

LANDSCAPE

MAPPING THE WORLD

Having had a look at how artists learned to paint and draw convincing landscapes in the 'Making Space' section, this section explores different uses of landscape images and their relationship to map-making.

Maps too are a kind of landscape where the viewpoint – the place where the artist appears to be located so they can look across the land – helps create a geographical sense of space. Some of the earliest images of what would be called landscapes were first drawn on the borders of maps. Landscapes often record the outdoors faithfully, documenting landmarks and the layout of the land accurately to create a topographically correct view of the world.

Before the invention of photography in 1838, European expeditions and explorers, who were seeking out new territories and landmasses, were often accompanied by artists in order to keep a visual record of their discoveries.

KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS

Bird's-eye view, maps, landmarks

KEY WORKS



Italian School, *Malta: the Grand Harbour of Valletta*, 1770s



Manufacture de Sèvres,
Ecritoire 'à Globes' Inkstand, 1759



Horace Vernet, *The Arab Tale-teller*, 1833

MALTA: THE GRAND HARBOUR OF VALLETTA



TITLE Malta: the Grand Harbour of Valletta

DATE 1770s

SIZE 106 x 207 cm

MATERIALS Oil on canvas

ARTIST Unknown

THE PAINTING

This is a view of the harbour of Valletta in Malta, the Mediterranean island nation. Valletta is the capital of Malta and was built in 1565. Its name is derived from Jean Parisot de la Vallette, the Grand Master of the Knights of Saint John, also known as the Knights of Malta.

THE ARTIST

Like many other paintings, this one is unattributed - we do not know who painted it. However, art historians are able to use their knowledge and the physical properties of the picture to deduce that it was painted by an artist from Italy in the later 18th century.

BIRDS-EYE VIEW

The artist has given us a bird's-eye view and the picture functions like a map, showing the town's fortifications and the Fort of Saint Elmo. In the foreground is a battle fleet of the Order of St John which is recognisable by its red flags, each with a white cross. A procession of the Grand Master of the Knights of Saint John can also be made out in front of the lighthouse at the edge of the port.

