

## A Famous Painting



What is the most famous painting in the world? Perhaps it is the Mona Lisa in Paris.<sup>1</sup> What is the most famous painting by a British artist? I think it is this one. Have you ever seen it? It is called, "The Hay-wain". A wain is a waggon or cart. John Constable (1776-1837) painted this picture. He knew the place very well. He grew up nearby. The river in the picture is the River Stour in Suffolk.

Constable liked to look at old paintings. The best old Dutch paintings are called the "Old Masters." Constable liked the Old Masters. They often showed carts crossing streams. Constable owned some of these old paintings himself. By this time many of the Old Masters' paintings had a dull colour. The grass was brown, not green. Why was this? The paintings had gradually become dirty. They no longer looked bright. Everyone liked the Old Masters so new paintings were painted with brown grass as well. That made them look like Old Masters!

Look at the picture. Constable has painted the grass green. He did not copy the Old Masters. Can you see some red in the picture? Constable liked to put a little red in his pictures.

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<sup>1</sup> See the lesson for April 15<sup>th</sup>.



Can you see the fisherman with his boat?



Can you see the dog?

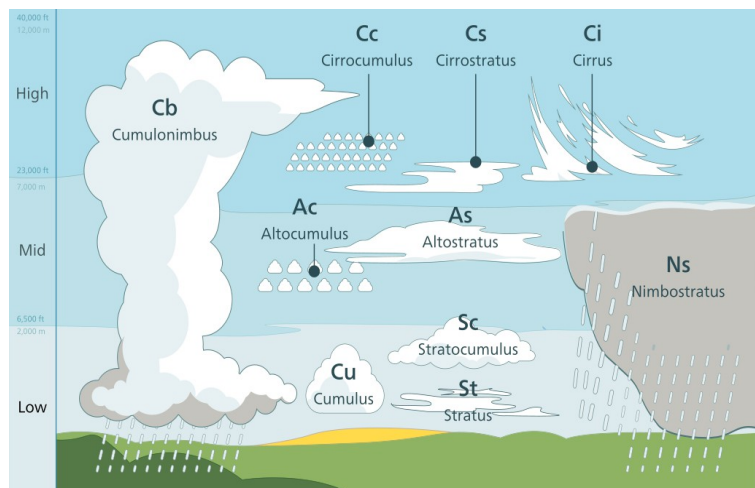
Constable painted "The Haywain" quickly. He was in London, not by the river. He used sketches he had made earlier to remind him of the scene. He wrote back to Suffolk to a friend. "Please send me some sketches," he asked. He wanted a sketch of a hay cart. The sketch he was sent was a wood cart so he painted that instead. A real hay cart would have high sides to stop the stack of hay falling off.

Constable's picture is full of people. Look at it very closely. Can you see the haymakers? They are loading the next cart which will soon come across the river with its load. Then back it will come again empty like the cart in the picture. Then it will be ready for the next load.



Constable's painting are famous for their clouds. Look at the clouds in this one. One writer said that Constable's pictures made him want to get out his coat and his umbrella!

A new way of naming clouds had just been invented. People were understanding more about clouds and weather. Constable used this in his paintings.



Luke Howard, (1772-1864 ) had worked out names for all sorts of

clouds. Luke Howard was a Christian. He believed the Bible. He understood that looking at clouds helps us know what the weather will be like. He said it was like looking at someone's face to see what was in their mind. We still use his cloud names today. Hay makers must get in the hay while the sun is shining. Look at Constable's picture again. Do you think it is going to rain?