OUTLINES

‘Becoming Modern’ Essay: <http://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/intro-becoming-modern/a/becoming-modern>

Modern – new, up to date, contemporary

Modern societies = technology and industrial progress,

in 19th Century, art was used to measure modernity

the modern period – 1850 to 1960, in art begins with the Realist movement (Courbet)

pre-modern society = agricultural; modern society = urban, industrial production and mass transport

Important features of modern societies = different paragraphs in the essay:

**Capitalism**: exchange of labor for set wage, wages buy goods, most profits realized by owners of the means of production; individuals with capital to produce goods can realize wealth, no longer related to status at birth

Industrial Revolution: mechanized means of producing goods, no longer by hand, begins late 18th Century in England, spreads across Europe in 19th Century, America by 1860s (second half of the 19th Century)

**Urban Culture**: cities where wealth gathered, factories and industrial production located, changed rhythms of life from traditional and rural to urban; rising problems include crime, prostitution, unsafe working and living conditions, alienation (dislocation, loneliness), exploitation, impersonal and depersonalization – expanded on in following paragraph comparing traditional exchange of goods/barter with capitalist transactions; advertising part of modern capitalism

**Technological Advancements**: industrial, assembly line manufacturing, railroad, steam travel and movement of goods, street lighting, urban mass transport, indoor plumbing, scientific advancements replace religious doctrine (including Darwin – evolution; Freud – psychology as a field of study; Marx – economics);

* Modern progressive societies tend to view themselves as highly developed and undeveloped countries as needing to be civilized, leads to colonialization of the 18th/19th Century (mentioned later)

**Secularism**: religious authority is diminished, separation of church and state is founding doctrine of US, religion doesn’t dictate social values; society becomes more diverse;

in art, subjects concerned with the individual experience or the subjective opinion rather than limited to society’s relationship with God or a monarchy

**Optimism**: change, innovation, spirit of progress; modern means constantly changing and evolving; old traditional styles (dominance of conservative Academic art) seen as static, out of touch, leading to new painting styles and techniques to express modern situations, seen in the Impressionists

**Middle-class audience**: private sector patronage, rather than monarchy, clergy;

Growing middle-class was more open and becoming more wealthy with capitalism, had disposable income to spend on *art that reflected their experiences of modern life*; Neoclassical, religious, historical styles are outdated.

**Avant-Garde**: modern is an attitude; modern artists also called *avant-garde* -meaning the first one, the one who takes the risk by going first; first applied to artists whose work served the people, the masses, rather than the ruling class (think about this in the choice of subject matter seen in the works of Manet, the Impressionists and soon the Post-Impressionists);

later applied to artists whose subjects and techniques were radically new and a departure from what came before; not unified by any one belief or style, but indicating a heightened individuality and autonomy that prevails in the modern era; can be related to politics as we will see and can be defined by a shared style

France leads the development in modern art, starting in mid-19th Century and into the 20th Century, France’s political situation was more unstable and in-flux, leading to stylistic upheavals and expressions of change in different styles

What is Modern Art? Essay:

<https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/what-is-modern-art>

birth of Modernism – Industrial Revolution – 18th/19th Century, rapid changes in manufacturing, technology, and transportation (railroad, steam engine, subway), affecting social, economic and cultural conditions in Western Europe, North American and further afield;

people able to travel easier, workers move to urban areas for industrial jobs, travel leads to access to new ideas and expanded worldview

(this should all be merged with contents of Becoming Modern essay)

**A Modern Art**: prior to 19th Century, artists commissioned by wealthy patrons or institutions, like church or state; art was mainly religious or mythological intended to instruct viewers

During 19th Century, artists begin making art about people, places, ideas around them, of which they had direct experience

Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams*, 1899, popularizes idea of subconscious mind, artists begin exploring dreams, symbolism, personal iconography to depict their subjective experiences

(this should all be merged with contents of Becoming Modern essay)

Art no longer *only* realistically depicts the world; expressive color, non-traditional materials, new techniques;

Photography invented in 1830s – new method for depicting and reinterpreting the world

(THIS CONTENT IS IMPORTANT / not discussed in Becoming Modern essay)

Atmosphere ripe for avant-garde to work in new, expected and modern directions

**Painting Modern Life**: artists depicted the modern world and the emotional and psychological effects of living in a world of rapid flux; Matisse and Cezanne paint traditional subjects but in shocking modern ways

**Rise of the Modern City**: cities grow in early 19th Century spurned on by industry, innovations in transport, particularly railroad, and mass migrations of people (Railroads and steamships move people)

Turn of 20th Century – *La Belle Epoque* – the beautiful era, Paris growing rapidly, machine-based production of goods replacing handcrafted good, industrial farming and factories in suburban areas

Modern engineering marvel – Eiffel Tower, some see this as progress, other worry about loss of humanity

City becomes preferred art subject to document these changes

(Some content and specifics here should be added to Becoming Modern section)

From here, this content is not discussed in Becoming Modern essay / IMPORTANT to add:

**Landscapes** – images of natural scenery, traditional subject, remains popular as artists seek out nature, first hand observation, away from city, avant-garde developments happened as a result, abstraction in color and new techniques;

Two innovations – transport/railway; paint in a tube, portable, easy to transport

**Portraits** – show individualism, they can be literal or symbolic, because of photography, artists were freed from literal representations, focus on subjective ideas – rather than focus on literal appearance, artists sought to represent inner character or psyche, using color and other formal characteristics for personal exploration

**Popular Culture**: end of 19th Century / La Belle Epoque, high culture versus popular culture, which was a new phenomenon, cabarets, innovations in printing allowed for poster printing, graphic design and advertising begin as fields