

LEARNING TO LOOK

Objectives: Observing Details
Developing Vocabulary
Using the 5 Senses
Identifying the Elements of Art

Color and Light (*page 1*)

Lines (*page 2*)

Shapes (*page 3*)

Composition and Balance (*page 4*)

Exploring through the 5 Senses (*page 5*)



LILLY MARTIN SPENCER
Peeling Onions, ca. 1852
Oil on canvas
Gift of the Women's Council in
celebration of the 75th anniversary
of the Memorial Art Gallery, 88.6

LOOKING TO LEARN

Objectives: Looking for Information
Comparing and Contrasting Information
Making Inferences

Art as Document (*page 6*)

The Big Picture (*page 8*)

Create a Story Picture (*page 9*)

Story Starter (*page 10*)



500 University Avenue ♦ Rochester, NY 14607 ♦ (585) 473-7720, ext. 3051

Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation is proud to sponsor the Memorial Art Gallery's school programs.

Additional support is provided by the estate of Estelle B. Goldman and an anonymous donor for the McPherson Director of Education.

LOOKING TO LEARN

Color and Light: How does an artist use colors to interest us in his painting?

(refer to color copy to complete this exercise)

- What colors do you see?

Write the names of all the colors you see. _____

Circle the whites, the reds, the yellows.

Match the colors with the color samples.

How many shades of brown can you see in the buildings? _____

- Artists use colors to make a picture look three dimensional.

What colors seem to jump out at you? _____

Which colors take you deep into the picture? _____

- How does the artist show brightness and light?

Where is the light coming from? _____

An artist can create a mood of cheerfulness and energy by placing bright colors next to each other. Each bright color “wakes up” its neighbor and helps it stand out in the painting. Circle areas in the painting where the artist has put bright colors close together.

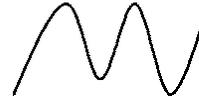
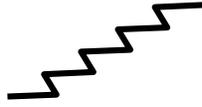


LILLY MARTIN SPENCER
Peeling Onions, ca. 1852

LEARNING TO LOOK

Lines: How does an artist use lines to make objects look real?

- Painters draw with many different lines.



Use your finger to trace the outlines.

Look for straight lines and curved lines. Mark them with a colored pencil.

Where can you find diagonal lines? Follow them and see where your eye goes across and into the painting! _____

Identify some objects that are created by dabs of paint with no outlines.

- Some lines are hinted at by the artist.

Follow the line of her right arm and hand as it takes you behind her face. That diagonal line, called linear perspective, gives us the feeling of depth or *dimension*. What other diagonal lines can you find? Circle them. What is their effect? _____

What other techniques is Spencer using to create the illusion of depth?

Look at the woman's eyes and follow her glance; this is called a *line of vision*. What is she looking at?

Is she looking out at you? _____

Where is the painter standing? _____

Is she looking at her? _____



LILLY MARTIN SPENCER
Peeling Onions, ca. 1852

LEARNING TO LOOK

Shapes: How does the artist use shapes to help us look all around the painting?

- Focus your eyes so you do not see the woman or the food but look instead for the shapes. A viewfinder can help you see only small parts of the painting at a time.

Where do you see rectangles? _____

Identify them on your painting with a colored pencil.

Locate the circles. _____

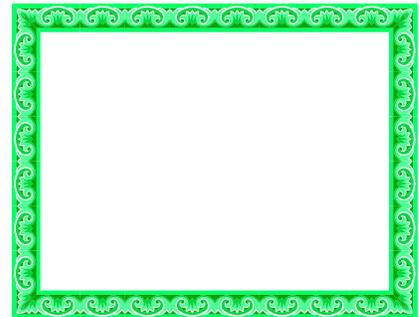
Locate the triangles. _____

- Walk around the room or outdoors and look through your viewfinder at the world above you, below you, in front of you and around you. Look until you find a picture through the frame that you think is interesting. Describe what you see. _____

Are some things in your view “cut off” by your frame so that you can only see parts of them?



LILLY MARTIN SPENCER
Peeling Onions, ca. 1852



(to use as your viewfinder,
cut out frame and use its center)

LEARNING TO LOOK

Composition and Balance: How does an artist combine what he sees and what he wants things to look like in his painting?

- Paintings are usually divided into the *foreground* or view closest to us, the *middle ground*, and then the *background* or distance. Can you find the background in this painting? Where is it?

Mark it on the painting.

Even though you cannot see very much background, what do you imagine it looks like?

- Painters like to balance the objects in the painting. Draw a line down the middle of the picture; divide the painting into a right side and a left side. List all the objects you see on each side. Is the painting composition balanced?



LILLY MARTIN SPENCER
Peeling Onions, ca. 1852

LEARNING TO LOOK

Exploring through the 5 Senses:

Imagine you are in the painting with the woman peeling onions. What are the sounds you hear? What is the painting makes you hear such sounds? _____

Imagine the smells. What makes you imagine this? _____

Do you feel hungry or thirsty when you look at this painting? What in the painting makes you feel that way? _____

Do you see anything that might feel very soft to the touch? What might be very rough or very hot to touch? _____

Describe what your eyes see at first. What appears after you look longer and harder? _____

Use movement and facial expressions to show the activities and feelings of the woman.



