leading the way for modern art.



Paintings in Claude Monet's series of Rouen Cathedral can be seen today in Rouen Fine Arts Museum.

What do you think was more important to Monet?  
The Cathedral - the subject of the painting?  
Or the painting itself?

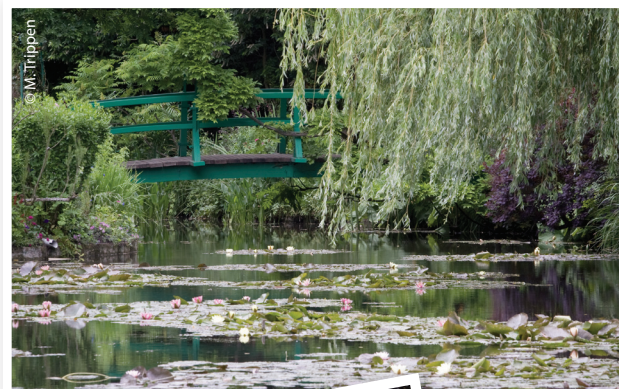


Claude Monet  
*Waterlilies*

Monet took Impressionism to a new level with his use of brushstrokes filled with individual, pure colour. We can see this in Monet's series of water-lily pictures, painted directly from nature, in his garden at **Giverny**.

Monet made his lily pond by diverting water from the River Epte. The pond water mirrored the sky and Monet enjoyed the challenge of painting the light off the water.

Giverny is situated in the Normandy countryside, about half-way between Paris and Rouen. Monet lived there for 43 years, from 1883 until his death in 1926. It's now open to the public.



Monet's House and Gardens,  
Japanese Bridge





## An artistic legacy

Impressionism's innovative style, and new vision of how painting should be, freed art from the past. Its popularity means that works by Monet and other key Impressionists can now fetch millions of pounds.

Every year, millions of visitors come to Normandy to follow in the footsteps of the Impressionists and to visit the beautiful landscapes which inspired a new art movement ...



## Impressionist Art in Normandy

### MUSEUMS

Musée André Malraux, Le Havre, has the second biggest collection of Impressionist art outside Paris

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen <http://rouen-musees.com/en>

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen <http://www.mba.caen.fr>

Musée des Impressionismes, Giverny <http://giverny.org/museums/impressionism/>

Musée MUMA, <http://www.muma-lehavre.fr/en>

**General information on Impressionism**, <http://www.normandie-tourism/main-menu/welcome-to-normandy/impressionism/219-2.html>

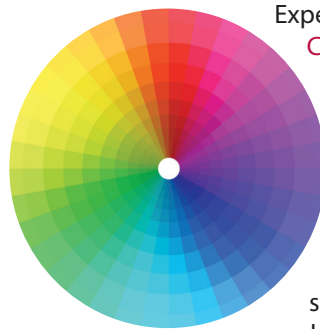
**Online video Impressions of Normandy**, <http://www.normandie-tourisme.fr/articles/the-film-normandy-birthplace-of-impressionism-865-2.html>

**Travelling to Normandy: Brittany ferries** - [www.brittanyferries.co.uk](http://www.brittanyferries.co.uk)

## ACTIVITY: Paint like an Impressionist

### Feeling inspired - why not paint in the style of the Impressionists?

- **CONTENT / SUBJECT-MATTER:** paint a scene or activity from your every-day life. Have a go at painting outside!
- **TECHNIQUE:** Paint in a rapid, sketchy way. Remember: you are painting 'a quick glance', so get across the spontaneous feeling, or the atmosphere of what you see. Don't worry about detail.
- **COLOUR:** Try bright colours and don't mix them. Instead, use brushstrokes of individual colour.
- **TONE = THE LIGHT OR DARKNESS IN A PAINTING:** Use colour to capture the light and shade but no black!
- **FORM = SHAPES/OBJECTS:** With your sketchy brushstrokes, the forms in your painting will not look clear but more as if they are disappearing or dissolving into each other.



Experiment with **COMPLEMENTARY COLOURS** to create tone.

This is when you use a primary colour, and its opposite, secondary colour made by the other primaries on the colour circle, to make shadow. Monet often used red as shadow for green.

Renoir said, "No shadow is black. It always has a colour. Nature knows only colours..."



