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## Pablo Picasso

1881 - 1973

Pablo Picasso was a very important modern artist. His career spanned more than 70 years, and his influence on later artists is impossible to measure. He was born [Pablo Ruiz y Picasso](#) on October 25, 1881 in [Málaga, Spain](#). Pablo's father, José Ruiz Blanco, was a professor of drawing. Pablo showed artistic talent as a young boy, but he was not a good student in most school subjects. He may have had [dyslexia](#) (dis•LEX•ee•uh), a condition that made it hard for him to do well in school. When Pablo was 14, his family moved to Barcelona, Spain. The next year, Pablo enrolled in the Barcelona art academy where his father taught. Pablo's parents knew their son was very talented. They devoted much of their time preparing him for a career as an artist.

[Pablo Ruiz y Picasso](#)[Málaga, Spain](#)[dyslexia](#)

Soon Picasso had his own studio and began to exhibit his work. His early painting went through a Blue Period, when he painted sad-looking pictures mostly in shades of blue. The pictures showed subjects like the life of poor people. A happier time is known as his Pink or Rose Period, when he created many paintings of circus performers.

Pablo was especially good at experimenting with what he learned. He used ideas from his studies in Madrid and Paris to express himself in new ways. He was always challenging traditional rules of art. For example, African masks inspired him to paint people so that their faces looked like masks. In about 1907 Picasso began to work in a completely new painting style. That year, while living in Paris, he painted a picture of some young women in Avignon, a city in southeastern France. The women in the picture do not look like women in real life. Picasso painted them with harsh angles and exaggerated physical features. Many people who saw the painting were

shocked by it. Some thought it was awful and a sign that Picasso was crazy. Many others thought it was brilliant.

That painting was the beginning of the painting style called [cubism](#), which brought major changes in the art world. As other artists began using this style, Picasso continued to experiment. Some of his later cubist paintings have pieces of paper or other materials glued onto them. (This was the beginning of the art form known as [collage](#).) Others use mostly curved lines instead of straight ones.



[cubism](#)



[collage](#)

Picasso's style of art continued to change throughout his career. After a trip to Greece and Rome, he painted people to look like the ancient statues he had seen. He liked the heavy, solid look of the statues, and he made his subjects look even heavier. In other paintings he distorted his subjects in an almost surrealistic way. Some of his works were new interpretations of great paintings from the past. Picasso did more than just paint. He also drew, [sculpted](#), and made ceramic plates, jugs, and tiles. He even designed stage sets and costumes for plays and ballet performances.



[sculpted](#)

Picasso kept working through times of war in Europe. A dark mood is reflected in his work during those times. Some paintings, like [Guernica](#), showed his feelings about war directly.



[Guernica](#)

By 1940 Pablo Picasso was the world's most famous living artist. His reputation as a person was as well known as his art. Picasso traveled back and forth between grand homes in Paris and southern France. One home near the French coast is an ancient castle he bought in 1958. Picasso's friends were the most famous writers, artists, and performers of the day. He appeared constantly in newspapers and magazines. Picasso's high-profile life made his work even more popular - and expensive. (He paid for one of his houses with the sale of just one painting!) Picasso was

still working and producing as much as one piece of art a day until he died at the age of 91.

