

Art & History: Interconnected

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Hello, high school art history students!

I don't know about you, but two of my favorite subjects are art and history. Putting the two together is just natural. There are so many interesting connections between art and history. For example, what did Michelangelo have to do with the Reformation? And how did the Baroque period send the Pilgrims high-tailing it to the New World? Nothing happens in a vacuum. History affects art, and art sometimes affects history! In this class, we are going to explore how world events impacted artistic movements and learn how different artists communicate their message through their art. We'll learn about many artists, their lives, and their part in history.

This class can be a twelve-week class or an eighteen-week class. It's up to you. Periodically, throughout the class, I'll give you an optional research project. If you're planning on taking this as a twelve-week class, don't do these research projects. If you're going with the eighteen-week plan, do all the research projects. Trust me, you'll learn a lot!

As you plan your weeks, find out where art museums are in your area and plan a trip. Sometimes there are art displays that change periodically, so you can make several trips and see different art each time. Also, spend some time *doing* art. I'll give you some chances to do that but seek out ways to increase your personal art abilities as you go along. Also, plan an exhibit of your art at the end. You can do this on your own or get some friends together to exhibit their art with you. Sometimes public libraries are happy to exhibit students' works.

Below, I have given you a rough outline of art styles, their characteristics, artists, and historical context. This is for your reference. You have probably made a timeline in a history class in the past. That will be extremely useful for this class! Either add to your previous timeline or make a parallel one for artists and art styles. Have that ready to go on your first day. It will be your responsibility to add to it throughout the class.

Have fun! And **always** use your art for the glory of God!

In Christ's Service,
Carla Earley

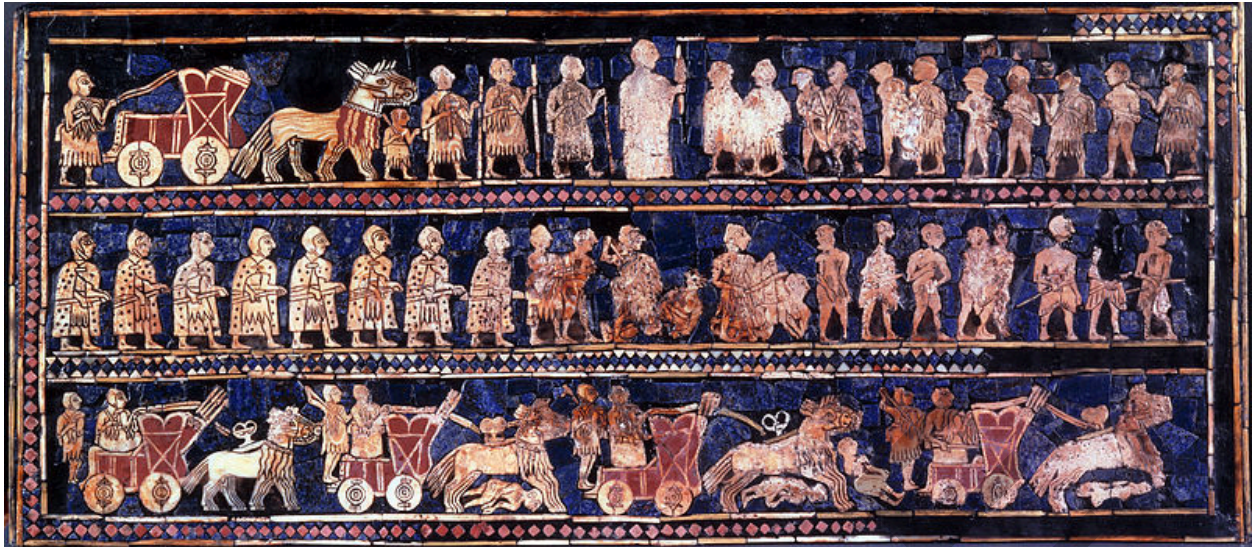
Week 1

Day 1

Until the Middle Ages, the artists behind works of art weren't well known, but what they left behind has outlasted their makers. Let's look at a few.



