Abstract Expressionism
A New York school of painting that flourished in the United States in the late 1940s and 1950s. Noted for its large-scale, nonrepresentational works.

action painting
A style of abstract painting that uses techniques such as the dribbling or splashing of paint and other energetic gestural movements to express the psychological and emotional state of the artist at the moment of creation. Jackson Pollock is one of the best-known action painters.

American Impressionism
A style derived from French Impressionism. Characterized by loose brushwork and vivid colors, American Impressionism was practiced widely among artists such as Childe Hassam and Mary Cassatt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Armory Show
Held in New York in 1913, the Armory Show was the first exhibition of modern art in America. Approximately thirteen hundred European and American paintings, sculptures, and prints were shown, roughly a third of which were by foreign artists.

Ashcan school
A group of American artists of the early twentieth century—also known as The Eight—who painted realistic scenes of everyday urban life in opposition to the conservative American art establishment of the time. The group included Arthur B. Davies, William Glackens, Robert Henri, Ernest Lawson, George Luks, Maurice Prendergast, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan.

assemblage art
A term used to describe objects made from fragments of natural or preformed materials or “found” household items. Well-known assemblage artists include Joseph Cornell, Louise Nevelson, and Robert Rauschenberg.

John James Audubon
An American ornithologist, naturalist, and painter who painted, catalogued, and described the birds of North America.

avant-garde
Venturing away from the current mainstream and characterized by unorthodox and experimental methods. May be applied to art or artists who are producing this type of work.
Barbizon school
A mid-nineteenth-century school of landscape painting named after the village in northern France where most of the school’s painters lived. Devoted to accurate representation of the working class in their paintings, the Barbizon artists include Jean-François Millet and Théodore Rousseau.

Bauhaus
An art and architecture school that operated from 1919 to 1933, when it was closed by the Nazis. The style of the Bauhaus was simple and functional. Important artists from the Bauhaus include Josef Albers, Naum Gabo, Paul Klee, and László Moholy-Nagy.

Black Mountain College
Founded in 1933 and operational until 1957, Black Mountain College was a multi-disciplinary art institution in Asheville, North Carolina. Some of its most famous teachers are the artist Josef Albers, the dancer Merce Cunningham, the scientist Albert Einstein, and the poet William Carlos Williams. Its alumni include Kenneth Noland, Robert Rauschenberg, and Cy Twombly.

Color Field painting
A style that emerged in the 1950s following Abstract Expressionism. Color Field paintings are known for their oversized canvases and solid washes of vibrant color. Well-known Color Field painters include Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland.

Composition
The arrangement of forms in a work of art.

Cubism
A nonobjective school of painting and sculpture developed in Paris by Picasso and Braque between the years 1908 and 1914 and characterized by the incorporation of multiple perspectives into a single work of art. Inspired by the work of Paul Cézanne, Cubism departed from the standard of recreating a believable, three-dimensional illusion of space.

Federal Arts Project
Programs sponsored by the U.S. government that were established in 1935 to help artists during the Great Depression. The project’s aim was to employ artists to decorate nonfederal public buildings and parks. It was closed in 1943.
foreground
The part of a scene or representation that is nearest to and in front of the spectator.

form
In a work of art, the relationship of basic elements such as lines and colors in a painting or volumes and voids in a sculpture.

French Impressionism
A term applied to the work of a group of artists working in France from the 1860s through the 1880s whose primary focus was on capturing the artist’s visual experience of a particular moment in time. Characteristics of Impressionism include the omission of detail, loose brushwork, and unblended pure color. Thirty artists, including Claude Monet, Mary Cassatt, Camille Pissarro, Edgar Degas, and Berthe Morisot, participated in what came to be known as the first impressionist exhibition in April of 1874 in Paris.

genre painting
A type of painting showing scenes from everyday life or domestic subject matter, particularly popular in the seventeenth-century Netherlands.

Clement Greenberg (1909–1994)
An influential American art critic associated with the abstract expressionist movement and a promoter of the work of Willem de Kooning, Hans Hofmann, and Jackson Pollock. Greenberg coined the term “Post-Painterly Abstraction,” which he used to describe the work of Color Field artists such as Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland.