LILLY MARTIN SPENCER
Peeling Onions, ca 1852

LOOKING TO LEARN

Art as Document: How does the artist give us a picture of a culture and environment?

- Ask yourself this question: I wonder what is going on in this painting?

Who is this woman? _____

What is she doing? _____

What is she looking at? _____

Where is she? _____

What objects can you identify? _____

When did this woman live? _____

Where is the artist? _____

Is there any connection between the woman and the artist? _____

How realistic is this scene? _____

Does the artist present a particular point of view? _____

Do you have sufficient information to draw any conclusions about 19th century American culture? _____

What other information would you want to have? _____

What other works of art would be useful in creating a window in 19th century America? _____



LILLY MARTIN SPENCER

Peeling Onions, ca. 1852

- Use the chart to list the things you can see in the painting.

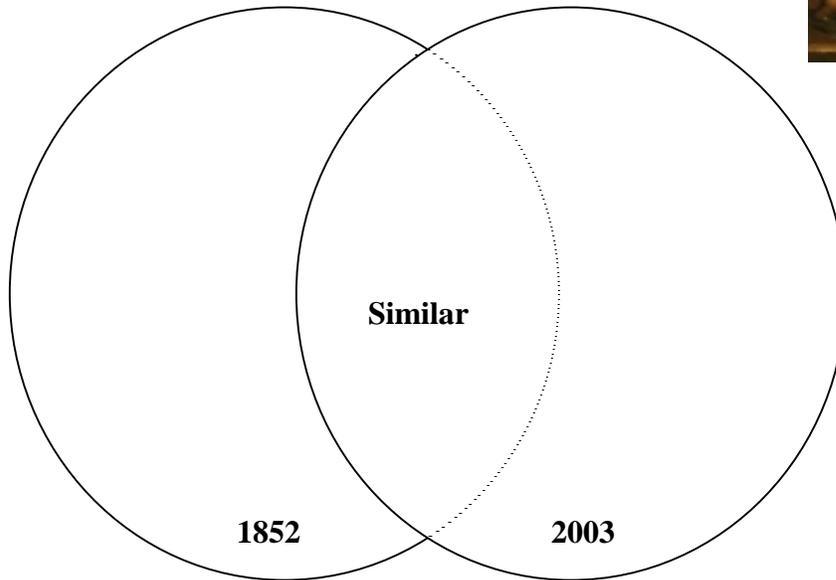
PEOPLE	OBJECTS	ACTIVITIES	BUILDINGS	ENVIRONMENT	OTHER

LOOKING TO LEARN

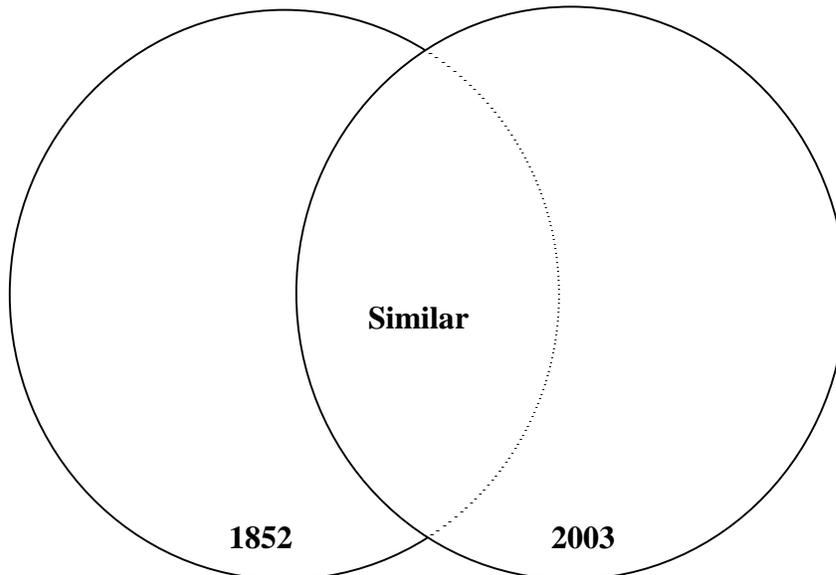
Does this painting look like a scene from today's magazines or TV?
What details give us clues as to when this woman lived?
Find a picture in a newspaper or magazine or home photograph.
What similarities and differences do you see? Record your ideas below.



LILLY MARTIN SPENCER
Peeling Onions, ca. 1852



What is this woman doing? Compare her activities with things women do today.



LOOKING TO LEARN

The Big Picture: How do details support the meaning as a whole?

