

PORTFOLIO COPY

BACKGROUND READING FOR ART PRESENTERS

Childe Hassam (child HASS-m) (1859-1935)

Sources: *Painting America Teachers Resource Book*
Childe Hassam Biography

Hassam was born in Massachusetts and showed a love of art at a very early age. He became an accountant like his father wanted but left that career after only a few weeks. At the age of twenty, he started experimenting with oil paintings, but soon changed to watercolors and did illustrations in magazines. He also drew pictures for children's stories.

At the age of 27 Hassam and his wife moved to Paris, where he became part of the art movement known as Impressionism. He was very interested in the use of color and light in his artwork.

Much of Hassam's famous works are cityscapes, paintings of cities. In 1916 he began creating "the Flag Series", a collection of flag paintings inspired by the World War I war relief effort. The most famous of these *The Avenue in the Rain* hangs in the Oval Office of the White House.

The painting *Allies Day, May 1917* is Hassam's most famous painting. To paint it, Hassam set up his easel on the balcony of a building, which allowed him to view the street with patriotic flags flying everywhere. This painting portrays a historic occasion as people were marching in support of our country's efforts in the war. It also shows famous buildings in New York City.

This painting became instantly famous and copies of it were sold to raise money for the war effort.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ART PRESENTER PROGRAM
First Grade

Allies Day, May 1917
Childe Hassam

1. What is the first thing that you see when you look at this painting?
2. Name some of the other things that are in the painting.
3. What are the main colors that the artist used?
(red, white, and blue)
4. Why do you think he used those colors?
(he painted it during WWI, and those are patriotic colors)
5. Why are there so many people out on the street with so many flags flying?
(they are cheering on the war effort and showing support for their country)
6. There are other flags besides the American flags. How many other flags do you see?
(Besides the American flags, there are two British Union Jacks, three French Tricolors, and a red flag with a small Union Jack on it that represents Canada)
7. Which flag stands out the most? *(American flag surrounded by blue)*
8. What does this suggest about how the artist felt about his country?
9. What do the brushstrokes look like in the painting?
(The strokes seem to be separate, as if the artist has just made them. They are not blended together to make a smooth surface and are of different sizes. This is how Impressionists painted)
10. People who lived at that time wanted a copy of this painting? Why do you think that they did?

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First Grade

Allies Day, May 1917

Childe Hassam

MONMOUTH ART PRESENTER PROGRAM

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Give the students a sheet of white paper. Have them design their own flag. Tell them they can only use the colors of red, white, and blue. (just like the colors in the painting) The symbols/pictures that they put in their flag should be something that is important to them. Crayons would be best, but markers are acceptable, as well.
2. Students will start with a sheet of white paper. They are going to design their own flag. Instead of coloring, they will cut out shapes or designs from red, white, or blue construction paper and glue them onto their paper to make a colorful flag. Perhaps it can be their class flag.