

How to use The National Gallery as a cross curricular approach to weather and climate studies at primary level.

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Weather and climate are topics in natural science and geography in primary and secondary education in most countries. The pupils are often doing own weather observations and measurements and are presenting the results oral, by posters or with digital aids. They also use the Internet with all its relevant resources in their studies to develop vocabulary, practical and conceptual knowledge. Knowledge about weather and climate is parts of liberal education and could be projected to other topics in science and to topics in other subjects, for instance: history, social geography, literature and arts. This article reports from a case study in grade 3 classes (age 9 year) during their Weather Week. Their science teacher was, quite untypical, also educated in art history. She arranged a visit to The National Gallery with the double agenda: 1. To introduce the pupils to Norwegian canon paintings from the national romantic period, our so-called “golden age”. 2. To look for and discuss weather elements in these paintings. For one hour the museum curator guided the pupils around the water cycle by using the paintings. While the pupils’ own observations of weather, clouds and wind and measurements of temperature and precipitation during the Weather Week only are point checks, the guided tour in The National Gallery gave literally “the whole picture” of the Norwegian weather and climate and of the water cycle. During the tour, the curator constantly invited the pupils to tell about and discuss what weather and water elements they were looking at when standing in front of a painting. The pupils were responsive and interested all the time. Back at school, they demonstrated that they had learned much about both weather elements, the water cycle as a hole and about our golden age painters. The presentation will, with some golden-age-paintings as backdrop (literally), discuss this particular cross curricular approach, and cross curricular approaches in weather and climate education in general.