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Activity Guide

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Action Jackson

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ABOUT THE STORY

Artist Jackson Pollock was living near the beach on Long Island when he was inspired to paint *Lavender Mist*. In a style unlike any seen before, he used paint, his body and objects from the area to create a work that shocked and amazed people.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan love art and writing. Greenberg operates an art gallery in St. Louis, Missouri, and has written many books for young readers. Jordan is a photographer and an editor. They have worked together to produce books about such artists as Andy Warhol, Vincent Van Gogh, and Frank O. Gehry.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Robert Andrew Parker has illustrated more than seventy books for young readers and has created illustrations for the *New Yorker* and the jackets of many adult books. He knew Jackson Pollock personally. Mr. Parker lives in West Cornwall, Connecticut.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Show children a few reproductions of Jackson Pollock's paintings. Ask them to describe what they see and how it makes them feel. Explain that the book they will read is about the artist who created the paintings.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

"Why doesn't Jackson Pollock use a base coat of paint?"

"What does Jackson Pollock look at before he begins to paint?"

"Why does the artist stop painting for the day?"

"Why do you think Pollock leaves the things that fall onto his painting?" (Draw conclusions)

"Do you think Pollock was a great artist? Why or why not?" (Make judgments)

Vocabulary

Write these words from the story on the chalkboard. Then have children copy these sentences. Ask them to complete each sentence with one of the words from the board.

enamel caresses improvise inspiration gesture

Jackson Pollock painted until he ran out of _____.

With each _____, Pollock spattered paint across the canvas.

Jackson Pollock used _____ paint for his work.

Pollock liked the way jazz musicians _____ as they play.

Pollock _____ the canvas with his paint-covered hands.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: Pollock's Own Words

The authors include some of Jackson Pollock's own words in the story. Ask children to choose one of the quotations and write it on a piece of paper. Then they can write a brief statement telling what they think the quotation means. What do the words reveal about the artist? Children can share their ideas with the class.

Art: Lavender Mist

Provide children with paints and paper, and ask them to create their own works inspired by the title *Lavender Mist*. Encourage them to use their imaginations. When they are finished, display the paintings in the classroom.

Language Arts: Dear Mr. Pollock

Ask children to look closely at the painting on pages 22-23. Then have them write a letter to Jackson Pollock about their reactions to the painting. Encourage them to describe how the painting made them feel and why.

Art: Other Painters

Ask children to look for information about one of these other painters who worked during the same time period as Jackson Pollock: Willem de Koonig, Jasper Johns, or Pollock's wife, Lee Krasner. Children can work in pairs or small groups to write a brief biography of the painter they have chosen. Encourage them to include an example of the artist's work in their biographies.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Jackson Pollock Paintings

Have children use the keywords Jackson Pollock paintings to find other examples of Pollock's work on the Internet. Ask them to print out a copy of a painting about which they feel strongly. Children can share their choices with the rest of the class, explaining how the painting affects them.