

Words to Know

Art Vocabulary for Middle School Students

Can you develop a game that will demonstrate art vocabulary? Start by using these words below and then add to them with your own list.

ILLUSION - something that deceives the senses or mind by appearing to exist when it does not, or by appearing to be one thing when it is in fact another.

IMPROVISE – to create something without any preparation or specific idea for an outcome.

EXPRESSIONISM - a term that describes emotional art, most often boldly executed and making free use of distortion and symbolic or invented color.

IDEALIZED – art in which people, places or objects have been made to appear perfect.

PALETTE KNIFE – a flexible metal knife used by an artist to mix paint and apply paint to his or her work surface. The use of a palette knife often results in a thick application of paint.

RELIEF SCULPTURE –sculptures with a flat surface on one side and a raised surface on the other side; a sculptural art form in which the top surface of the art work demonstrates some carving or three dimensional qualities.

STYLE –the use of materials, the design qualities, the methods of work and choice of subject matter. In most cases, these choices show the unique qualities of an individual, culture or time period. The style of an artwork can help you to know how it is different from other artworks.

THEME – the major subject or idea behind a discussion, a piece of writing or a work of art. A theme can also be the idea that brings meaning to a work.

TRIPTYCH – a work of art created in three separate panels.

TROMPE L’OEIL – a French painting term that means “fool the eye.” Trompe l’oeil paintings are usually so realistic that the viewer is fooled into believing they are real.

VALUE – difference in the lightness of darkness of a hue (or color).

