

PABLO PICASSO'S PORTRAITS

FROM REALISM TO CUBISM



[START THE LESSON](#)

LESSON OUTLINE



- * [Biography facts: Formative years](#)
- * [Blue and Rose Periods](#)
- * [Towards Cubism](#)
- * [Art as Political Statement](#)
- * [Your Turn! Activities](#)

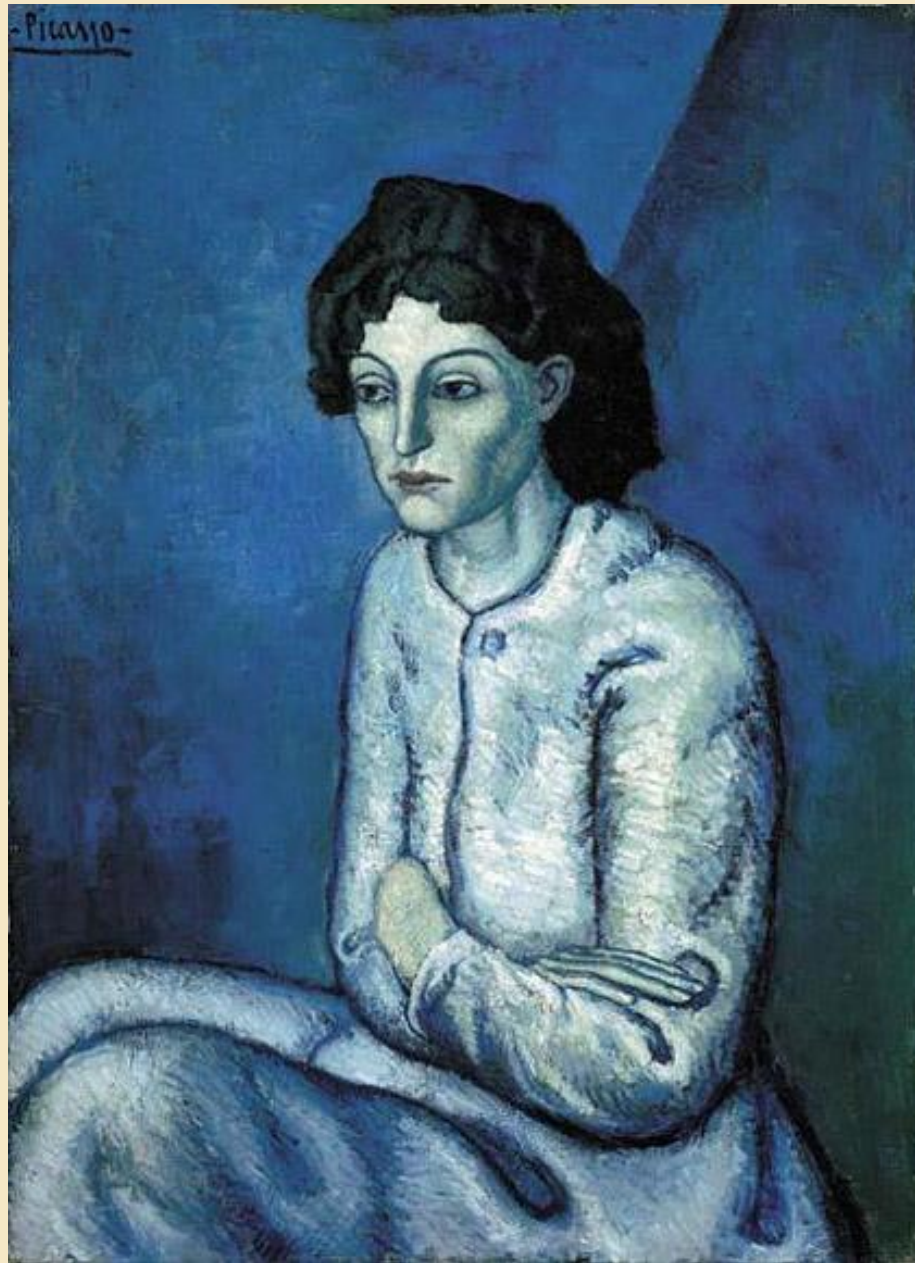


BIOGRAPHY FACTS

Early years

- Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain in 1881.
- His father, José Ruiz Blasco, was an art professor who instilled academic discipline—drawing from casts, copying masters, and studying anatomy.

- By age 14, Picasso's technical ability rivaled that of established painters.
- Yet by his late teens, he sought to move beyond imitation to express psychological depth and inner experience.



