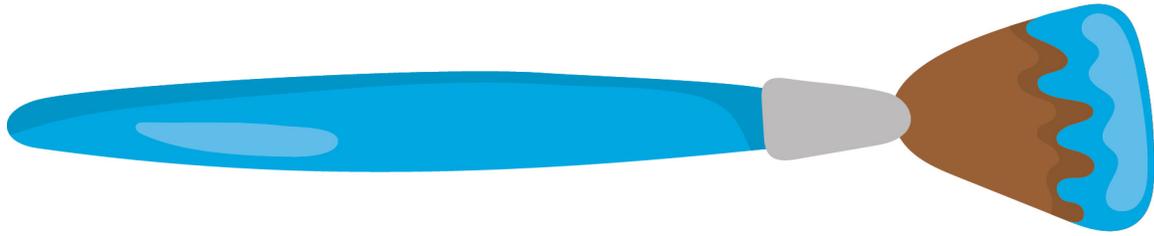


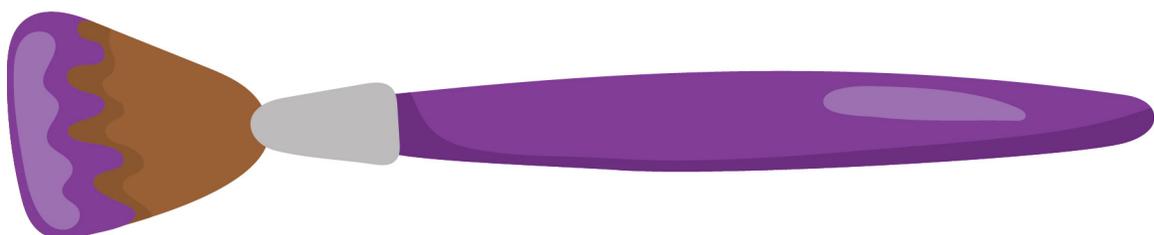
Rembrandt Van Rijn (1606-1669)

By Lynne Chandler
and Britelle Smith



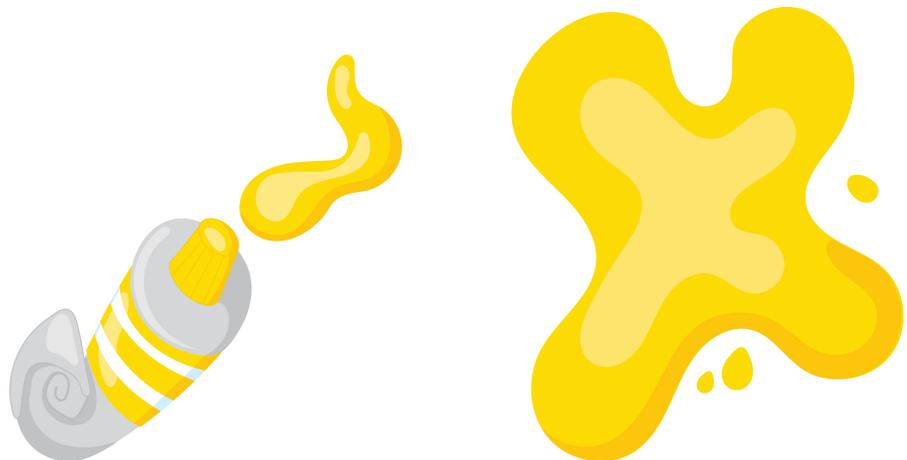


Life is like an artist painting a picture. Imagine the many different parts the artist would show in the painting of your life. Many different colors and details would be painted into the picture. Different thoughts and ideas would be hidden inside the painting. Happy times as well as sad times in your life would be painted. Imagine what your picture might look like.



Rembrandt Van Rijn lived a difficult life. But he chose to let hard times make his life even more beautiful. He did not write or talk a lot about his feelings. Instead he painted them. His paintings show a great understanding of God and life. This understanding grew, as he got older.

Rembrandt was a great storyteller. He loved to paint stories of ordinary people and everyday life. He also loved to paint stories from the Bible. He had a special way of bringing such stories to life.



Rembrandt was born July 15, 1606, in the town of Leiden in the Netherlands. Leiden lies along the Old Rhine River. It is not far from ocean. It is only about 25 miles south of the big city of Amsterdam.



Leiden is very similar to other Dutch towns. It has rows of narrow houses with bright-colored shutters. The houses lean together beside the streets and canals.

The countryside surrounding Leiden is very flat. But in Leiden, a very tall medieval castle looks down upon the city. Rembrandt and his friends had a lot of fun exploring the old castle when they were young.



Rembrandt's full name was Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn. The name van Rijn means "from the Rhine." Van Rijn was the family's name because they had lived near the great Rhine River for many generations.

Rembrandt was the eighth of nine children in his family. His father was a miller. He owned a windmill. His mother was the daughter of a baker. She taught Rembrandt about God. In several of his paintings, Rembrandt showed his mother reading her Bible. This was something he always admired about his mother.



Rembrandt's love for art began at an early age. He learned very quickly how to etch, draw, and paint. Etching is a way of copying a design.

First you coat a metal plate with wax. Then you draw with a sharp instrument through the wax down to the metal. Next you put the plate in an acid bath and heat it to dissolve the wax. Then you put ink on it and use it to print on paper.





When Rembrandt was a teenager, he was just one of many talented Dutch artists. But by the time he was in his 20's, he was very famous.

