



Lesson: The Grand Tour

GRADES K-12



Luca Carlevariis, *The Piazzetta at Venice*, 1700-10, oil on canvas, 38" x 76⁷/₈"

Painting: "The Piazzetta at Venice"

The painting offers a familiar view of the Piazza di San Marco, seen from a boat on the Grand Canal. On the right, you can spot St. Mark's Basilica in the distance, the column of St. Mark, and the façade of the Doge's Palace. To the left are the Sansovino Library, the base of the Campanile, and the column of St. Theodorico. The plaza is bustling with locals, merchants, tourists, and stray dogs. As a large-scale work, it would have been a costly investment. For travelers on a budget, Carlevariis also produced detailed engravings of similar Venetian scenes.

Vocabulary:

The Grand Tour – A popular trip in the 1700s-1800s where rich young British people traveled around Europe (especially France and Italy) to learn about art, culture, and life.

Status – How important or respected someone is in society.

Relative – Something understood by comparing it to something else.

Vedute – Detailed pictures of city or country views.

Artist: Luca Carlevariis

Carlevariis was the son of architect Giovanni Leonardo (b. 1614) from Udine, northeast of Venice. By age 16, he had moved to Venice and joined the painters' guild in 1708—a crucial step for artists seeking success in the city's competitive, reputation-driven art market. At the time he painted the Timken's work, Carlevariis was Venice's leading vedute (view) painter. He held this position until his younger follower, Antonio Canal—better known as Canaletto—rose to prominence among English and German collectors in the mid-1700s.

Venice – A famous city in Italy with canals instead of roads.

Paris – The capital of France, known for art, fashion, and culture.

London – The capital of Great Britain, known for history and big-city life.

Art Materials:

Printed handouts

Colored pencils

Pencils with erasers

Look, Talk, Listen, Connect

This is a simple, discussion-based activity to introduce students to the artwork. It's based on the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) method and helps build critical thinking, language, and observation skills.

How to Start:

Project the artwork image (downloadable from timkenmuseum.org) and give students a few minutes to look closely.

Ask These Three Questions:

What's going on in this artwork?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What more can we find?

Teacher Tips:

Paraphrase responses without judgment

Point to the area being discussed

Connect and highlight student comments

Student Goals:

Look closely

Share observations

Support ideas with visual evidence

Listen to others' perspectives

This process helps students connect the artwork to historical, cultural, and personal experiences.

Process

Start with the Look, Talk, Listen, Connect activity (see above).

Review vocabulary (page 1) and use pictures of the three European cities (pages 4-6) to show their locations. For younger students, focus only on city names.

Show the map of Europe (page 8) and point out England, France, and Italy. You can also project a world map (page 9) to show where Europe is compared to the U.S. and California.

For older students, share info about the artist and painting (page 1), and the 18th-19th century "Grand Tours" (page 3). Explain how people traveled long distances to learn before modern technology.

Ask students to remember where England, France, and Italy are located on a map of Europe because they'll fill in a blank map next.

Hand out blank maps (page 10) and colored pencils. Students label England, France, and Italy—either independently or as a class.

Give out the European cities handout with fun facts (pages 4-6). Students read and pick their favorite city. They can do the quiz (page 7, if time allows). For younger kids, read and do the quiz together.

Pass out coloring pages of the cities (pages 11-13). Students color their favorite. You pick one to color too—it's a relaxing activity!

At the end, have each student share one thing they learned and show their colored picture.

SUPPLEMENT 1

"THE GRAND TOUR DESCRIPTION"

The Grand Tour:

The Grand Tour was an 18th- and 19th-century tradition mainly for young British aristocrats who traveled across continental Europe—especially France and Italy—as a rite of passage for education and social advancement. Similar to today's study abroad programs, these privileged travelers sought carefully planned cultural experiences and intellectual growth. Only those with wealth, leisure, and social status could afford such lengthy journeys.

This multi-year trip acted as a "finishing school," where travelers gained exposure to art, architecture, manners, and classical history. The tradition grew alongside improvements in travel infrastructure and guidebooks but eventually declined with the rise of mass tourism.

For British nobility, completing the Grand Tour was a mark of good breeding and cultural sophistication, preparing them for political or diplomatic roles within the expanding British Empire. While initially limited to wealthy men, the tour later became more accessible to women, wealthy Americans, and middle-class travelers as travel costs dropped and transportation improved.

Typical Route:

Starting Point: Travelers usually began by crossing the English Channel to France.

France: Paris was a major stop for lessons in French language, dancing, and horseback riding.

Switzerland: Crossing the Alps was a challenging but necessary step to reach Italy.

Other Destinations: Some travelers also visited additional locations throughout Europe.

Worksheet: London, Paris & Venice —

Fun Facts, Quiz & Pictures

London



1. Big Ben is actually the bell inside the Elizabeth Tower.
2. The London Underground (“the Tube”) is the world’s oldest metro, dating back to 1863.
3. Urban foxes roam the streets—even one was found on the 72nd floor of The Shard!
4. Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre first opened in 1599 (rebuilt in 1997).
5. London hosted the Olympic Games three times: 1908, 1948, and 2012.
6. The London Eye holds 32 capsules but skips number 13 due to superstition.