DISCUSS



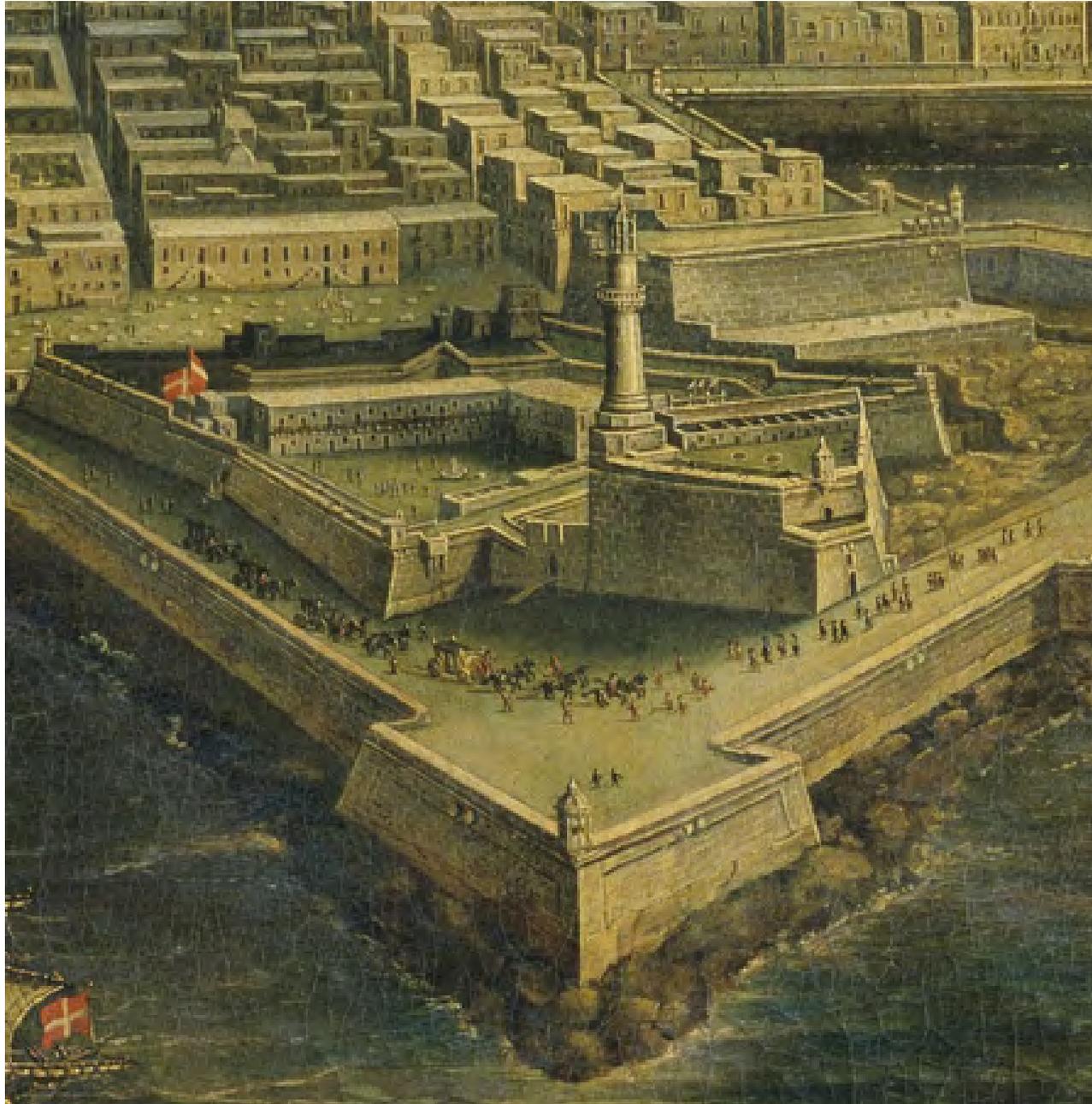
- Why do you think this painting was made?
- Is it a landscape or is it a map?
- Where do you think the artist might have been standing to see this view?
- Why look down from above to represent the town?
- What clues can you find to tell which country or town is being represented?
- What kinds of buildings can you see?
- Why is there a tall tower on the edge of the coast?

ACTIVITIES



- Make a map: have a walk around your school or your local area and identify landmarks, then think about how you would record and present the local area to help others navigate the space.
- Design a flag: consider how simple colours and shapes can represent entire nations and big concepts (see page 8 for a template).

