

Create Your Own Landscape

Ages: 6–18 (Grades 1–12)

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Materials needed:

- Pencils
- Paper
- Colored pencils/crayons/markers
- Paint (if available)

Introduction:

All landscapes include four main elements: the **foreground**, the **middle ground**, the **background**, and the **horizon** line. These help an artist create a sense of **perspective** for their viewers.

1. **Foreground** is the part of a painting that appears closest to you.
2. **Middle ground** lies between the foreground and background of a painting and often is the focal point for the **composition**—this is where a lot of details can be found about the place being shown.
3. **Background** is the part of a painting that appears farthest from you. Objects and details in the background of a landscape painting look smaller than those in the foreground.
4. The **horizon** line in a work of landscape art is where the earth and the sky appear to meet.

Choose two landscapes from our Google Arts & Culture online exhibition, [Hudson River Art](#), or our [Collection Highlights](#) page. Try to find these four elements in your chosen landscapes. Can you point out one detail from the perspective of each section (foreground, middle ground, and background)? Do you notice if the horizon line is different from one work of art to the next?

Here are two helpful YouTube videos on Landscape Analysis:

- [Understanding the Horizon Line](#)
- [Sketchbook Mission #2](#)

Procedure:

1. Hudson River School artists and contemporary artists make landscape artworks of places they love in order to celebrate them and highlight their beauty. Think of a place outside that you love to be in, visit, and/or look at. This can be a place that has changed over time, or a place you hope stays the same for as long as possible.
2. What do you want your viewer to notice about your landscape? You can brainstorm using words on a piece of scrap paper.
3. Will your landscape have a horizontal or vertical format?
4. Where will your horizon line be?
5. Do you need a larger foreground or a larger background?
6. What is happening in your middle ground?
7. What time of day, season, and weather conditions do you want to have in your scene?
8. Using paper and pencil, sketch out your landscape.
9. Add colors, if you have them!

Share your work:

Take a photo of your sketch and post it to Instagram using the hashtags #MuseumFromHome and #NaturalistsJourney, and tag the Museum.

