Who is Claude Monet?

**Occupation:** Painter  
**Born:** November 14, 1840 in Paris, France  
**Died:** December 5, 1926 in Giverny, France  
**Famous works:** *Impression: Sunrise, Water Lilies, Haystacks, Woman with a Parasol*  
**Style/Period:** Impressionist

**Where did Claude Monet grow up?**

Claude Monet was born on November 15, 1840 in Paris, but his family moved to the port city of Le Havre, France while he was still young. He loved to draw as a child. He began drawing caricatures of people that were quite good. Even as a kid he was able to make some extra money drawing pictures of people.

Around the age of eleven, Claude entered a school for the arts. His mother supported his becoming an artist, but his father wanted him to take over the family grocery business. Claude met some other artists around this time and began to use oil paints to paint the outdoors.

**Moving to Paris**

A few years after his mother died in 1857, Claude moved to Paris to study art at the Academie Suisse. He was there for about a year when he was drafted into the army. He became sick with typhoid fever in the army and returned home a few years later.

**Women in the Garden**

Monet continued to paint outdoor scenes. His paintings were becoming accepted by the art critics in Paris. He then decided to take on large project he called *Women in the Garden*. This was a huge painting, over eight feet tall, that he painted outside in the natural light. It was a normal everyday scene. He spent a lot of time on it, but the critics did not like it. He became depressed and was also out of money.

**London**

War broke out in France in 1870 and Claude moved with is new wife, Camille, to London. There he met art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel who would become one of his strongest supporters. At this time Monet began to study the relation of the city of London to the River Thames.

**Impressionists**

Monet became friends with several of the leading artists of the time including Pierre
Renoir, Edouard Manet, and Camille Pissarro. Together they formed the Society of Anonymous Painters, Sculptors, and Printers. They wanted to experiment with art and not do the same classical art that satisfied the art critics of Paris.

They organized an exhibition of their art in 1874. One critic called it the Exhibition of the Impressionists. The term "impressionist" was used to imply that the art was just an impression of something and not completed. It was meant as an insult.

**Impression: Sunrise**

The critic got the word "impression" from one of Monet's works. It is called *Impression: Sunrise*. This painting was a great example of the new style. The lighting gives the viewer the feeling or "impression" that the sun is just rising. Monet's use of light was unique. An interesting fact about this picture is the brightness of the sun. It is the same as the sky. If you turn this picture into a black and white picture, the sun virtually disappears.

[Image: Impression: Sunrise]

**Continued Work**

Despite the critics of Impressionism, Monet continued to refine his work. He continued to try and capture the changing effects of color with light. He used a wide range of vibrant colors and painted quickly using short brushstrokes. Soon, Monet's work began to gain recognition. His paintings started to sell. He even organized an Impressionist art exhibition in the United States in 1886.

**Painting in Series**

In order to continue his experiments with light, Monet began to paint series of the same scenes. He would paint them at different times of the day and in different types of weather. He painted a series on haystacks, the Rouen Cathedral, and the London
Parliament.

![Haystacks](image)

**Haystacks**

**Water Lilies**

Near the end of his life, Monet embarked on his largest project. It was a series on the pond at his home in Giverny. It involved a number of huge paintings of the pond in different lighting and conditions such as morning, sunset, and clouds. He called it the Grandes Decorations. When finished, all the panels together were over 6 feet tall and nearly 300 feet long. During much of the project the aging Monet was suffering from bad eyesight and lung cancer. He spent the last ten years of his life on the project and donated it to France in honor of the end of World War I.

![Water Lilies](image)

**Water Lilies**

**Legacy**

At the prime of his career, Monet was considered the preeminent artist in France. He is still considered one of the great French artists of all time. He also founded the Impressionist movement, one of the major movements in art history and had a major influence on future artists.

**Interesting Facts about Claude Monet**

- Monet once had a joint art show with the premier sculptor of the time, Auguste Rodin. It was a huge success.
- He painted many pictures of his first wife Camille. They had two sons named Jean and Michel.
• At one point, before his paintings started to sell, he became so distraught over his financial situation he tried to commit suicide.
• He was born Oscar-Claude Monet. His parents called him Oscar.
• He nearly went blind from cataracts.
• He once said "Everyone discusses my art and pretends to understand, as if it were necessary to understand, when it is simply necessary to love."

More examples of Claude Monet's Art:

![Woman with a Parasol](image1)

![Bridge over Water Lilies](image2)