What is the main idea or theme you see in the painting? _____

What title would you choose? _____

What details support your idea? _____

What is the title Spencer gave to her painting? _____

What details has she used to give us that theme? _____



LILLY MARTIN SPENCER
Peeling Onions, ca. 1852

Your Title: _____

Spencer Title: _____

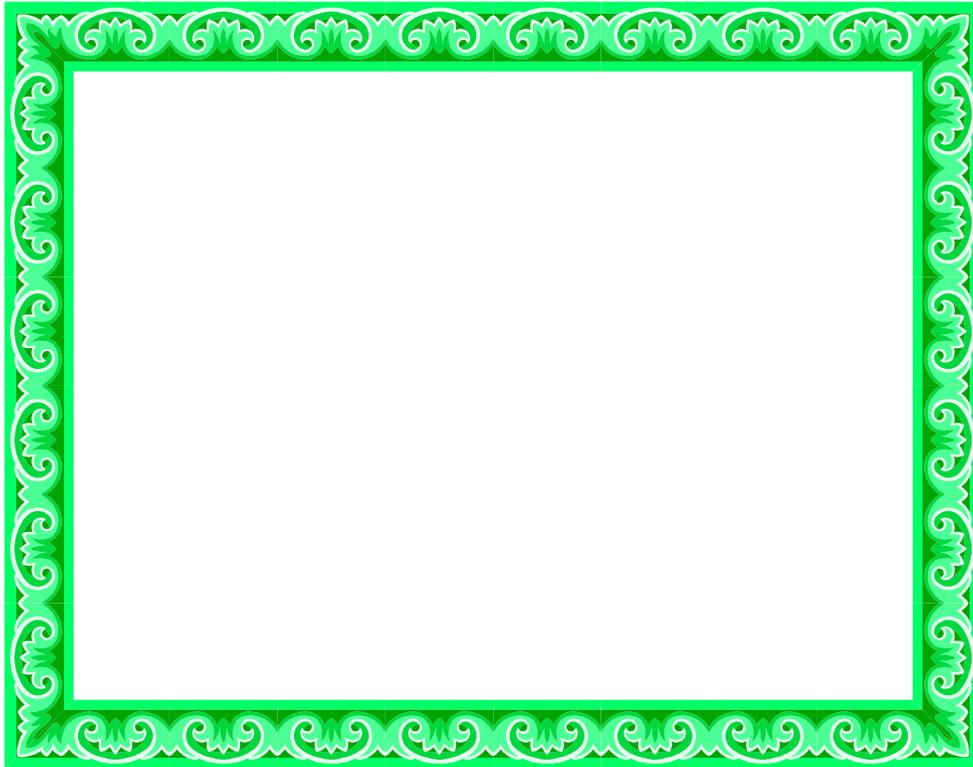
Supporting Details: _____

Supporting Details: _____

LOOKING TO LEARN

Create a Story Picture using a detail out of the painting.

- Do not look at the painting but ask someone to draw or copy a detail out of the painting onto a card. Create a story picture using the detail as your starting point.



Now look at the actual painting. How did the artist use that detail to create his story?

Compare how he used the detail with the use you made of it.

- What details are very important in the story of *Peeling Onions*?

LOOKING TO LEARN



LILLY MARTIN SPENCER
Peeling Onions, ca. 1852

Story Starter

- What is the story this painting has to tell? _____

What is the setting? _____

Who are the characters? _____

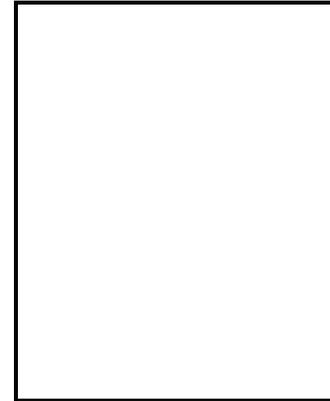
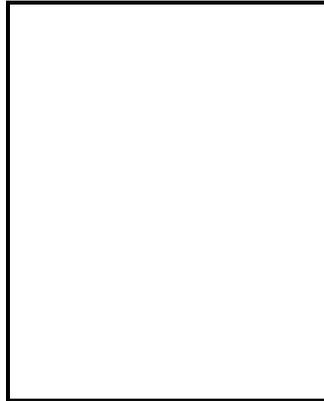
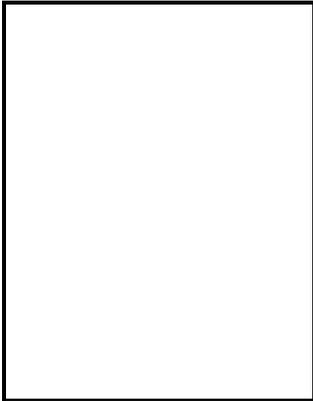
Are you in the story? How could you be a part of it? _____

Does the painting show the beginning, the middle or the end of the story? _____

- Cut out and paste the painting in the one of the boxes below. Where you place it will determine whether it is the beginning, the middle or the end of the story. Draw two other pictures in the other boxes that tell the rest of your story. What other details can be used to show that time has passed in your story? _____

Extension: Students write the story and use pictures to illustrate it.

Story Title: _____



Name: _____

Painting: *Peeling Onions, ca.1852* by LILLY MARTIN SPENCER