

## Language Phrases for Describing Paintings

When describing paintings, we usually focus on four areas: general description, style and technique, colours and mood, and personal interpretation. Below are useful English phrases for each.

### 1. General Description

*This painting shows / depicts / portrays...*

*The artwork represents...*

*It is a portrait of... / It is a landscape of...*

*The scene is set in...*

*It appears to be...*

### 2. Talking about Style & Technique

*It was painted in the [Renaissance / Impressionist / Cubist / etc...] style.*

*I think it was painted by (artist's name)...and is called...*

*The artist uses bright / muted / contrasting / earthy / colours.*

*The brushstrokes are bold / delicate / expressive / loose / full of movement / precise...*

*The composition is balanced / symmetrical / fragmented with...*

*It is painted in oil / watercolour / fresco / acrylic on canvas.*

### 3. Colours & Mood

*The dominant colours are...*

*The use of light creates a dramatic / calm / mysterious / striking / unsettling / stark / effect.*

*The colours give the painting a warm / cold / vibrant / monumental / formal / serious atmosphere.*

*The mood of the painting is joyful / melancholic / unsettling / reflective / tense / austere / serene.*

### 4. Interpretation & Personal Response

*The painting might symbolise...*

*It could reflect the artist's feelings about...*

*It makes me feel...*

*I like this work because...*

*This reminds me of...*