

## TEACHER'S GUIDE TO ANALYSIS OF *THREE MUSICIANS*

<b>Elements of Art</b>	
<b>Light and shadow</b>	There does not seem to be a source of light in the image. Everything appears illuminated equally, except perhaps the dog's head. There are no shadows, except perhaps the dog's head.
<b>Space</b>	The painting depicts a very small room, cramped, with barely enough room for the three musicians and the dog. The uneven floor and walls make the room look lopsided.
<b>Shape</b>	The images are constructed out of irregular two-dimensional geometric shapes, as though cut out of paper. Most of the shapes are angular, with only a few curves.
<b>Line</b>	The lines are distinct, though slightly wavy and unsteady, as though cut out with scissors.
<b>Color</b>	The colors are mostly muted, brown and beige slightly offset by the blue, orange and yellow. Because each shape is a different color, the colors help emphasize the boundaries of lines and the geometric shapes.
<b>Principles of Design</b>	
<b>Balance</b>	The painting is balanced, with the figures centered and filling most of the image. Because the shapes are irregular, however, there is a sense of imbalance and unevenness.
<b>Emphasis</b>	The bright color of the central figure (pants and guitar) draw the viewer's eyes first.
<b>Movement</b>	There is no obvious movement. The fragmented nature of the image, with its various shapes, tends to lead the viewer to wander from part to part, trying to piece together figures and the whole image.
<b>Pattern</b>	There are no discernable patterns, beyond the repetition of irregular shapes and unsteady lines.
<b>Interpretation</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	Three musicians seated on chairs play music in a small, crowded room, with a table in front of them and a dog under one of the chairs.
<b>People and things</b>	There are three musicians, each uniquely dressed (see symbols). There are, presumably, three chairs and a table, and a dog sits on the floor under one of the chairs.
<b>Symbols</b>	Two of the musicians appear to be wearing clown costumes while one is dressed like a monk. (See the Wikipedia page for <i>Three Musicians</i> for a biographical explanation of these costumes, though that is not needed to appreciate the Cubist aspects of the painting.)
<b>Degree of Representation</b>	The painting obviously depicts three musicians and a dog in a room with table and chairs, however, they are not realistically represented. Rather, they are two dimensional, as though made of cut out paper. There is little detail and a heavy reliance of geometric shapes. In addition, the angles of the walls and floor are wrong, unbalanced and three sides of the edge of the table are visible, when in reality only two should be.
<b>Meaning</b>	On one level, the painting suggests a fun event, both through the use of the costumes and the playing of music. On another level, the painting is not so much about these characters as it is about painting and how to see the world in a new way. The painting asks the viewer to perceive the world in two-dimensional shapes viewed from multiple perspectives simultaneously.