MALTA: THE GRAND HARBOUR OF VALLETTA



IN DETAIL



MALTA: THE GRAND HARBOUR OF VALLETTA



IN DETAIL



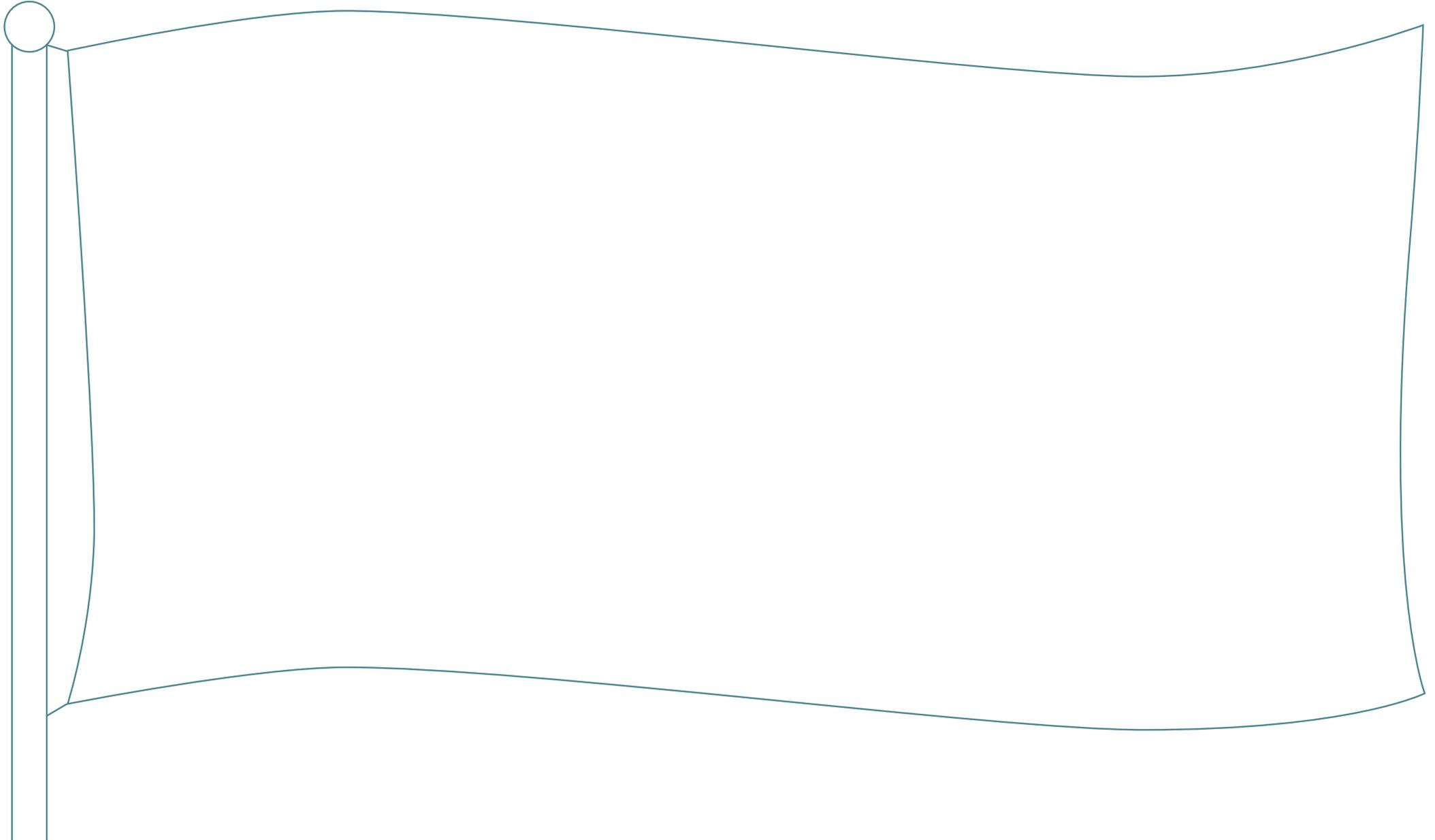
MALTA: THE GRAND HARBOUR OF VALLETTA



IN DETAIL



ACTIVITY Design a flag





TITLE Inkstand, Ecritoire 'à Globes'
DATE 1759
SIZE 17 x 38 x 27 cm
MATERIALS Porcelain, gold, silver paint

MAKER Manufacture de Sèvres
PLACE France

THE OBJECT

This highly decorated and colourful object is an inkstand made from porcelain and is one of the finest and most prized pieces of Sèvres porcelain in the Wallace Collection.

The inkstand would have been used as a writing set and comprises an inkwell, or pot of ink, decorated as a globe with a map of the world, and a pot of sand, decorated with a map of the stars. The sand would have been sprinkled over fresh writing in order to dry out or soak up any wet ink to avoid smudging. The two containers sit on a tray on which the user would have rested their quills - trimmed feathers used as pens.

In the middle of the stand is a crown which hides a little cushion, used to clean up any excess ink on the quill, and a bell to alert a servant to come and collect letters for posting.

The fleur-de-lys (a stylised lily) design which decorates the crown is a symbol of the French monarchy and tells us that this precious and expensive object was made for a member of the French royal family. Indeed, this inkstand was probably made for Marie-Adélaïde, the daughter of King Louis XV of France. The king's miniature portrait medallion decorates the base of the pen tray.

THE MANUFACTURER

The Manufacture de Sèvres is an important and influential European porcelain manufacturer. Porcelain is a type of very fine pottery where the materials are 'fired' or heated at a very high temperature (1200-1400°C) making the porcelain very strong and vitrified (glass-like).

The company was set up by the French crown in the 18th century and is still in production today. It takes its name from the town of Sèvres on the western outskirts of Paris.

Celebrated for making refined and exquisitely decorated porcelain, it became a standard-setter for quality and design.

