

Exploring Horizon Lines and Creating a Landscape Painting

Time: 1 hour, plus dry time

Difficulty level: Moderate

Messy level: Medium



Inspired by the works of David Hockney featured in the exhibition *Hockney – Van Gogh: The Joy of Nature*, on view through June 20, 2021, this activity will guide you in exploring perspective and using horizon lines to create a landscape painting.

Above: David Hockney, *Woldgate Vista*, 27 July 2005, oil on canvas, David Hockney Inc. © David Hockney / photo: Richard Schmidt

This exhibition is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in partnership with the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, and in collaboration with David Hockney.

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To view a hi-res image of the work, visit the [MFAH website](#).

Investigate the Work of Art!

1. The horizon line is the line where the earth meets the sky. In this artwork by David Hockney, what do you notice about the position of the horizon line?
2. If the horizon line were moved lower in the picture, would it change your view into this landscape?
3. The horizon line creates a sense of depth and distance. Just for fun, can you guess how many miles it would be from the grass at the bottom of the painting in the foreground to the trees at the horizon line?

Gather These Materials

- Acrylic paint
- Paintbrushes
- 11 x 14 inch canvas or thick paper
- Cup for water
- Pencil
- Palette (paper plate is fine)
- Paper towels

To purchase some of the recommended art materials, visit [dickblick.com](#).

Step-by-Step Artist Instructions

First, let's warm up:

1. Think of a rolling landscape either from your imagination or from a photo. Sketch out your idea on a piece of paper.
2. Observe where the horizon line is in your sketch. Now try to redo your sketch and change the height of the horizon line. Move it much higher on the page or much lower.
3. Do a third sketch and move the horizon line one more time. Look at all three sketches and choose your favorite one for your final painting project.

Now to the painting:

4. Lightly sketch your landscape design onto your canvas.
5. Paint your base colors first. For example, paint the whole sky the dominant color of your choice and then add shadows and clouds.
6. Using a large brush, paint the largest blocks of color areas first.
7. Switch to a smaller brush and paint the smaller sections next.
8. Finish by adding highlights to the lightest parts of your painting.