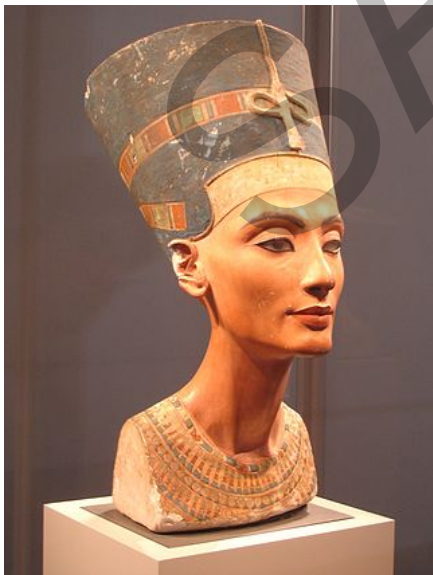
Lascaux Cave Painting, France



Standard of Ur, Iraq, mosaic



Pyramids, Egypt



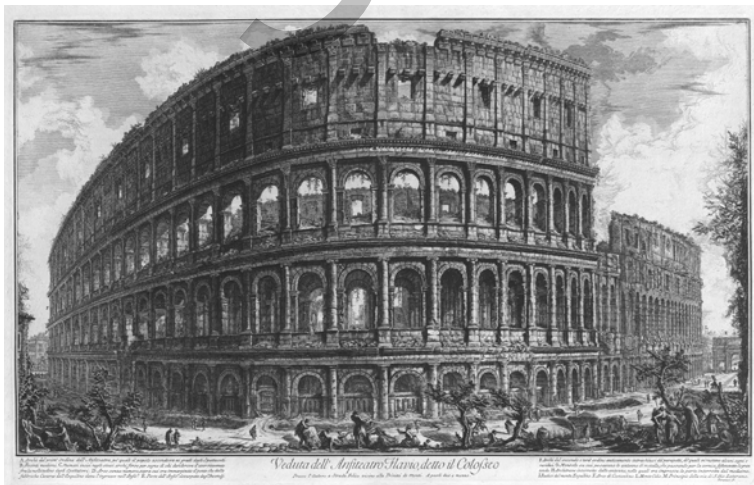
Bust of Nefertiti, Egypt



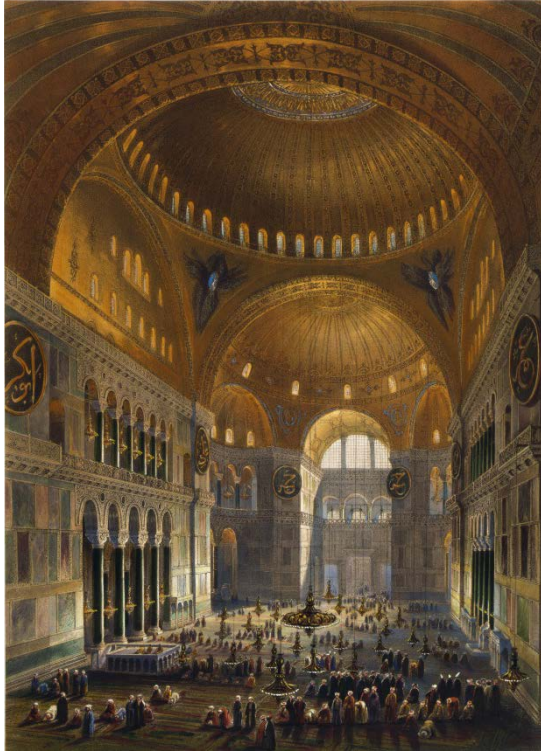
Reconstruction of the Acropolis in Athens by Leo von Klenze, 1846 (The Parthenon is the building on the upper right.)



