

# Art A Day CHALLENGE: Complementary Colorist

## Washington County Museum of Fine Arts

### FA4: Understand and apply content specific vocabulary and notation of each artistic discipline.

In order to perform or assess art appropriately, artists must first understand and be able to apply content specific vocabulary and notation.

How does knowing and using visual art vocabularies help us understand and interpret works of art?

We challenge you to an art activity each day of the School Closure! If you decide to complete this challenge, share it with us in the comments and on Instagram @WCMFA and use the hashtag

## #ARTaDayCHALLENGE

Stuff you'll need: Read through the challenge to decide...the materials you use are up to you!

### Words to know:

**Contrast** -Opposites placed near each other in one picture. It can be sizes, colors, shapes, lines, or light vs. dark.

**Complementary Colors**- colors that directly across from each other on the color wheel.

**LOOK** at this painting by the American artist, Charles Webster Hawthorne. This artist often gave his sitters (that is sometimes what we call people that sit down and have their portrait painted) a small activity to work on. In this painting, the woman is sewing. Something from another part of the room seems to have caught her interest. What do you think distracted her?

The artist was also doing something special with the color. Charles Webster Hawthorne was a colorist! This means the use of color was something he thought a lot about and it was a very important part of his paintings. In this painting, two colors seem to stand out. We see red in the woman's hair, her lips, throughout her skin tone, and that little pin cushion on the table. Green is also an important color in this painting. The walls are green, the woman's eyes are green, even her shirt is green! Now, look at the color wheel below. Find red on the warm tones side of the wheel. Look directly across from red. Green is the **complement** of red. This means red and green are **complementary** colors! When the artist placed the **complementary** colors next to each other, **contrast** was created. Contrast creates visual interest for the viewer.

**THINK** about the artist's use of color. Why do you think **complementary** colors were important to the artist? How would the effect change if the colors were not **complementary**? Why do you think creating **contrast** was important? Think about the look on the woman's face and the task she is performing. She is sewing, but she is not focusing on the activity in this painting. What do you think the artist wanted the viewer to know about this person?



Charles Webster Hawthorne, 1871-1930  
American  
Sewing Girl



**CREATE** a portrait of a family member, pet, or yourself! If you are creating a portrait of a family member, ask the sitter to perform a small activity or task like the Sewing Girl, in Hawthorne's painting. Maybe you will ask a sibling to coloring in a coloring book, read a book, or play with blocks for example. Then, create **contrast** with your use of colors! Look at the color wheel. Find two colors that **complement** each other. Think about how you will use the colors to create **contrast**. For example, if your sister has blue eyes, maybe you will color the chair she is sitting in orange or if your brother has a red shirt on you will make his book green.

**Writing Journal Prompt:** Write about **contrast** in other parts of your life. Think about contrasting moods, ideas, and events. What can **contrast** mean beyond color?

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