

Artists IN FOCUS

Thomas Gainsborough: Prominent Draughtsman



What We Learned:

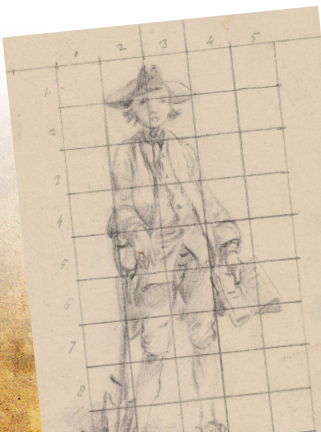
- Gainsborough was born to a middle-class cloth merchant's family in Sudbury, England in 1727.
- As a young teen Thomas went to London and was an apprentice to the engraver, Hubert Gravelot. Here he was introduced to Rococo style art, sometimes called Late Baroque, which was very decorative—full of fancy curves, gold, and pastel colors.
- He loved and preferred painting landscapes. But, because he needed to make a living, he became a portrait artist, often painting the backgrounds as a landscape.
- His portraits gained the attention of King George III, and Gainsborough became a favorite of the royal family.
- His most famous painting is *The Blue Boy*.



Art Activity: Sketch of Self-portrait in a Landscape

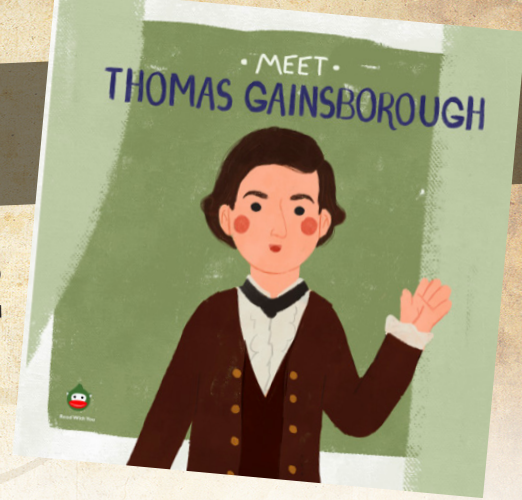
Gainsborough drew a lot of sketches. His sketches were drafted loosely and quickly. He would sketch his subjects, then often finish the painting in his studio. Some believe this is why his portraits and landscapes were so realistic. When painting portraits, Gainsborough would often include details of hobbies or professions of the patron.

The students used drawing pencils to finish their self-portrait by adding facial expressions, clothing, etc. They then drew their favorite outdoor background for the landscape.



Book Nook

Meet Thomas Gainsborough (Meet the Artist)
by Read With You



Connections at Home: Easy Textured Landscape Painting For Beginners

SUPPLIES:

- Paint in the following colors: green, yellow, blue, purple, white, brown
- Pencil
- 9" x 12" or 12" x 18" Black Construction Paper
- Paint Brush (stiffer brush works best)
- Warm-Colored Tissue Paper for trees
- Glue



INSTRUCTIONS:

For more detailed instructions:

<https://craftyartideas.com/textured-landscape-painting/>

Step 1: Draw horizon line

Step 2: Dab green, yellow & white paint for grass. Fill the whole area below the horizon line.

Step 3: Using violet, blue & white paint swirls in the sky.

Step 4: Let painting dry.

Step 5: Paint 3 tree trunks with largest in foreground and smallest near horizon line.

Step 6: Add warm-color tissue paper leaves to the trunks. Wrap a small square of tissue paper around your pencil, dip the end in glue and paste it onto the tree.

For Parents

As a boy, Thomas Gainsborough drew pictures of the English countryside, and throughout his career landscape paintings were his passion. He was born in Sudbury, England in 1727. At age 14 he went to London to assist Hubert Gravelot, an illustrator and engraver. He also studied under Francis Hayman, a portrait and history painter. Thomas married at age 19 and continued to live in the country for 14 years. He then moved to Bath and later London where he began to paint more portraits. He did not like making portraits. His clientele was mostly upper class, which he also disliked. King George III noticed his paintings and commissioned Thomas to paint the royal family. Gainsborough laid the foundation for realist artists and the future movements of Romanticism and Impressionism. He died in 1788 at the age of 61.

Please note: As M&G's host location for *Homeschool Days*, Mack Library will feature books each month for parents to reference as resources. We hope these additional features will further support your teaching at home.

Connections at Home:

Split Face Self Portrait (Half Photo, Half Drawing)

SUPPLIES:

- printed photo of student, with half of photo being blank
- coloring supplies (pencils, crayons, watercolors, markers)
- glue
- scissors
- colorful backdrop paper

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Step 1:** Cut photo in half and glue on white paper.
- Step 2:** Have student draw the other side of the portrait by copying the photo side.
- Step 3:** Using colored paints, fill in the side drawn by the student.
- Step 4:** Let dry, then mount on a colored background paper.



Additional Resources

To learn more about Gainsborough, click on the links below:

- To see the x-rays of Gainsborough's *The Blue Boy*, visit:
<https://www.ovationtv.com/project-blue-boy-reveals-dog-other-conservation-findings-beneath-surface-of-iconic-painting/>
- The Huntington Museum's short video on the conservation of their painting, *The Blue Boy*: <https://huntington.org/exhibition/project-blue-boy>
- Scroll through "7 Works That Define Thomas Gainsborough's Legacy":
<https://www.thecollector.com/thomas-gainsborough-works/>
- Follow a timeline of Gainsborough's paintings in art history and read a comprehensive summary of his life and accomplishments:
<https://www.theartstory.org/artist/gainsborough-thomas/>
- "Meet the Gainsborough Family" by visiting here:
<https://ascholarlyskater.com/2019/05/20/meet-the-gainsborough-family/>
- Read interesting facts about Thomas Gainsborough and see a gallery of his paintings at Kiddle:
https://kids.kiddle.co/Thomas_Gainsborough



Additional Resources Continued

- Fun fact: there is a Gainsborough portrait in Greenville located in the president's house, White Oaks, on the campus of Furman University. See the picture and read the controversy about the painting of Portrait of *Lady Impey* here:

[https://www.furman.edu/news/is-the-painting-a-real-thomas-gainsborough-only-english-](https://www.furman.edu/news/is-the-painting-a-real-thomas-gainsborough-only-english-scholar-knows-for-sure/)

[scholar-knows-for-sure/](https://www.furman.edu/news/the-verdict-the-lady-is-for-real/) and here: <https://www.furman.edu/news/the-verdict-the-lady-is-for-real/>

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.

M&G Educational Mission:

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G's goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.