Pantheon (painted by Giovanni Paolo Panini) in Rome, Italy



The Colosseum (by Giovanni Battista Piranesi) in Rome, Italy



Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey



A segment of the Bayeux Tapestry depicting Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, rallying Duke William's troops during the Battle of Hastings in 1066. (See the full Bayeux Tapestry [here](#), about a third of the way down the page. It's incredibly long!)

These works of art and architecture are only representative of different time periods and people groups. Referring to the timeline I have provided at the beginning of this class, notice where each of these fit into history. Find out a little more about each. Find out why each of these were made and why they were important. Why are they important now? What is special about each of them? Write down your findings.

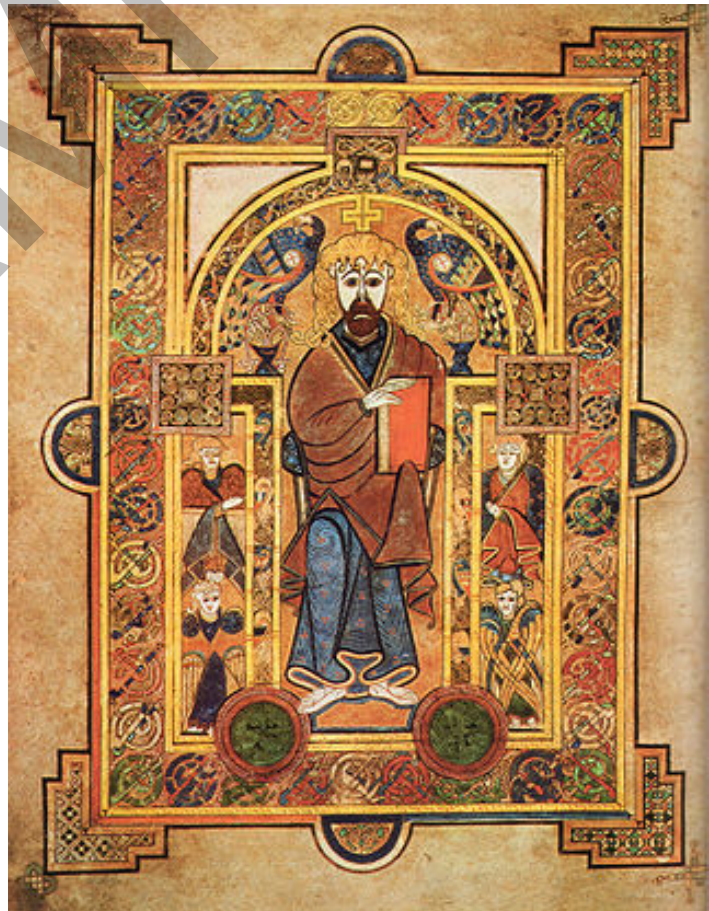
Day 2

**If it is available to you, watch the movie The Secret of the Kells. It tells this story beautifully! You may be able to find it online or at your library.*

Let's jump right in and visit the Middle Ages. What do you think of when you see the words "Middle Ages"? Maybe knights and castles? Robin Hood? The Black Plague? I think of monks in dimly lit scriptorium monasteries copying the Bible. If you'll notice on the timeline, this was before printing was invented. Monks, writing in beautiful calligraphy, meticulously copied the Latin Bible by hand. They also gorgeously illustrated some of them in gold and vibrant colored ink. The idea they wanted to convey was that the words in the text were as beautiful as the pictures and worthy of elaborate illustration.

The ***Book of Kells***, named after the Abbey of Kells where it was kept, was what is called an illuminated manuscript of the four Gospels of the New Testament. It was created in a Columban monastery in Ireland around AD 800. It is now on permanent display at Trinity College Library in Dublin and is known as Ireland's finest national treasure. It is bound in four volumes, its pages made of high quality vellum (calf skin) with ten full pages of elaborate illustration. The size is about 10" x 13". The text itself seems to be the work of at least three different scribes. Since the Abbey of Kells was plundered many times by the Vikings, it is a miracle the book survived at all. It is said to be in remarkably good condition, though about thirty pages (folios) have been lost over the centuries.