Paris



1. The Eiffel Tower was built for the 1889 World's Fair.
2. Every night, it sparkles with 20,000 light bulbs.
3. Paris has its own Statue of Liberty on Île aux Cygnes, facing New York.
4. Beneath the streets lies a labyrinth of catacombs holding over six million remains.
5. In 1984, a crocodile was found swimming in the city's sewers!
6. Notre-Dame Cathedral has stood since the 1100s and remains one of the most visited monuments.

Venice

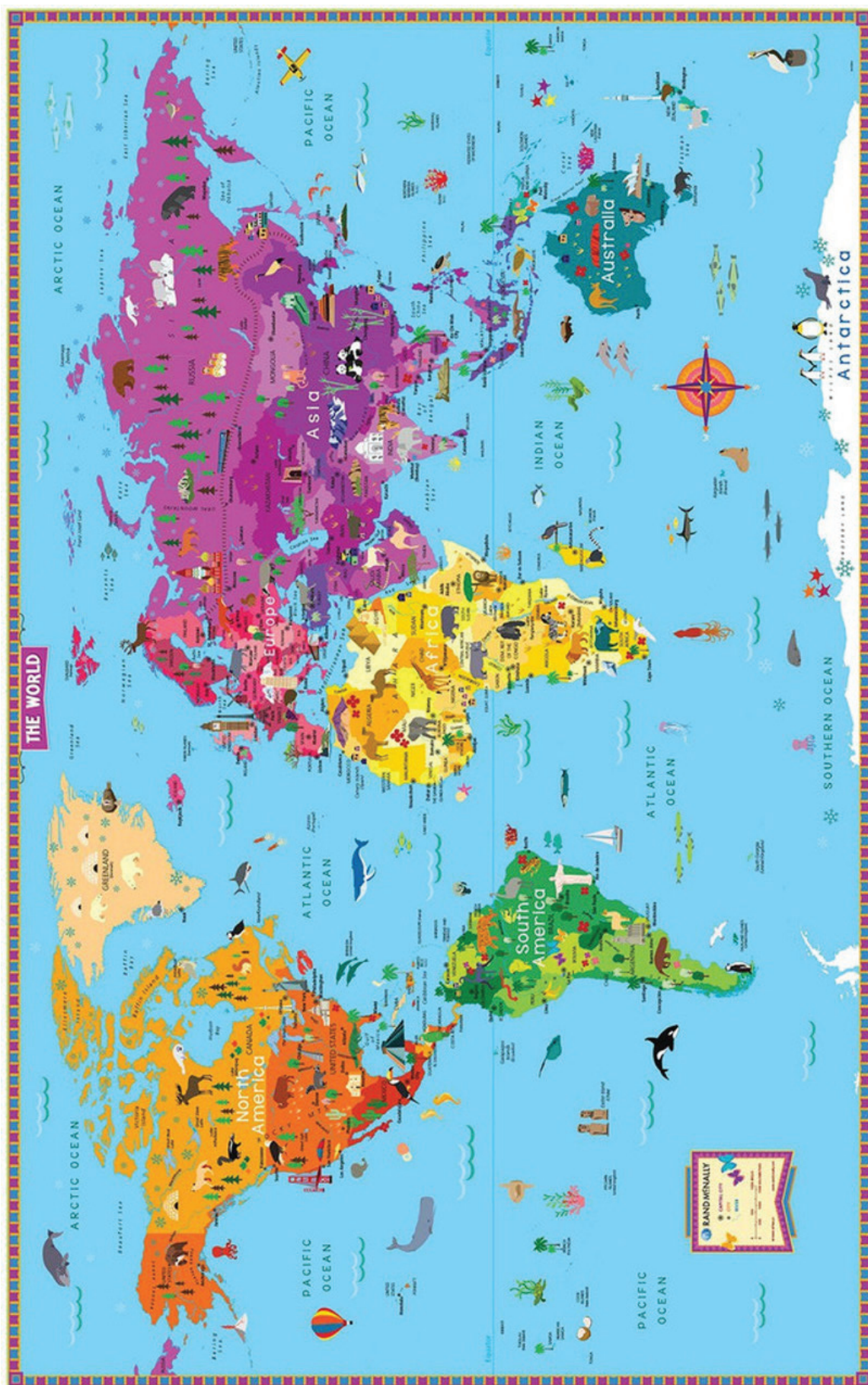


1. Venice rests on wooden pilings driven into marshy ground—now petrified.
2. A 17th-century law mandates that gondolas be painted black.
3. The Carnival of Venice, famous for masks and costumes, was revived in 1979 and now draws up to 3 million visitors.
4. The Lion of St. Mark statue in Piazza San Marco may have been made in China during the Tang dynasty and brought back via the Silk Road.
5. Ponte dei Pugni (“Bridge of Fists”) was the site of violent clan fights in the 14th century.
6. St. Mark’s Campanile—the bell tower—is nearly 99 m tall and Venice’s tallest structure, originally built as a watchtower.

Quiz Time!

1. Which city built the Eiffel Tower?
2. Where can you find a labyrinth beneath the streets?
3. In which city is Big Ben (the bell) located?
4. Which city requires gondolas to be painted black?
5. Where do 20,000 bulbs sparkle every night?
6. Which city sits on petrified wooden pilings?







LONDON



PARIS



VENICE

