A critique is an analysis of the formal, narrative, and contextual elements of a work of art. There are four essential steps of a formal critique. A critique is composed of the description, interpretation, analysis, and judgement. The only portion of the critique that should vary among the three art styles is that of the description (The Critique Method).

Within the Realism art style, the critic should approach the piece the same way he or she would approach any other work of art. However, the critics should really try to focus their attention on nature and of contemporary life. The depiction of real life should be the heart of their work’s description. Gustave Courbet is well-known for one of his most famous pieces *The Stone Breakers*. Despite the artist’s intentions, I took the piece a different way. I saw an older sibling, perhaps a father or grandfather, teaching a younger sibling how to make a living. Tradition is a big part of most families which is why I viewed the piece the way I did. Before I do any research on a piece, I always interpret the piece. The piece depicts two males hard at work. The man appears to be too old to be performing that job and the boy appears to be too young. The work’s purpose was to highlight the common features of mid-century France’s rural life. I really enjoyed this piece because of how engaged I was. The implied line and color contrast throughout the work really kept my attention which is why I chose to critique this work.

Like any other artwork, the same process of critiquing applies to art within the Expressionism Era. Unlike other styles, the expressionism critiques should focus on, “anxiety about humanity’s increasingly discordant relationship with the world and accompanying lost feelings of authenticity and spirituality” (Expressionism Movement, Artists and Major Works). *The Scream* by Edvard Munch was a pastel-on-board piece that was created in 1895. This piece exhibits every aspect of the Expressionism time period which is why I chose this work. At first glance, I could feel the emotions of the screaming individual right away. It is evident that the person screaming is suffering mentally from either loneliness, anxiety, depression, or some combination of the three. Prior to my regular research I viewed this work as a depiction of a flaw in our society. The flaw being that people rarely care about other’s feelings. The piece supports this claim because there are two individuals, probably a couple, just walking. They are walking with not a care in the world while the troubling individual is trying to regain sanity. After research on the work, I realized I was not far off from the artist’s actual intentions. The work depicts Munch screaming in nature after his two companions had left him. I really liked this work and chose to critique it because I was able to relate to it in many ways.

The descriptions within critiques that are related to abstract pieces focus their discussions on the vagueness of the work. “The term ‘abstract art’ – also called ‘non-objective art’, ‘non-representational’, ‘geometric abstraction’, or ‘concrete art’ – is a rather vague umbrella term for any painting or sculpture which does not portray recognizable objects or scenes” (Abstract Art: A General Guide Definition, Types, History, Characteristics). Similar to that of every other art style, it would make sense that the description of the piece would have some connection to the art era the piece was made in. I like to think of the Abstract Era as an OCD person’s kryptonite. Wassily Kandinsky’s *Composition VIII* is a prime example of this. The oil on canvas piece was painted in 1923. If I could describe the piece, I would say geometry vomited on a piece of paper. There is no organization to the piece whatsoever which is why I described abstract art as kryptonite to the people who have OCD. One of the main reasons I am not a fan of abstract art is because the pieces are really hard for me to understand. The work’s name *Composition VIII* suggests it has something to do with music, that is the only information I got from the piece. Honestly, it is really hard to critique a work that you have no knowledge on. There is not much information on the work except for that the role the many circles would play in the future. Supposedly this work was foreshadowing the future use of circles in his later works (Guggenheim). Overall, I am not a fan of this piece, but I do respect the artist’s work immensely.

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