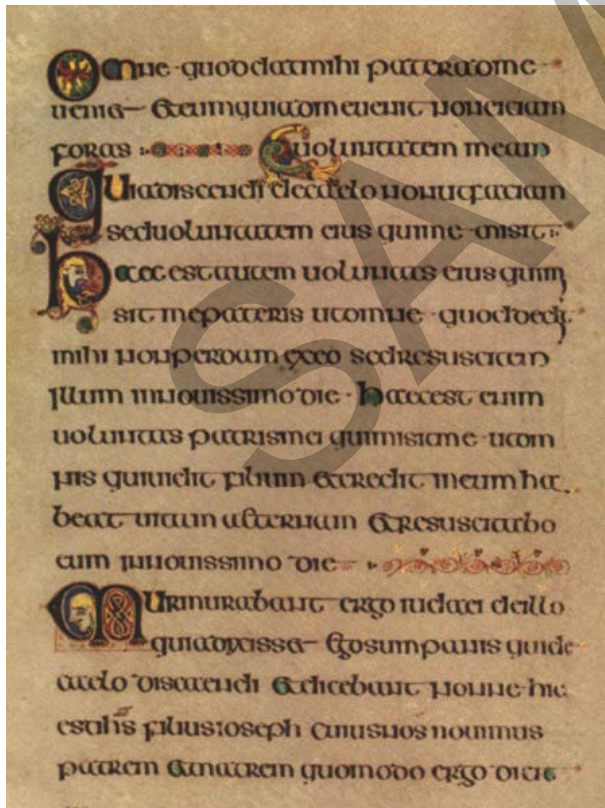
Here are some examples from the pages.



Book of Kells, Christ Enthroned, 800 AD



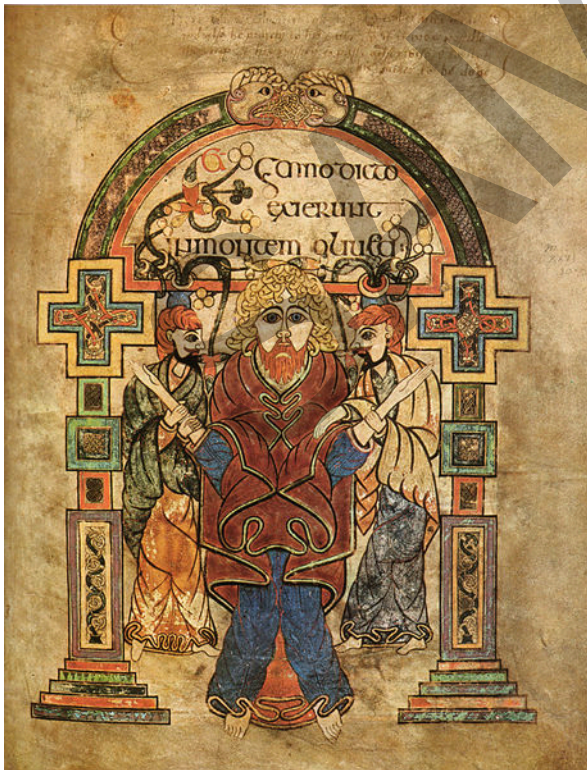
Book of Kells, The Four Evangelists: a man (Matthew), a lion (Mark), an eagle (John), and an ox (Luke)



Book of Kells, from the Gospel of John (Try to read it if you know Latin. If you don't, then don't bother.)



Book of Kells, the Chi Rho monogram. These are the first two letters of the word Christ in Greek.



The Book of Kells, the Arrest of Christ in Matthew.

Considering the whole book itself was probably smaller than your computer screen (10" x 13"), can you see how ornate each of the illustrations is? Enlarge the first illustration and look at the detail and colors. Can you imagine how long it might have taken to make just that one page? If you took your Bible and tried to copy one page of it, how many times do you think you would mess up? There was no erasing with this ink! Everything had to be perfect! These monks were amazing artists and scribes, weren't they?

