

## Language through Art: An ESL Enrichment Curriculum (Beginning) Information for Teaching

### ***Three Young Artists in a Studio***

Louis-Léopold Boilly (French, 1761–1845)  
About 1820  
Black chalk with white chalk heightening  
and stumping on beige paper  
11 3/4 x 14 3/8 in.  
2000.63



### **Background Information**

Louis-Léopold Boilly's depiction of three artists in a studio (with a fourth person peering around the canvas) conveys the serious and dignified role that he ascribed to the profession. Boilly's harmonious use of black-and-white chalk on beige paper further underscores the subject's sobriety. The three fashionably dressed men, with their tousled hair and intense expressions, confront the viewer with a sense of their fierce commitment to their profession and to each other. In Boilly's numerous variations on this theme, artists are shown in their studios, engaged in discussion with fellow artists and surrounded by the fruits of their labors. It is likely that Boilly's three sons, all of whom became artists, were the models for this sheet.

### **About the Artist**

Louis-Léopold Boilly (French, 1761–1845)

The son of a wood sculptor, Boilly came from a modest background. As a teenager, he studied painting in the provinces, moving to Paris in 1785 only after ascertaining the marketability of his genre scenes. He established himself as a painter of slightly naughty images, which were especially popular with patrons who enjoyed the mischievous side of life. In 1794, an erotic painting elicited accusations of obscenity—an offense that carried the threat of prison and harsh penalties. A keen observer of human behavior, Boilly turned his attention to more public scenes, depicting the social customs of Parisians at the Salon, on the promenade, and at the billiard table. He meticulously recorded facial details and gestures, and his depictions of costumes and textiles are fascinating as a chronicle of fashion. Boilly's paintings and drawings, often tinged with humor, showcase the artist's witty interpretation of urban life.