Francisco de Goya y Lucientes is regarded as the most important Spanish artist of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes was born in Fuendetodos, Spain on March 30, 1746. He took his first art lessons from his father, who was a master gilder. Francisco also learned etching from friendly local monks. He became an apprentice at age 14 to a village painter and realized that he wanted to become an artist. However, the art academy rejected him in 1763 and 1766, which greatly disappointed the young man. Goya didn't give up on his dream of becoming a painter, though, and traveled to Italy to study. He learned how to paint in the bold Rococo style and even won second prize in a painting contest in Rome.

Goya triumphantly went back to Spain in 1771 and began painting frescoes in the local cathedral. He also studied with an artist named Francisco Bayeu and later married Bayeu's sister, Josefa. His marriage helped him get a job creating designs for the royal tapestry factory in Madrid from 1775 until 1792. He designed 42 tapestries that showed scenes from everyday life, and he developed new techniques that helped weavers do their craft with precision. Tapestry design was fun, but Goya still wanted to be a full-time painter.

Goya's big break came in 1783. One of the king's friends asked Goya to paint his portrait, which turned out well. Soon, Goya had other patrons. He became popular for his amazing portraits. Many of them had an element of mystery to them. Goya tried to make one young girl imitate a queen, but you might not think so at first glance. The girl looks like a country girl because she is wearing a straw hat and flowers on her dress. Her pet pug is covered with ribbons and bells. So why did this girl resemble a queen? The secret was that the French queen, Marie-Antoinette, sometimes dressed up as a shepherdess!

One of Goya's most famous paintings was called The Maja Clothed. A lady is on a sofa relaxing. She is dressed in shimmering clothes of lavender, pale green, and pink. She is smiling, and she looks happy. This painting showed the lighter side of Goya's work, and it now hangs in the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid.
Goya's paintings do not have much detail in them, and he usually used pale colors for the clothing his subjects wore. Their faces, however, look like they are glowing with secrets. Some people think that he kept his paintings simple because of his experience as a tapestry designer. He never used lots of details in his designs because it would have been hard for the weavers to put them into a tapestry.

The Spanish royalty loved Goya, but just as his fame reached its peak, he got sick. He had a high fever in 1792 that made him deaf. It took him five years to recover. During that time, he read a lot about the French Revolution. He became withdrawn, and it affected his style. He began to paint bizarre creatures from his inner fantasy world. He did one especially weird series of eleven paintings called Fantasy and Invention. The mood of his paintings became sad and strange.

Goya's paintings also became much darker in color. They were even called "black paintings." He began to use his paintings to express his opinions about things rather than just as works of art. His most powerful paintings show the struggle of the Spanish people against Napoleon's army when they invaded Spain. One of his paintings, called The Third of May, 1808, showed a group of citizens in front of a firing squad. It expressed how much he disliked violence. Some of his work about the war was not published until after his death. Goya became disappointed in Spain and later moved to France.

Francisco Goya died on April 16, 1828. He is often called "the first of the moderns" because he showed the events of his time in a bold way. The art academy that rejected him might have been surprised at his success!

**READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:**

**Answer the following questions:**

1. Who gave Goya his first art lessons?
2. Where was Goya born?
3. What did Goya design before he became a famous painter?
4. Who invaded Spain during Goya’s lifetime?
5. Which queen liked to dress up as a shepherdess?
6. Is Goya famous for the great detail he put into his paintings?
7. Where did Goya live at the end of his life?
8. What phrase is sometimes used to describe Goya?
ACTIVITIES

1) Match the following Goya´s paints with their titles.

- The duchess of Alba
- The third of May 1808
- The grape harvest
- Charles IV of Spain and his family
- The witches-sabbath
- The clothed Maja
- The snowstorm
- Here – neither
- The Parasol,
- The family of the Duke of Osuna
2) **Click here** to find the information you need to complete this table.

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