

# The National Gallery

## **1/ Symbols in a painting.**

### **Room 56 : The Arnolfini Wedding. Jan Van Eyck. 1434.**

To understand the symbols present in this painting, answer the following questions.  
For each question, tick the right box:

#### **a/ The husband raises his right hand. What does this mean ?**

Arnolfini reminds his young bride that she must obey him	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arnolfini solemnly expresses his consent to the marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arnolfini asks the witnesses present for the wedding to remain at a certain distance	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### **b/ What does the presence of the dog symbolize?**

Wickedness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wealth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marital fidelity	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### **c/ Why is their only ONE candle in the chandelier ?**

It symbolizes the fact that the merchant Arnolfini is miserly	<input type="checkbox"/>
It represents the « union candle ». In the Middle Ages, it symbolized God's presence in the newly-wed husband and wife's house	<input type="checkbox"/>
The scene takes place during the day. Therefore, one candle is enough to light the room.	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### **d/ Arnolfini and his bride are not wearing any shoes...**

They walk with bare feet because they do not want to make a mess of their bedroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
This is another symbol of marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>
The husband and wife have just returned from a walk and have sore feet	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### **e/ Why are there fruit in the room?**

In case somebody is hungry and wants to eat	<input type="checkbox"/>
To add a touch of colour to the painting	<input type="checkbox"/>
To symbolize that marriage equals fertility	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### **f/ What does the mirror symbolize ?**

Wealth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Love	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### **g/ What can one see when looking at this painting ?**

The husband and wife	<input type="checkbox"/>
The husband and wife and other characters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2/ Painting and religion.**

**Rooms 53 et 8 : The representation of the Virgin Mary in two paintings:**

**Room 53: The Wilton Diptych. Unknown author.**

When was this painting made? .....

What element enhances the holy character of the people represented ?

.....  
In the background, there is no scenery (decor). What replaces it ? What does this symbolize?

**Salle 8 : The Madonna of the Pinks. Raphaël.**

When was this painting made? .....

Are there any elements showing the holy character of the people represented ?

.....  
Describe the landscape/scenery in which this scene takes place?

.....  
**Compare the representation of the Virgin Mary in these two paintings. Explain to what extent it can be said that men's relationship to God and religion has changed (over the period when these two works of art were produced)**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**2/ Painting and politics.**

**Room 4 : The Ambassadors. Holbein.**

This painting represents two ambassadors of François 1st to the court of Henry VIII in 1533. **The two ambassadors** lean their elbows on a **shelf** where many instruments and symbols of knowledge are exhibited. Their power originates there.

**a/ What do the different objects represent ?  
Match up the objects with what they represent.**

<b>The celestial globe</b> (next to Dinteville's hand) and <b>the sundials</b>		Geometry and arithmetic.
<b>The terrestrial globe</b> (lower shelf) :		The main discoveries in astronomy made in the 16th century
<b>A square and an open arithmetic book</b> (next to the globe) :		The most important countries.
<b>The luth and a series of flutes</b>		Music.

**b/ To conclude, What image of themselves do the ambassadors want to convey ?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**c/ Across the mosaic floor, there is an anamorphosis representing death**

An **anamorphosis** is a **geometrical transformation of an image so that it cannot be recognized.**

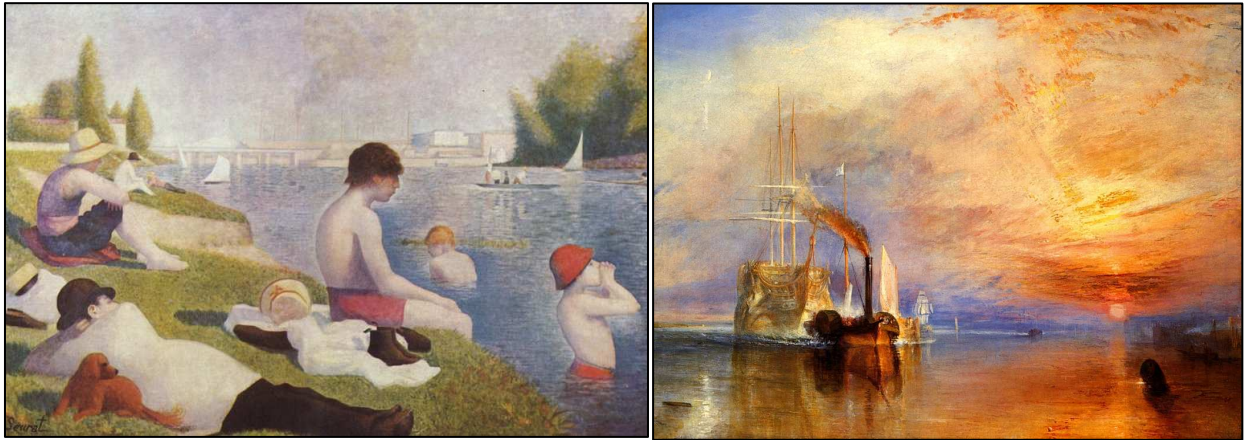
To reconstitute the image, the viewer needs either a convex or a concave mirror. Concerning this painting, the use of a glass tube (placed in front of the painting) enables viewers to reconstitute the image.

**What message did Holbein want to communicate to the ambassadors who had commissioned this painting?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**3/ Painting and industrialization.**

When were these two paintings made :



- **Room 44** : Bathers at Asnières. Seurat. ....
- **Room 34** : The fighting Temeraire. Turner.....

What elements in the paintings evoke the « industrial revolution » of the 19th century ?

- **Room 44:** Bathers at Asnières. Seurat. ....
- **Room 34** : The fighting Temeraire. Turner.....

What element of the scenery allows you to affirm that this scene takes place in France ?

- **Room 44:** Bathers at Asnières. Seurat. ....

**4/ Paintings of the 17th century.**

Find the name of a painting for each one of the painters mentioned below:

**Velázquez** : .....

**Rembrandt** : .....

**Vermeer** : .....

**Poussin** : .....

**Caravaggio** : .....