# Impressionism - Timeline of Key Events

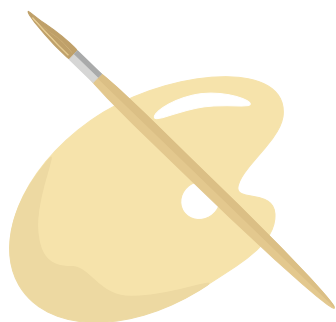
## ACTIVITY A: UNDERSTANDING CHRONOLOGY

### The Development of the Impressionist Art Movement

**Can you work out the order of these key events that enabled impressionism to blossom as an art style?**

**i)** Using your detective skills, can you work out the order in which these key events took place?

**ii)** Add them to the timeline to find out the date the event took place. You could cut and stick them, or write them on to the timeline.



The artists organise and exhibit their paintings at an exhibition in Paris as none of the galleries will show them. They become widely known as the Impressionists.

Impressionism is one of the most loved art movements in the world and Impressionist paintings sell for millions of pounds at auctions.

Seaside bathing becomes fashionable in both France and Britain. Seaside resort towns begin to develop on both sides of the Channel.

The International Marine Exhibition is held in Le Havre to celebrate the young painters Monet, Manet, Courbet and Boudin and other young artists who were trying to capture the impression and the light of Normandy landscape and architecture on canvas.

The steam railway line from Paris to Rouen, Normandy is opened. Lines are extended to Le Havre and Dieppe by the end of the decade. The journey from the capital to seaside towns is now much faster than it used to be by stage coach or steam boat.

The impressionist paintings gradually become more accepted. Monet begins to make money from his paintings.

Monet paints a picture called 'Impression, Sunrise' in the town of Le Havre on the Normandy coast. An art critic, Louis Leroy, mocked the painting when it was exhibited in Paris. He called it an 'impression' rather than a 'painting'.

Emperor Napoleon III says the artists new painting style is not fit to be seen in the official galleries in Paris. But he says the public should judge for themselves. An exhibition called the 'salon des refuses' (Salon of the Refused) is put together but most visitors laugh at the paintings.

John G.Rand invents the paint tube. Paint can now be produced in bulk in tin tubes with a cap. More colours are available and they last longer. This makes painting 'en plein air' (outside) much easier as before that paints were stored in pig's bladders! Artists soon begin experimenting painting outdoors.



# Impressionism - Timeline of Key Events

**Date****Event**

Early 1800s

1841

1843

1863

1868

1872

1874

1880s

End of the 20th  
Century

# Impressionism - Map of Key Places

## ACTIVITY B: LOCATING SITES OF WHERE HISTORICAL EVENTS TOOK PLACE

**Can you locate the sites where the artists painted and developed the Impressionist art movement?**

- Use the text provided and an atlas to find the names of the places marked on the map of Normandy. Write them in the map's key.
- Find out why these places were important to the Impressionist artists.

**NEED SOME HELP?** The following place names and event clues will help you to create your map.

### PLACES

Can you locate these places on the map of Normandy?

Le Havre

Etretat

Honfleur

Rouen

Fécamp

Giverny

Dieppe

Sahurs

River Seine

La Bouille

### EVENTS

Can you work out what happened where?

A port on the southern side of the mouth of the Seine estuary. It inspired many of the painters who were to become known as the Impressionists as there was so much to paint here - the estuary, the quays, the churches and the old streets. This town escaped the bombings in the Second World War and nearly all the locations painted by the Impressionists can be found here today.

This fashionable seaside resort is known as a 'ville d'art et d'histoire' (town of art and history). The impressionist painters enjoyed painting marine scenes on the beaches here.

This became a fashionable seaside resort in the early 1830s. The artists painted the dramatic white chalk cliffs found here.

Monet lived in this small village for 43 years until his death in 1926. He created a beautiful garden with lily ponds and a Japanese bridge. He painted his famous water-lily pictures in his garden. Many artists came to visit and work with Monet over the decades he lived here. His house is now open to the public.

This seaside port, to the north of the Seine Estuary, played a very important role in the evolution of Impressionism. The International Marine Exhibition was held here in 1868 to celebrate the young painters Monet, Manet, Courbet and Boudin who were painting there. Monet painted his picture 'Impressionism, Sunrise' here a few years later which was to give the art movement its name.

This city sits on a bend on the River Seine. In 1892, Monet painted the Cathedral here. At one stage he was working on 14 paintings of the cathedral at the same time, and he switched between them to try to paint precisely the different light and shadows on the building at different times.

