

Name _____

Diego Velázquez: Master of the Baroque Brush

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Diego Velázquez's appointment as the court painter to King Philip IV was pivotal in his career as it provided him with access to the royal family and the opportunity to create portraits of the Spanish royalty. This appointment elevated his status as an artist and allowed him to produce some of his most iconic works. It also ensured the patronage and support of the royal court, which was essential for an artist's success in that era.
2. Velázquez's attention to detail and use of light and shadow contributed to the realism of his portraits by creating depth and dimension in his subjects. The play of light and shadow on the subjects' faces and clothing added a three-dimensional quality, making them appear more lifelike and natural.
3. "Las Meninas" can be compared and contrasted with Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa." Both paintings feature a central figure with a mysterious smile. However, "Las Meninas" is a group portrait that includes the artist, while the "Mona Lisa" is a solo portrait. Additionally, "Las Meninas" is more complex in terms of composition, with multiple figures and a richly detailed background, whereas the "Mona Lisa" features a more simplified background.
4. As an art historian, I would explain the enduring appeal of Velázquez's works by highlighting his ability to capture not only the physical features of his subjects but also their personalities and emotions. His attention to detail and mastery of light and shadow created a sense of realism that continues to captivate viewers. Additionally, his innovative techniques and influence on later artists make his works a crucial part of art history and a source of inspiration for contemporary artists.