Day 3

Set aside one hour and find a Biblical passage that is particularly meaningful to you. If you know how to do calligraphy, consider doing a short passage (5–6 verses) in calligraphy. If you don't know how to write in calligraphy (no time like the present to learn), choose a longer passage and write it in your fanciest handwriting. To add ambiance to your project, feel free to do it in a castle or monastery, but if you are short on medieval structures, try doing it by candlelight. Then, on another page, plan a drawing to illustrate your passage. It does not have to be as elaborate as that of the *Book of Kells*, since you don't have years to do it. If you have time, though, finish your project with vibrant colored markers. Gold leaf is optional!

Day 4

Giotto di Bondone, an Italian painter and architect from Florence, Italy, lived from around 1270 to 1337. If you'll notice on the timeline above, this was after the Crusades but before the Black Death took over Europe. When times are peaceful, art and architecture tend to flourish. Giotto's past isn't known completely, but the story goes that he was originally a shepherd who enjoyed drawing. A famous artist of the time, Cimabue, happened to see his work on a large stone and decided to take Giotto on as a student. At the time, paintings were rather stiff, formal, and symbolic, but Giotto painted what he saw and felt, allowing his personality to shine through. He painted using perspective, making his paintings look more life-like and full instead of flat.

Compare the paintings of Mary and Jesus and the Last Supper done by Giotto and his master Cimabue and answer the questions:

- What is similar?
- What is different?
- What kinds of symbols do they use?
- Which one is more realistic?

Write down your observations in a paragraph.



Madonna Enthroned by Giotto



Virgin Enthroned with Angels by Cimabue



The Last Supper by Cimabue



Last Supper by Giotto

Giotto's most well-known work, considered one of the most important masterpieces of Western art, are the frescoes of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, which was completed around 1305. His frescoes illustrate the life of Mary and Jesus. He captured specific moments in time with human emotions, gestures, and dimensions. Look at a few of these paintings.



Expulsion of the Money Changers from the Temple by Giotto



Kiss of Judas by Giotto



Lamentation (The Mourning of Christ) by Giotto

Watch this video of the Scrovegni Chapel to get an idea of how immense this project was for Giotto: <https://youtu.be/nEvhS9BRtuA>. (Also, notice how they pronounce “Giotto.”) Notice how the narrator says, “Anyone with a knowledge of the Bible can read the chapel like a picture book.” Imagine sitting and worshipping in this chapel. This video will really get you in that mindset: <https://youtu.be/n1R7ZPD1PhQ>. Try to figure out which story each scene is depicting.

Back in the Middle Ages, no matter where you went to church, the service was most likely in Latin, which was not understood by the common people. The Bible was written in Latin . . . and common people would not have had a Bible or known how to read, whether in Latin or in their own language. Art inside of churches, whether statues, stained glass windows, or frescoes, helped the people learn Bible stories. This particular chapel was originally built to be a private chapel for a wealthy family, but most churches were decorated in such a way that would’ve been a way to teach the people stories of the Bible. These paintings in the Scrovegni Chapel show not only Giotto’s talent as a storyteller, but possibly his faith as well.

SchoolhouseTeachers.com note: Parents should closely monitor children’s use of YouTube and Wikipedia if you navigate away from the videos and articles cited in these lessons. We also recommend viewing the videos on a full screen setting in order to minimize your students’ exposure to potentially offensive ads and inappropriate comments beside or beneath the video.

Day 5

Today you will plan a chapel. Take a look at the plan for the Scrovegni Chapel: <https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/g/giotto/padova/>. The spaces with numbers are where he painted his frescoes. He took his subjects from the life of Mary, Christ, and Joachim (who, incidentally, according to tradition, was Mary’s father). You, however, may take your stories from anywhere in the Bible, like Michelangelo did, later. Make a list of the Biblical moments you would include. How would you arrange them? What will you include? If you knew that this would be the only “Bible” many people would “read,” how would this affect your artwork?