Peggy Guggenheim (1898–1979)
An American art collector and niece of Solomon R. Guggenheim, Peggy Guggenheim was highly influential in the development of the New York City museum named after her uncle. In 1942, she opened her own gallery, The Art of this Century Gallery in New York. There she exhibited the work of William Baziotes, Alexander Calder, Joseph Cornell, Hans Hofmann, and Jackson Pollock, among others.

Hudson River School
The first school or movement of American art. Coined in 1890, the name describes an informal group of New York City–based painters whose subject was the grandeur of the natural environment, both in America and abroad. Key Hudson River School painters include Frederic Edwin Church, Thomas Cole, and Asher B. Durand.
kinetic art
Art that has movable parts activated by air currents or by some artificial means—usually electronic or magnetic forces. Alexander Calder’s mobiles are a well-known example.

landscape
A work of art that depicts scenery such as mountains, rivers, trees, valleys, and forests.

modernism
A general term referring to experimental methods in different art forms that developed in the earlier part of the twentieth century as a reaction to traditional forms. Modernist artists focused more on formal qualities such as shape, form, line, and color as opposed to iconographical, historical, or biographical content. Paul Cézanne is often considered the “father of modernism.”

nationalism
A term that describes devotion and loyalty to one’s own nation and the desire for national advancement or independence.

National Academy of Design
Founded in 1826 and modeled after the British Royal Academy, the National Academy of Design was the first art school in New York. Well-known members include William Merritt Chase, Frederic Edwin Church, and Henry Ossawa Tanner.

en plein air
A French expression which means “in the open air” and is used to describe the act of painting in the outdoors from direct observation rather than in the studio from photographs or sketches.

portrait
A pictorial representation of a person that typically shows a likeness of the face.

John Ruskin (1819–1900)
A mid-nineteenth-century English artist, scientist, poet, environmentalist, and philosopher and the preeminent art critic of his time.
**Social Realism**
A style adopted by artists who addressed social issues and the hardships of everyday life in their work. Social realists wanted art to reflect social concerns and to be used as an instrument for social change. Dorothea Lange, Jacob Lawrence, Diego Rivera, and Ben Shahn are some of the best-known social realists.

**still life**
A picture consisting predominantly of inanimate objects. Fruit, flowers, and musical instruments are typical still-life subjects.

**Surrealism**
A style of art and literature that emerged in the 1920s that attempted to express the subconscious and is characterized by bizarre imagery and odd juxtapositions of forms. The French artist André Breton was the main founder of the movement.

**Tenth Street Studio**
Built by architect Richard Morris Hunt in 1857 and located at 51 West 10th Street in Greenwich Village, New York, this building was at the center of the developing national art scene in the nineteenth century. It was the first modern facility built exclusively to serve artists’ needs. Artists from all over the United States worked, exhibited, and sold their art out of their studios.

**The Ten**
A group of ten American artists who were active in New York and Boston in the early twentieth century and were influenced by French Impressionism. The Ten were Frank Weston Benson, Joseph DeCamp, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Childe Hassam, Willard Metcalf, Robert Reid, Edward Simmons, Edmund Charles Tarbell, John Henry Twachtman, and, J. Alden Weir. When Twachtman died in 1902, William Merritt Chase joined in his place. The Ten exhibited together from 1898 to 1919 and had been members of the Society of American Artists but resigned because they thought its exhibitions were too large and highly commercialized.

**Tonalists**
An artistic style that emerged in the United States in the 1880s. The tonalists painted landscape forms with an overall tone of colored atmosphere or mist. Some famous members of the tonalist movement include George Inness, John Twachtman, and James McNeil Whistler.
**Transcendentalist**
An adherent of transcendentalism, a literary and philosophical movement associated with Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller, which emerged in New England in the early to middle nineteenth century and asserted the intuitive and spiritual above the empirical.

**Venice Biennale**
An important exhibition of contemporary art that occurs every two years in Venice, Italy. The first Biennale was held in 1895.

**Works Progress Administration (WPA)**
A work program created in 1935 under President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal. Millions of people, especially those from rural and western mountain populations, were employed in jobs related to the maintenance and development of public facilities and infrastructure, such as highways, streets, public buildings, parks, city halls, public libraries. Many artists, such as Milton Avery, Stuart Davis, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko, were employed as muralists and painters through the WPA in the 1930s.