

## Pablo Picasso (1881 – 1973)

Costume: Picasso Tee Shirt  
Wear/attach/bring other items that show your personality

Props: Portrait of a Woman print  
Art Composition Board  
Picasso books  
Paloma Picasso picture  
Cubism Face  
Blank paper

Can you tell anything about me by the way I am dressed? These things all tell something about me – the things I like, the way I am. I'll give you a hint. All these things tell you something about my personality – who I am.

Lei – I like Hawaii  
Apron – I like cooking and cooking shows  
Crane – I like arts and crafts  
Dog - I like dogs  
Picasso Tee Shirt – I like art, especially Picasso!

How many of you remember what an art composition is? (Show art composition board). A composition is sort of like a personality. Lots of different parts work together to make a whole painting, just as a person has lots of different parts to his or her personality. The way that an artist or a composer does his or her compositions can tell us something about his or her personality.

Each of our artists for this year painted in a unique way. See if you can tell me what kind of an artist may have painted this. This is a very different painting, so think carefully before you answer. (Show Portrait of a Woman print.) Do you think this artist, Picasso, is a good artist? (Show traditional pictures done by Picasso in book, marked with post-it #1, First Communion and the Barefoot Girl, to show students he could paint in more traditional styles too.)

I am going to give you some time to really study Picasso's composition so that you can tell me what you think about it, and while you're doing that, I want to tell you about Picasso as a person.

Picasso was born on October 25, 1881 in Spain. When he was born they couldn't get him to breathe and thought he was dead. Luckily for us and the art world, Picasso's uncle, a doctor, was there and got him to start breathing. Two weeks later he was baptized. (Show roll of paper with his name. Ask for a student to hold one end while you roll it out.)

*Pablo Diego Jose Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno Maria de los Remedios Cipriano de la Santisima Trinidad Ruiz y Picasso*

Fortunately, we can just call him Pablo Picasso. Picasso's family knew he was going to be an artist when he grew up because Picasso knew how to draw before he could even talk. But a bigger clue was because his first word was not mama or papa, but "piz", for the Spanish word lapis, which in English means pencil.

When Picasso was a young boy, he didn't have a lot of art supplies so he would draw in the dirt with a stick. He and his friends did a special kind of drawing called "arabesque." Let's demonstrate. (Have everyone use a pencil and a piece of paper and follow your instructions.)

Pick an object in the room (like you, the presenter). You may not look at your paper again until you are sure you have completed your picture in one continuous line. Try to finish your picture as close to your original starting point as possible. This is "arabesque." (Have everyone show their pictures.)

At the age of 7 Picasso started formal art lessons with his father who was an art teacher and an artist himself. At the age of 10 Picasso was given to complete, unfinished drawings that his father had started. By the age of 13, Picasso was so good, that after seeing one of his pictures, which Picasso had completed for him, his father handed over his paint brush to his son and vowed never to paint again.

At the age of 15 Picasso set off on his own for the capitol of Spain, Madrid, to attend the Royal Academy, but once there dropped out because of his dislike for formal instruction. He spent a number of years living and working on his own in Madrid and finally convinced his father to finance a trip for him to London. He never made it to London. On the way, with his friend Casagemas, he made a stop in Paris and there they stayed. There in Paris he was to experience some of the best years of his life and the development of his unique talents, in the company of other artists, poets, and thinkers of the day.

In the fall of 1901, Picasso was to begin to display styles all his own. Unfortunately, his friend Casagemas committed suicide and in his saddened state, Picasso painted many pictures primarily in blue, creating what became known as his Blue Period. The pictures of this period all suggest sad, depressed moods. (Show examples in book of the Blue Period, including #2, the Old Guitarist.)

In 1904 his life changed and with it his art did too. He had fallen in love for the first time, and as his mood brightened, his art got warmer and more delicate. This was known as his Rose Period and contained many pictures of clowns and circus performers. (Show pictures at post-it #3.)

Picasso's personal life was turbulent and often notorious. Amid periods of high acclaim, there were fits of depression, two wives, and in between, many girlfriends. Picasso had four children, one of whom, Paloma, gained some fame herself in the arts, but Picasso never had consistently close relationships with his children. (Show Paloma Picasso print advertising her jewelry.)

By 1906 Picasso had achieved what all artists envied: fame, respect and money. You would think that having success Picasso would just continue doing the same things. But he was a creator. That year, he started working on a painting unlike any he had ever tried before and unlike anything the art world had ever seen before.

In all the centuries of Western painting there have been only a few works that have altered art's future course so much as Picasso's "Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)". This picture began the art movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Show picture #4.) This picture was so different from other art at the time that it shocked the art world and gained Picasso a lot of abuse, even from his friends. What was different about the Young Women of notorious Avignon Street in Barcelona were the angled, distorted shapes resembling broken glass as much as traditional human figures, and the inclusion of the mask-like faces of two of the figures, showing the influences of the African and the South Pacific art to which Picasso had been exposed. He continued to experiment.

Picasso, working closely with another artist at this time, Braque, refined the angular techniques first seen in Les Femmes to present images from objective reality in complex, prism-like structures. Focusing on the edges and angles, critics called this style Cubism. (Show print #5 and following pages - all examples of cubism.)

Cubism tried to show many sides of the same subject all at once. Objects and subjects were reduced to their planes and carefully composed into an interlocking whole. Picasso's genius extended this style to create what we know today as collage, layering real objects on a canvas with sometimes a helping line or shadow painted in. Later the genius came full circle by painting in such a manner as to suggest a collage. (Show print #6, The Three Musicians.)

To explain even better what Picasso was doing with his Cubist style, I'll need an assistant. (Bring up a student. Place student at profile to class.) If you were going to do a picture of this student, what would you draw? (Only the student's profile.) Artists who painted in the Cubist style wanted you to know that there was another side to the subject that you didn't see; just as there are many parts to our personality that others don't readily see at first glance. What is on the other side of the student that we can't see? (The other side of his face.) Show Cubist face profile only.) The Cubist would paint in the side we don't really see (Open out the folded side.) Picasso always painted subjects from the real world of people and objects around him. His works expressed how he saw their personality or character and how he felt about them. They also reduced their subjects to their simplest form.

Let's go back to the "Portrait of a Woman." First of all, do you see any place where Picasso may have used the arabesque technique? (The woman's fingers.) Remember the Cubist will reduce his subject to its simplest form. Do you think Picasso achieved that here? Look at the colors he used and how he used them. Picasso has spread on colors in splotches and simple lines. He doesn't mix or blend the colors but has separated them. Similarly with his lines, he has reduced their use to the simplest form.

This portrait is probably one of Picasso's girlfriends, Dora Maar. (Show print #7 and #8.) The sharp lines and shrill colors suggest her intelligence and commanding personality. They contrast sharply with the softer colors and more rounded shapes of an earlier girlfriend, and dreamer, Marie-Therese Walter.

Picasso's revolutionary, abstract styles influenced modern art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century more than any other artist. Yet his art was always linked to the real world in subject matter. This fact is true even in his most famous work "Guernica", which expressed in stark, pained, Cubist images, the inhumanity of war. The picture was his reaction to the first aerial bombardment of a civilian population, which occurred during the Spanish Civil war in 1936. (Show print #9.)

In 1973, at the age of 91, Picasso died, leaving behind him a vast collection of art in many forms, including drawings, paintings, graphics, sculpture, collage, ceramics, murals and stage settings. He even designed the costumes for one of the ballets for which Manuel de Falla, one of his close friends did the music. De Falla is the composer we will talk about today, making this the first time that we have studied an artist and a composer that actually knew each other.