

## Illinois State Museum – MuseumLink Art Heartfelt/Handmade Activities: Genre Painting

**Purpose:** To help the students understand how genre paintings were composed, how gentlemen farmers of the 19th century lived in Illinois, and relate genre to life today in our own neighborhood.

**Illinois State Museum Web site used:**  
<http://www.museum.state.il.us/vrmuseum/muslink/art/htmls/hh.html>



**Objectives:** After studying the period and viewing the web site, the student will be able to tell the characteristics of a genre painting, tell what activities would be happening on an Illinois farm in the 1850s, and compose a painting illustrating everyday activities today as a genre painting.

**Grade Levels:** K-8

**Time Required:** two 50-60 minute periods

**Materials:** drawing paper  
pencils  
painting paper  
paint of your choice

**Motivation:** Discuss with the class what they have learned about farming in 19th century Illinois, or your area. Brainstorm to compile a list or idea web of plants and crops, animals, people, clothing, jobs, games, duties, buildings and their styles, and transport of that time. Compare these activities with what activities go on now in a household and its surroundings. Emphasize that the painter wants to show as many of these activities as possible going on at the same time. Tell the students that they will be composing a “modern” genre painting. Talk about how this type of painting can help us find out a little about life in the nineteenth century. Compare several genre paintings you find online or in art or history resources. What similarities in lifestyle are there among the paintings? What differences? What causes these differences? (climate, ethnic background, time period, economic means).

### **Procedure:**

- Students decide what their scene will look like and make a list of the people, animals, objects, and landscape they want to include in their painting.
- They sketch on a small drawing paper to get the composition of activities. They should be aware of balance, distance, and proportion but not necessarily precise perspective.
- When they are satisfied with their sketch (give a time limit), they transfer it to the painting paper lightly with pencil.

- They paint the scene, including as many details as their skills and ability levels allow.

**Publication and Closure:** Students will share their work and tell what inspired it. Hang the work in a display. The paintings could be accompanied by literary sources the students are reading about nineteenth-century life in the United States.

**Assessment:** The scene should contain simultaneous activities around a single house or street. The students should be able to explain or describe what types of activities he or she included and why. The students should be able to relate his/her picture to the Roeder or other genre painting to make comparisons and contrasts.

**Illinois State Board of Education Goals and Standards addressed:**

**Social Science:**

**Early Elementary: 18.C.1:** Describe how individuals interacted within groups to make choices regarding food, clothing, and shelter.

**Late Elementary: 16.D.2b:** Describe ways in which participation in the Westward Movement affected families and communities.

**Middle School: 16.D.3b:** Describe characteristics of different kinds of families in the nineteenth century.

**Visual Arts:**

**Early Elementary: 27.B.1:** Know how images convey stories about people, places, and times.

**Late Elementary: 27.B.2:** Identify and describe how the arts communicate the similarities and differences among various people, places, and times.

**Middle School: 27.B.3:** Know and describe how artists and their work shape culture and increase the understanding of societies, past and present.