DISCUSS



- What is this object for?
- Who would have owned such an object?
- What materials is it made from?
- Where might all those materials come from?
- Would you like to own such an object? Where would you put it?
- What is the equivalent you might own today?
- Where do you keep your writing equipment?

ACTIVITIES



- Look at old maps of the world, and see which continents are missing. What did the world look like when people believed it was flat?
- Examine the globe that is decorated with a map of the stars. Investigate the classical myths and stories that gave the constellations their names and shapes.
- Investigate and try out old writing technology – making and using pens made from a reed or a feather (see the animation on page 16).

INKSTAND



IN DETAIL



INKSTAND



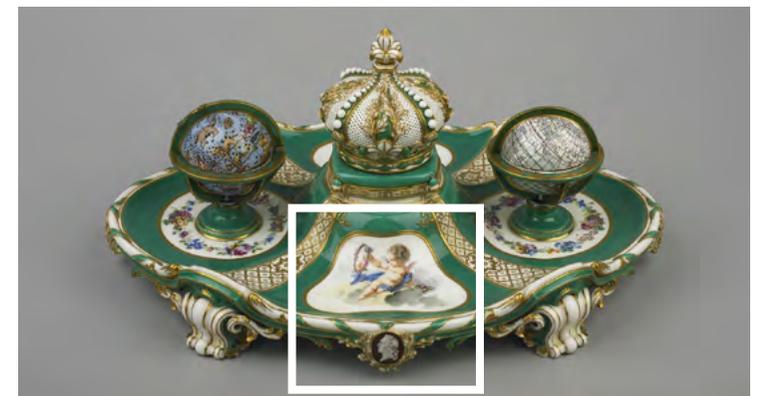
IN DETAIL



INKSTAND



IN DETAIL



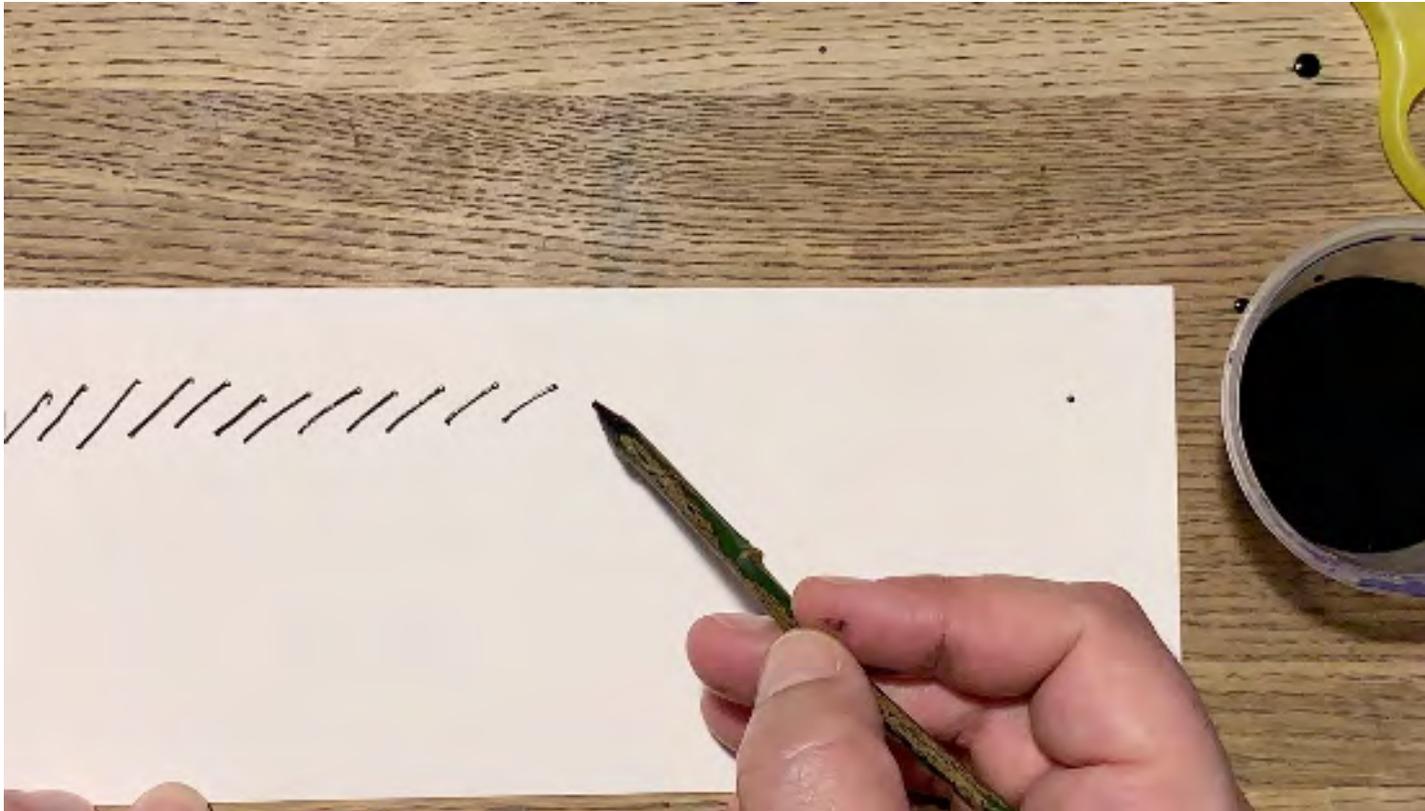


IN DETAIL



ANIMATION > OLD WRITING TECHNOLOGY

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/H9WC4GUA6CI](https://youtu.be/H9WC4GUA6CI)



THE ARAB TALE-TELLER

LANDSCAPE
MAPPING THE WORLD



TITLE The Arab Tale-teller
DATE 1833
SIZE 99 x 136 cm
MATERIALS Oil on canvas

ARTIST Horace Vernet
DATES 1789-1863
PLACE Paris, France

THE PAINTING

While this painting – which was produced for the English Earl of Pembroke, who was living in Paris at the time – represents the non-European subject of Algerian men gathered to listen to a storyteller in a North African landscape, it was in fact painted in Rome. Horace Vernet had previously travelled to Algeria and made numerous sketches and visual records before composing this idealised scene.

This practice of building up a catalogue of images while travelling, to be used when back home in the studio, was common practice for artists. This work also demonstrates a growing interest in non-western cultures in Europe during the first half of the 19th century. The term sometimes used for this kind of work is 'Orientalism', which means paintings or literature which represented, or even invented, an exotic and entertaining idea of non-western cultures for the enjoyment of western audiences.

