

Art Enrichment

Artist Biography

Grade 4

*****Please do not read the biographical information word for word to the class. Paraphrasing would be best.**

Pierre Auguste Renoir (pronounced payr oh-GOOST Ren-Wah) **French, 1841-1919** **Impressionist**

Renoir is one of the most loved painters. His pictures are filled with warmth and happiness. Pierre Auguste Renoir was born in Limoges, France in 1841. He was the sixth of seven children in his family. His parents found him a job painting porcelain vases and plates. By the time he was 19 years old, he decided he wanted to become an artist. He saved his money and paid to study at art school.

At first, he studied how to draw and paint as the old masters had done. This way of painting was very careful, using dark colors. The old masters' art showed historical or important people. Renoir enjoyed learning about these paintings in class but felt the style was much too old fashioned. Three of Renoir's classmates (including Claude Monet) wanted to try new ways of painting. They liked painting lively, everyday scenes of people relaxing. They used bright colors and quick brush strokes to make their scenes seem sparkling and alive.

Renoir and his friends decided to put on an exhibition to show their new style of painting. Most people didn't like the new paintings at all. They thought the paintings looked sloppy. One writer described the paintings as "impressions". He meant the paintings were not detailed copies of a person or view. Instead, the artist tried to recreate the impression a place or person had on them. Fortunately, a few people in Paris, France did like this new style called Impressionism. One wealthy man asked Renoir to paint portraits of his family. Soon other people asked Renoir to paint portraits too. Renoir loved painting portraits but he also painted landscapes and still lifes.

In his last years, Renoir had pain in his hands and had to have the brush strapped to his hand. Renoir lived to be 78 years old. Just before he died, he told a friend, "I think I'm beginning to understand something about painting."