



## **Desk Chair, Etienne Meunier**

### **Desk Chair**

Attributed to Etienne Meunier  
French, Paris, about 1735  
Walnut with leather upholstery  
H: 2 ft. 11 3/8 in. x W: 2 ft. 4 in. x D: 2 ft. 1 1/4 in.  
71.DA.91



### **Questions for Teaching**

Take a moment to describe the objects and surroundings in the French 18th-century room in the image below. Look closely at the desk chair created by Etienne Meunier (the brown leather chair in front of the desk). Does the chair visually belong in this room? Why or why not? Are there other types of rooms that this chair might have been used in? Explain.

Focus on the image of the Meunier desk chair. What material do you think the body of the chair is made of? What are some details in it that look unusual? (the high arms with compartments on top [see image on next page], and the legs are not on traditional corners; there's a leg in the front). What do you think the handle compartments were used for?

Consider the layout and design of the room interior. Use your imagination to describe the appearance and habits of a possible owner of the desk chair.



18th-century period room.  
Jacques Gaultier, furniture worker, Paris, 1725–1726,  
20th-century additions

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### **Background Information**

Designed to be used at a desk, this comfortable armchair with its high, wrap-around back forced the sitter to sit with legs apart, straddling the projecting front leg. The small, velvet-lined compartments hidden in the hinged arm pads were a convenient innovation, allowing the owner to store personal items such as spectacles, a snuff box, or even money.

### **About the Artist**

Etienne Meunier (French, life dates unknown; active 18th century)

Very little is known about Etienne Meunier. He became a master furniture maker circa 1732. He established the Meunier dynasty and was its most eminent member. He produced different kinds of furniture, including daybeds, but is best known for his chairs. He crafted chairs of many kinds: desk chairs, armchairs with light and graceful curved backs, and chairs with carefully designed flowing curves.

Etienne Meunier's style was very simple. He often decorated his chairs with flower heads used in a very restrained manner to harmonize and soften any severe lines of the furniture.



Detail of Desk Chair by Etienne Meunier, showing open compartment in the arm