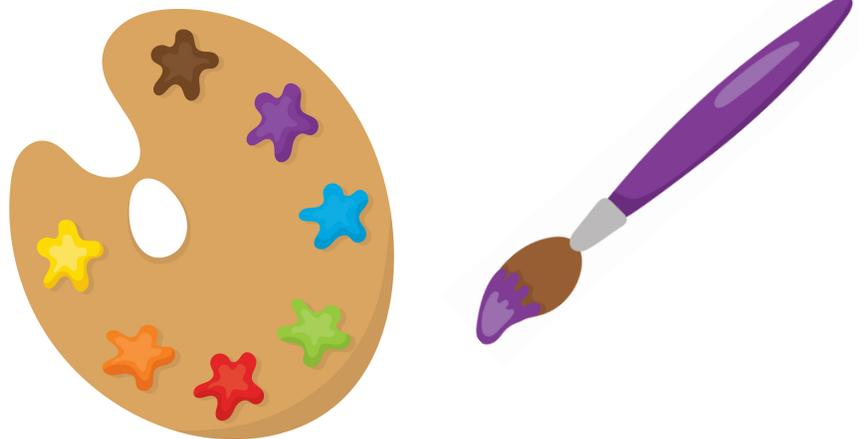
Rembrandt began to study art in Leiden. But he soon moved to the city of Amsterdam to learn from better artists. When he was 20 years old, he returned to Leiden and began painting on his own.

Most of Rembrandt's early paintings are small, detailed pictures of stories from the Bible and other events in history. He is famous for the way he used light and shadow together in his art. This style is called "chiaroscuro." This Italian word means "bright and dark." The darkness in his paintings helps to make the light parts stand out. It was not long before Rembrandt began teaching others. He attracted many students.



In the year 1632 Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam. He lived there for the rest of his life. He married a woman named Saskia. Saskia was the cousin of his landlord.

Saskia came from a wealthy family. She had a lot of money. She introduced Rembrandt to many wealthy people in Amsterdam. Soon Rembrandt became wealthy and famous. He earned his living by working for people who hired him to paint. In those days people did not have cameras. Many people paid artists to paint their pictures.



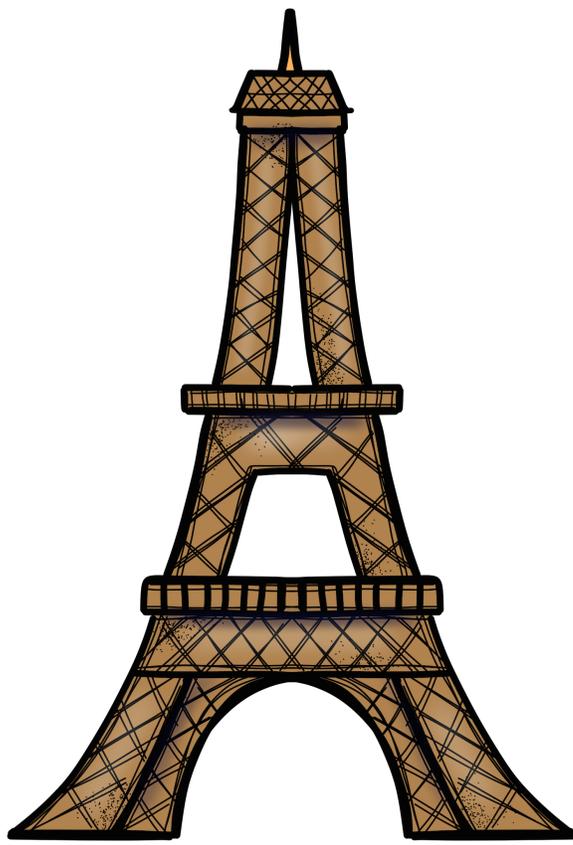
Saskia and Rembrandt had four children. Only one, named Titus, lived. Unfortunately, Saskia died in 1642 after giving birth to Titus. This was a very hard thing for Rembrandt to go through. After Saskia died, Rembrandt could not afford their large house payments. So he moved to the poorest section of Amsterdam. Soon he ran out of money.

Later he fell in love with his maid, Hendrickje Stoffels. She helped take care of his son, Titus. Hendrickje gave birth to their daughter, Cornelia. Hendrickje lived with Rembrandt until she died in 1662.

Rembrandt went through a very sad time. His art began to show his thoughts about life. He tried to show everything he felt about God and people in his paintings. He showed suffering, patience, love and even history.

Rembrandt created 600 paintings, 300 etchings, and 1,400 drawings during his lifetime. Many of his works are famous. They can be found in art museums all around the world.





One of his most famous paintings is *Christ at Emmaus*. He painted it in 1648. It hangs in the Louvre Museum in Paris. Rembrandt painted *Christ at Emmaus* from a story in the Bible. In this story, Jesus appeared to two of his friends after he rose from the dead. They recognized him when he broke the bread for their meal together.

Most painters before Rembrandt showed this event as a big surprise. But here Rembrandt shows everything is calm. The servant does not know anything unusual is happening. Only if you look very closely at the painting would you know the disciples recognized Jesus. One disciple is raising his hand to his mouth. The other disciple is moving backward when he recognizes Jesus.



A very moving etching by Rembrandt is called *Christ Preaching*. This work of art hangs in the New York Metropolitan Museum. Rembrandt portrays a quiet scene in which he shows Jesus' deep feelings of sympathy for the poor people who are listening to him. Jesus is standing right among the people. You can sense his love for each of them.



In 1669, the last year of his life, Rembrandt painted the *Return of the Prodigal Son*. It was a story in the Bible he liked and wanted to paint. In this painting the son is lying at his father's feet. The father is lovingly holding his son and forgiving him for something he had done wrong. Rembrandt did not want people to just see *Return of the Prodigal* as a nice picture. He wanted them to think about its meaning.



Rembrandt died later that year on October 4, 1669. No matter what he was painting – an animal, a tree, a field, or a story from the Bible – Rembrandt knew his talent was a special gift and he was very thankful for it.

