

CHARACTERISTICS OF CUBISM

Cubist Characteristic	Description of Characteristic
Dedicated to the simplification of painting	Cubist painters resisted the notion that art should be “realistic” and show us the world as it appears to be. Rather, they focused on the two-dimensionality of the canvas to force viewers to see paintings for what they are – paint on a canvas, rather than be tricked by the illusion of realism.
Excluded all but the formal elements of art: line, shape, and color	Most Cubist painters used line and color to emphasize geometric shapes, sometimes to the point of abstraction. Cubism gets its name from the way painter George Braque used layers of cubes and other shapes to create landscapes. In some ways, this is akin to how mosaics work, using separate shapes of glass to create an image. How closely the painting resembles a “real” image depends on how the shapes are arranged.
Developed a new way of depicting space and time which involved multiple and mixed perspectives.	Cubist painters also resisted the notion that paintings should be limited to a single point-of-view or vantage point or limited to a single moment of time. Consider what you might see if there were two of you standing at opposite corners of the room seeing the same scene from two different angles. Or consider how you might depict in a single image a sequence of events over time. These were challenges Cubist painters embraced.

TYPES OF CUBISM

Analytical Cubism	The first phase, Analytical Cubism attempts to construct reality through the overlapping relationships of interdependent views. It tends to be highly fragmented and is often ambiguous, abstract, and difficult to interpret.
Cubist Collage	Taking the idea of geometric fragments in another direction, collage allows for the use of a range of real-life materials to be arranged in geometric patterns that suggest an overall image or idea.
Synthetic Cubism	Synthetic Cubism grew out of Analytical Cubism and the experimental nature of Collage. While still applying many of the same strategies, it tends to be more “realistic,” more decorative and appealing, less fragmented, and somewhat easier to interpret.