

House by the Railroad, 1925 by Edward Hopper [1882-1967]

1. Ask students to describe the mood of this painting and to explain why it seems like this.
2. Where is the sun?
3. Where are the darkest shadows?
4. Ask what these dark shadows suggest about the house.
5. Ask students how a real estate agent might write an ad for this house. What are its strong features?
6. How could its location be described positively?
7. Ask students to imagine how this scene would change if a train went by on this track.
8. Ask students what they think was built first, the house or the railroad track. Ask them to explain why they think this.
9. Think of a building in their community that seems old, outdated, and ugly, but not so old that it is a treasured antique. Hopper probably felt about this house. Its Victorian architecture was dated and out of style in 1925, but today that style has regained some of its popularity.
10. What elements in this painting help convey a sense of loneliness?
11. Why might many people come near this house each day?
12. What might they think about the house and its inhabitants?
13. Will they probably ever meet the people who live in this house?

Historical Connections: railroads in the United States

Geography: Midwest region; the changing landscape of rural America during the early twentieth century;

urban sprawl; the effect of industrialization on rural America

Science: advances in transportation

Literary Connections and Primary

Documents: *Our Town*, Thornton Wilder (middle)

Arts: Victorian architecture