

# Rembrandt: The Late Works

## Art Teachers Word Bank

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### Canon of Art History

The conventional timeline of artists who are sometimes considered as 'Old Masters' or 'Great Artists'. Today's art history attempts to question these rules of 'greatness' by considering issues of gender, race, class, and geography among others.

### Commission

An artwork is often commissioned when a wealthy patron asks an artist to create a specific artwork in exchange of a fee. When this happens an artist is often creating something with someone else's wishes in mind rather than their own. A good example of this is when a church commissions an altarpiece.

### Doublet

A tight-fitting and high-collared men's jacket that was worn from Medieval times until the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### Muse

An artist's muse is someone who inspires an artist to create artwork. This is a role often given to women throughout the history of art, reflecting conventional gender roles.

[Read more about Muses in classical civilisation](#)

### Patronage

A patron is a person who commissions a work, or more widely can mean someone or an institution who supports, encourages, privileges, or aids a particular artist or group of artists. For example, in 17<sup>th</sup> century Holland many guilds (associations of merchants, trades or skilled artisans) would provide patronage to artists.

### Pendant portrait

Pendant is the name given to one of two paintings conceived as a pair. Pendants were often works intended for a particular domestic setting – perhaps to hang either side of a fireplace or window. Usually pendants are compositionally and thematically related.

### Sitter

The person posing in a portrait.

### X-ray images

X-rays are a type of radiation that can be used for analysing aspects of a work of art not visible to the naked eye. X-rays can pass through most solid objects, but they are obstructed by certain materials. The heavier the atoms in a substance, the more resistance it has to X-rays. An X-radiograph is a photographic image, which records the areas of a work where the X-rays have been impeded. These areas appear white on the photographic positive. Pigments containing heavy metals such as lead and mercury show up, as do the nails used in the construction of a painting's support. X-radiographs are useful for revealing changes that may have occurred at different stages in the development of a painting; losses to the paint layer show as dark areas. X-radiographs can be difficult to interpret because the image shows all of the layers of the work superimposed.