THE BLUE PERIOD (1901–1904)

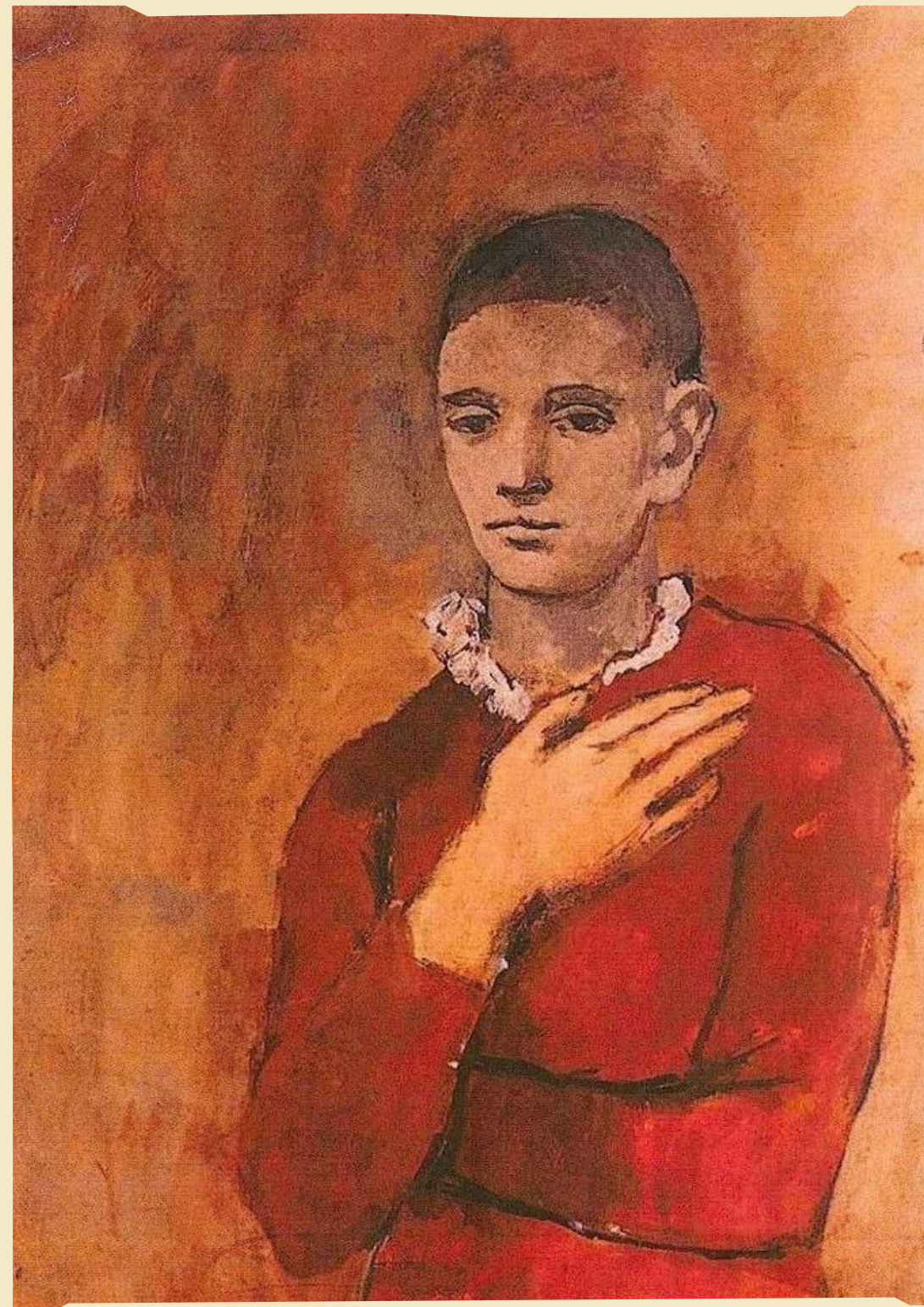
After the sudden death of his friend Carlos Casagemas, Picasso entered a somber phase marked by emotional introspection. During this time, Picasso painted essentially monochromatic paintings in shades of blue and blue-green, only occasionally warmed by other colors. His subjects became marginalized figures—beggars, blind men, mothers with children.

These sombre works, are now some of his most popular works, although he had difficulty selling them at the time.

THE ROSE PERIOD (1904–1906)

Emerging from depression, Picasso's mood—and his palette—lightened. Pinks, reds, and ochres replaced blue; itinerant performers and circus people symbolized human resilience and creativity. His partnership with Fernande Olivier also brought warmth to his imagery.

This period reflects the influence of classical composition, yet the faces remain introspective—suggesting the loneliness behind performance.



TOWARD ABSTRACTION: THE BIRTH OF CUBISM

By 1907, Picasso began dismantling the visual language of realism. Influenced by African masks and Iberian sculpture, he reimagined form as conceptual structure rather than optical truth.

Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. no. O) marked a rupture with Western perspective and Renaissance ideals—it presented five nude figures fragmented into angular planes.



ANALYTIC AND SYNTHETIC CUBISM (1908–1914)

Together with the artist Georges Braque, Picasso developed Cubism in two phases:

- Analytic Cubism: deconstructing form into facets and muted tones (1908–1912).
- Synthetic Cubism: reintegrating color, collage, and texture (1912–1914).

These works invited the viewer to reconstruct meaning—shifting the act of seeing into an intellectual process.