Today the term is being readdressed, as it is increasingly evident that what many 'Orientalist' artists were depicting is fantasy and not fact. The woman carrying a jug on the left is posed to echo or quote the celebrated ancient Greek Venus de Milo sculpture, which was discovered and excavated in 1820 and brought to the Louvre Museum in Paris.

THE ARTIST

Horace Vernet was born in the Louvre Palace in Paris during the French Revolution. Both his father and grandfather were celebrated artists and had been given important royal commissions.

Like them, Vernet painted for the French state but developed a less classical or academic style of painting to represent battle scenes, portraits and non-western subjects. He made five visits to Algeria after it had been invaded and colonised by the French in 1830.

DISCUSS



- Where do you think this was painted?
- What do the clothes and belongings of the people in the painting tell you about them?
- Could it have been painted elsewhere? How would an artist make an image of one place when they were painting in another location?
- Why would a European artist paint this subject? Why might a European audience want to see this painting?
- Does this painting show respect for other cultures?
- Can you trust what images tell you? Is it possible for paintings to tell lies? How?

ACTIVITIES



- Write a travel diary entry, describing your journey and discovery of this scene (see page 24 for a template).
- Make a tracing of the figure carrying a water jug on the left and lay it onto of an image of the Venus de Milo from the Louvre Museum in Paris.

THE ARAB TALE-TELLER



IN DETAIL



THE ARAB TALE-TELLER



IN DETAIL



THE ARAB TALE-TELLER



IN DETAIL



THE ARAB TALE-TELLER



IN DETAIL



THE ARAB TALE-TELLER

ACTIVITY Imagine visiting this scene and write a diary entry about the experience.

A large rectangular box with a dashed vertical line down the center, intended for writing a diary entry. The box is empty and occupies most of the page below the activity instruction. There is a small decorative corner graphic in the top right corner of the box.