



**“The Banjo Lesson” by  
Henry O. Tanner  
&  
Winslow Homer’s “Snap the Whip”**

This week in Art Masterpiece we learned how paintings can tell a whole story without any words. We looked at **Henry Tanner’s *Banjo Lesson*** and **Winslow Homer’s *Snap the Whip***.

Homer and Tanner were American artists that painted pictures of people and American scenes. They lived and painted around the same time from the mid-1800s until the early 1900s. Their paintings showed people doing something, like a candid photo would, rather than just posing. They had a lot of details in the background that told about what was happening in the painting, or something more about the people in the painting. Many of their paintings tell a story about what life was like at that time. Can we tell a story about these two paintings?

**Can you feel it?:** Tanner’s and Homer’s paintings let you join in the picture. You can tell what is happening and can almost tell how the people feel. In *The Banjo Lesson* you can tell how much the old man and the young boy care about each other. How can you tell this? Who do you think they are? Maybe it is a grandfather with his grandson? If you could hear what they are saying, do you think that the man is talking softly to the boy? Now look at *Snap the Whip*. What is happening in this painting? What season do you think it is? Maybe it is spring because they have jackets on but no shoes. Can you imagine that the boys are laughing? Can you feel the wind?

**What do you see?:** Both paintings have a lot of details when you start to look closely at them. When you look around the room in *The Banjo Lesson* what do you see? Why do you think Tanner put all of this in the painting? Is the lesson in a classroom or do you think it is at their home? Is the room light or dark? Does it look warm or cold? Do you think it is a big house or small? Do you think that Tanner painted all of these things on purpose to tell us something? In Homer’s painting there is a schoolhouse in the background. The one-room schoolhouse was very common at that time in rural areas. Do you think the boys just got out of school and are enjoying a beautiful spring day? Do you want to run through the grass barefoot too? What else do you see in the picture that tells more of the story?

**Our Project:** After talking about Tanner’s and Homer’s paintings we looked through magazines to pick out pictures to make a collage that told a story about us. We colored around the pictures adding other things that we like. We added our favorite colors, sports, and pets so someone could look at the picture and tell all about us. They would know our story!