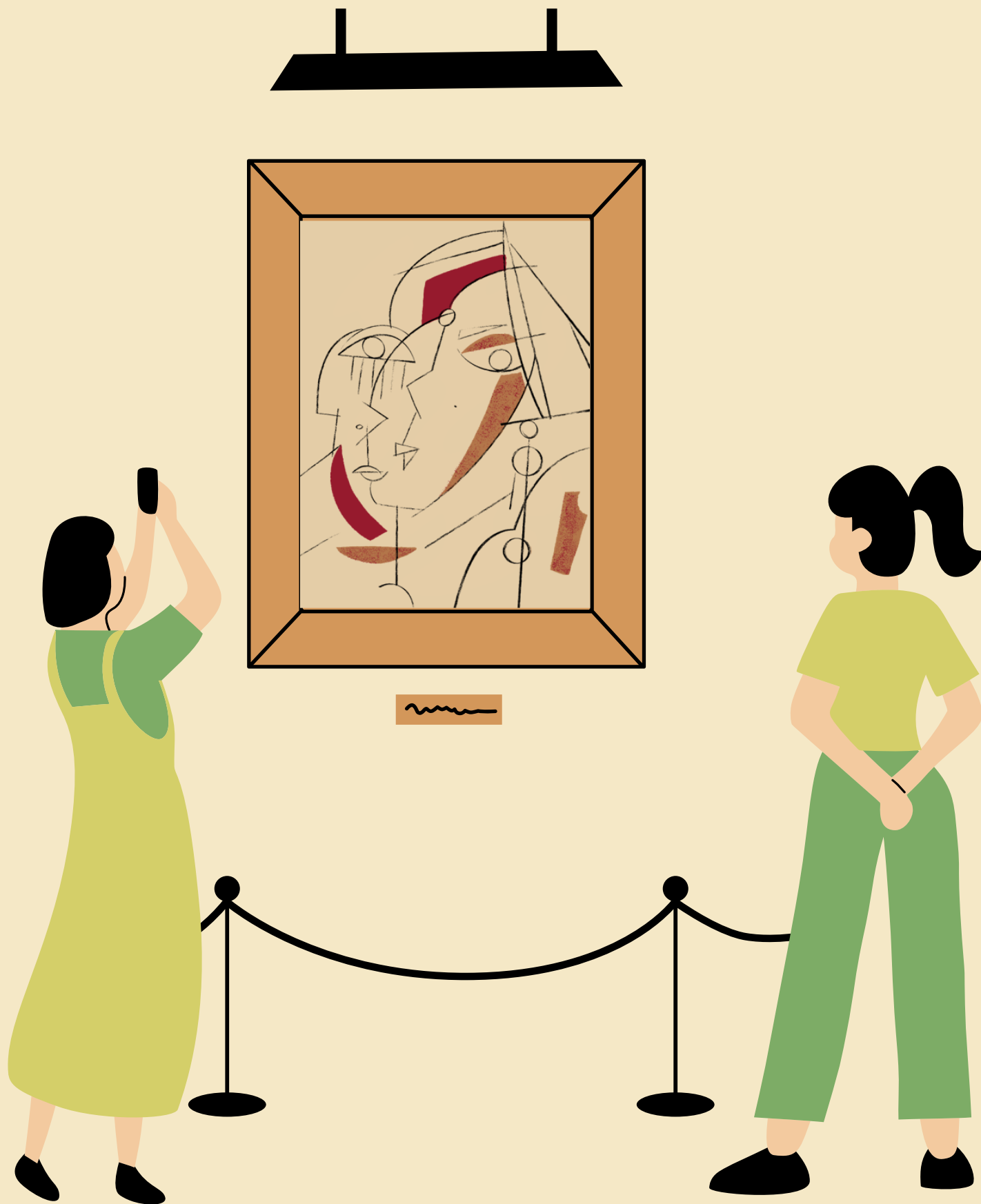
Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, 1910. Art Institute of Chicago. In Public Domain in the USA.

FRAGMENTED FACES

Picasso's portraits reflect the psychological tensions of the 20th century—identity as multifaceted, unstable, performative. His depictions of lovers, such as Dora Maar and Marie-Thérèse Walter, merge sensuality and distortion.

The Weeping Woman (1937) epitomizes emotional expression through form: angular lines, fractured planes, and acid colors.





* POLITICAL EXPRESSION

“Painting is not made to decorate apartments. It is an instrument of war against brutality and darkness.” — Pablo Picasso

* LEGACY AND INFLUENCE

Picasso’s impact on art is immeasurable. His radical redefinition of form influenced abstraction, Surrealism, and later postmodern deconstruction. Artists from Willem de Kooning to David Hockney engaged with his vocabulary of fragmentation and synthesis.

His prolific experimentation—over 20,000 works—embodied the modern artist as perpetual innovator.

YOUR TURN!

Follow the link to check your knowledge about pablo picasso through quizzes and reflective activities



[CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE](#)