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## Art Masterpiece: Snap the Whip, 1872 Winslow Homer, 1836 - 1910

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Keywords: Line, Movement  
Grade: First  
Activity: Fun with Pipe Cleaner

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### Meet the Artist:

- He was born in Boston in 1836.
- He was always interested in art, in part because his mother was a skilled painter and always encouraged her son to sketch what he saw. He painted in a style called Realism, meaning that we can plainly see and understand what he painted.
- He didn't receive much art schooling, he preferred to learn things on his own. He believed one should study nature, not other paintings.
- He started drawing illustrations for magazines by age 19. He was a successful artist by age 21, painting images he saw of the Civil War.
- After the war, he settled back into the rural northeast and painted what he saw. He loved painting people in a landscape setting (a painting that has strong elements of nature in it like trees, mountains, etc.), which is what he saw. He loved using watercolors best.
- His early career consisted of painting pictures of people in their natural rural settings. Over time, he changed from doing people in landscapes to people in seascapes (pictures involving water).
- He received many awards for his paintings and became a very important American painter. He lived until 1910.

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### About the Subject:

*Snap the Whip* was a popular children's game in the 1800s and early 1900s. Children held hands tightly and then ran very fast. The first kids in line stop suddenly, yanking the other kids sideways. This causes the ones at the end to break free from the chain. Winning involved being the last person connected to the chain. The painting portrays children playing this game in a landscape.

## Questions about Snap the Whip

- Do you think Snap the Whip is a team sport or an individual one?
- What is the building in the background? (schoolhouse)
- How do you think they got to school? (There were no cars, so most walked, others were lucky enough to ride horses, or to have a horse drawn buggy.)
- What sounds could you hear if you were in the painting?
- Where do you see curved lines?
- Where do you see straight lines?
- Which lines show the most movement? (the curved ones)

## Activity

Fun with Pipe Cleaner

## Supplies

9 x 12 inch sheets of white construction paper

markers

pipe cleaners

staples

## Directions

- Give the children a piece of white construction paper, markers and an assortment of pipe cleaners
- Have the children place the paper in front of them, like a place mat, and have them fold it in half from right to left. On the back, have them write their names.
- Have the children work together at each table. Each child gets a turn doing a pose for the other children of their station. On the left half of the paper, have the other children do a quick sketch (with only **one** color) with his/her marker, in stick figure form (you may want to draw an example of a stick figure on the board) on their paper.
- Each child at the table takes a turn to do a pose and the other students draw that pose on the left side of the paper.
- The right side of the paper is for the pipe cleaners. Using pipe cleaners, show the children the basics of making a basic stick figure. They can then mold stick figures to match each of the watercolor sketches.
- Then they can staple each of these pipe cleaner people **onto the right** half of the paper.