Village to the south of the River Seine

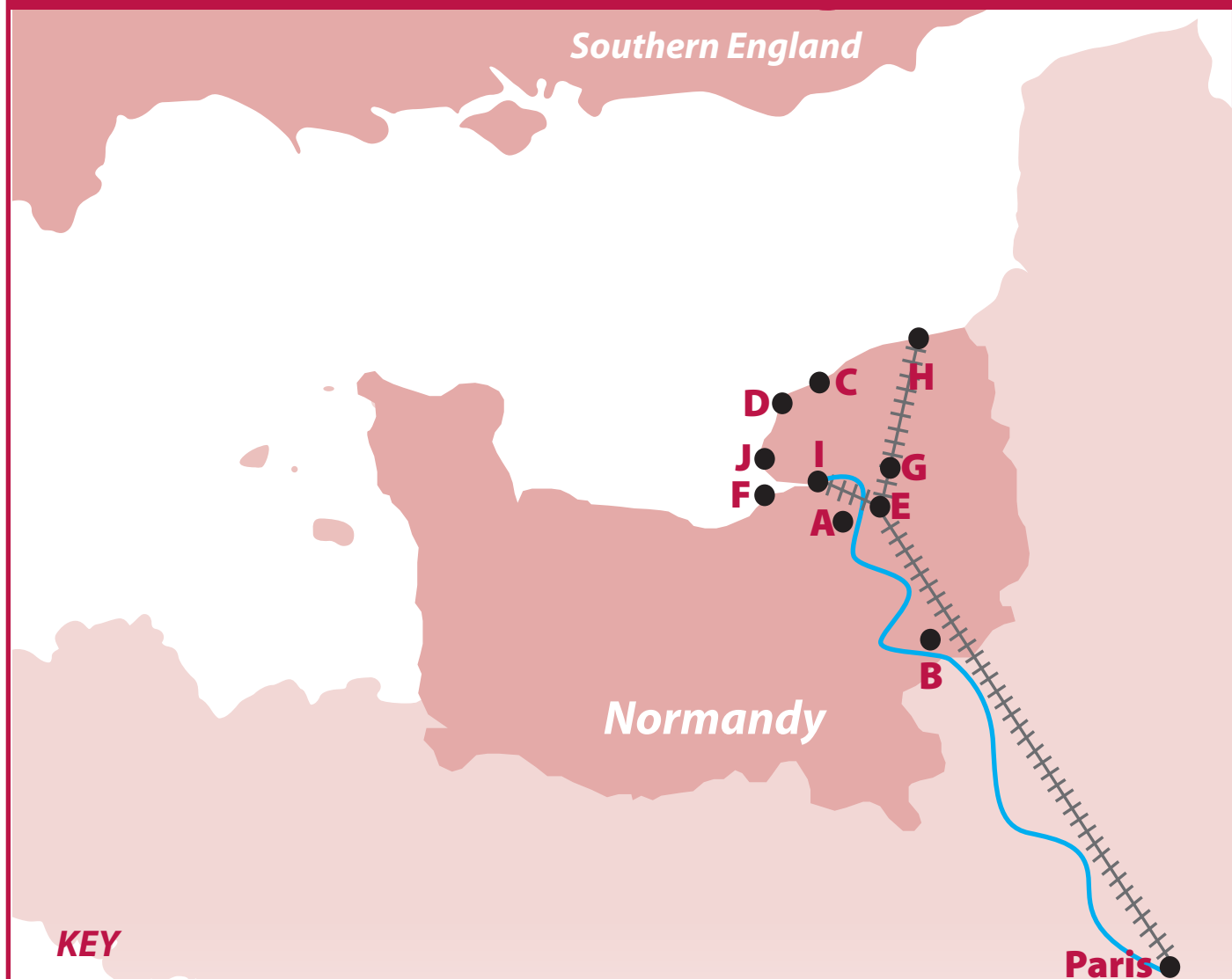
A fishing port hidden in a gap in the high white cliffs. Monet spent winters painting here. It is famous for its iconic natural cliff arch and needle structures.

Village to the north of the River Seine

Artists set up their easels in the fields around these two small villages. They painted views of the River Seine, tug boats and sailing boats, and the surrounding hills. They were fascinated by the sharp bends in the river and how the light changed quickly here which they tried to capture in their paintings.



# Impressionism - Map of Key Events



## KEY

	.....
--	-------

	.....
--	-------

<b>A</b>	.....
----------	-------

<b>B</b>	.....
----------	-------

<b>C</b>	.....
----------	-------

<b>D</b>	.....
----------	-------

<b>E</b>	.....
----------	-------

<b>F</b>	.....
----------	-------

<b>G</b>	.....
----------	-------

<b>H</b>	.....
----------	-------

<b>I</b>	.....
----------	-------