Learning to Look:

Introduce the painting to the students, guiding their looking and using open-ended questions to elicit their personal responses.

► This is not the time to focus on the background information; save it until the students have shown interest in the information, generated some questions and tried to answer their questions through looking!

“Take a few minutes to look quietly at the image.”
Older students could write down their thoughts while looking.

“What do you see?”
This is an opportunity for everyone to offer an idea, as each new thought enables everyone to see new things. Precise verbal descriptions help to clarify and identify details and usually allow for “correction” of any unsubstantiated ideas.

► Teacher facilitates the discussion but should not be an expert on what “should” be seen, or how the painting “should” be interpreted!

“How does the artist help us to see that?”
Colors used, placement of objects in the composition, use of light and shadow to highlight details, use of strong or dynamic lines, size of objects, and other decisions made by the artist can help us to “read” the painting.

“What questions do you wish you could ask the artist?”

Looking to Learn:

The suggested activities are strategies to enhance student observation and analysis skills while having fun looking and learning.

Make copies of the worksheets for use by individuals or groups of students.

Project the image and outline selected features on blackboard or large paper. Students can then add appropriate details or “continue the story” in mural-form.

Create a museum-in-the-classroom (or hallway) so students can see each other’s work and share their ideas.
Art Alive! – Lessons for the Primary Classroom

Towing a Boat, Honfleur, 1864
Claude Monet, French, 1840-1926
Oil on canvas
91.35

LET'S LOOK:
What do you see?
What in the painting makes you say that?
How does the artist help you to see that?
What questions do you have?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

Five Senses
Ask students to imagine and describe textures, smells, sounds, and tastes they "see" in the artwork. What specific details are they "reading?"

Using the line drawing of the painting, students can fill in the missing details that they think are important.

Then What Happened?
Introduce the artwork as if it were a scene from a storyboard. Ask the students to imagine how the story might continue (group activity).

Using the storyboard worksheet, the students can draw additional or alternate scenes using details gleaned from the brainstorm session.

How's the Weather?
Ask the students to identify and describe the weather conditions in scene. What details does the artist use to tell us the weather?

Use the worksheet to depict scene in different seasons or weather conditions. Students can draw and color in new details or cut them from magazines to create a collage.

Create by projecting the image on the wall and sketching in the outlines; students can then add the details.

TARGETED SKILLS:
description, details, vocabulary, point of view

story structure, details, sequencing

description, inference, prediction, compare/contrast
Art Alive! – Lessons for the Elementary Classroom

Towing a Boat, Honfleur, 1864
Claude Monet, French, 1840-1926
Oil on canvas
91.35

LET'S LOOK:
What do you see?
What in the painting makes you say that?
How does the artist help you to see that?
What questions do you have?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

What's in a Name?
Introduce the name of the painting and ask students to find all the details that fit the title.
Ask students to rename the painting and explain their choice.
Divide the class into groups and ask each to create a new title based on a different characteristic of the painting: color, location, action, time, etc.

Musical Moods
Ask students what sounds they hear in the painting. What colors or lines or characters are they “hearing?”
Try to recreate various sounds from the scene.
Ask students what music they would use if this was a scene in a movie.
Listen to examples of music from the time and place of the painting.

Wish You Were Here!
Using the painting as a “vacation destination,” compose postcards to family or friends telling about your experience.
Choose 1-2 specific details and describe them in words so that your friends can picture the location too.

TARGETED SKILLS:
inference, details, prioritizing, description, point of view
details, context, description
description, point of view, prioritizing, correspondence
Towing a Boat, Honfleur, 1864
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About the Painting:
The rocky cliffs in the distance of this scene give way to a sandy beach in the foreground, where two figures strain at the rope tied to the front of a small boat. The low clouds and the disappearing sun darken the sky. In response, a lighthouse begins to shine its lantern at the far edge of the cliffs. Although the artist used very few colors in producing this painting, the light in the sky, the reflection in the water, and the shadowy figures on the shore lend the scene a very strong sense of place.

About the Artist:
Claude Monet is one of the most familiar and popular artists in the last 500 years. His evocative studies of light and water through the use of intriguing, and sometimes surprising, combinations of color made him the “father of Impressionism.” Indeed, the term impressionism was coined by a scornful critic upon viewing Monet’s 1872 painting Impression: Sunrise. The Impressionists’ experimental, modern, non-traditional images of light, color, and everyday scenes did not fit the “official” definition of true art as depicting only noble portraits, great historical or mythological events, and classical landscapes. In his early career, Monet lived in poverty as buyers were not interested in this new work, although he eventually achieved great success and recognition.

Additional Information:
Monet was 24 years old when he painted this scene, one very familiar to him as he had grown up in a village called LeHavre, near Honfleur on the northeast coast of France in Normandy.
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Then What Happened?  A Storyboard Worksheet

Sketch out your story scene by scene, just as movie makers do.
Develop your story idea by placing the painting in as a beginning, middle or ending scene,
and then draw two other scenes that fill in the story.

CLAUDE MONET
_Towing a Boat, Honfleur, 1864_

Story Title: ________________________________
Claude Monet
*Towing a Boat, Honfleur*, 1864

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