

Pablo Picasso

- ***Childhood and Youth 1881-1901***

Pablo Ruiz Picasso **was born on October 25, 1881** to Don José Ruiz Blasco (1838-1939) and Doña Maria Picasso y Lopez (1855-1939).

The family at the time resided in Málaga, where his father, a painter himself, taught drawing at the local school of Fine Arts and Crafts.

When **his father was offered a better-paid job**, they moved to the provincial capital of La Coruna.

In **1892, Pablo entered the School of Fine Arts there**, but it was mostly his father who taught him painting.

In **1895** Don José got a professorship at “La Lonja”, the **School of Fine Arts in Barcelona**, and the family moved there. **Pablo passed the entrance examination in an advanced course in classical art and still life** at the same school.

In **1896** Pablo’s first large “academic’ oil painting, “[The First Communion](#)”, appeared in an exhibition in Barcelona.



Born in 1881
in Malaga

Starts painting
with his father

Picasso's early life

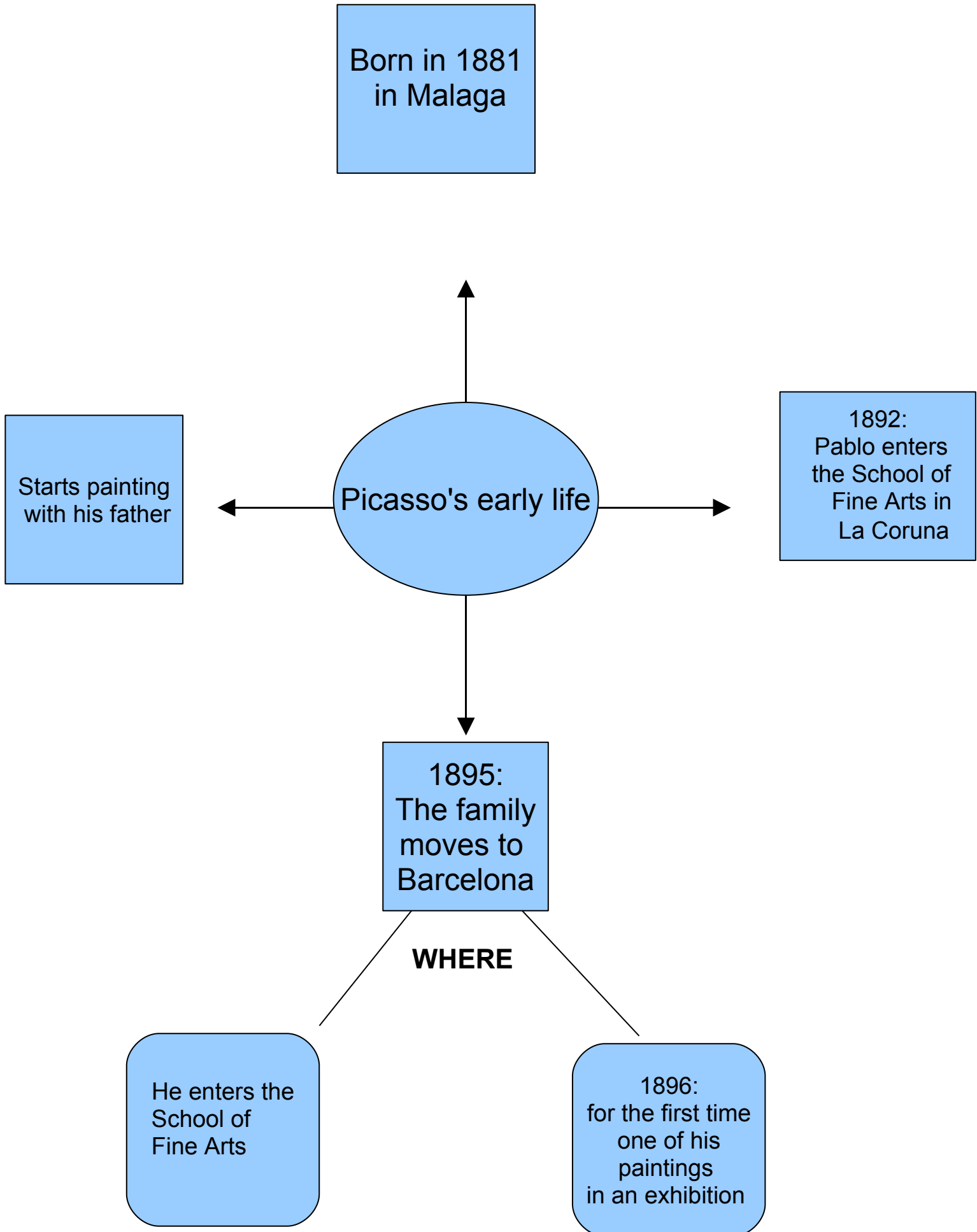
1892:
Pablo enters
the School of
Fine Arts in
La Coruna

1895:
The family
moves to
Barcelona

WHERE

He enters the
School of
Fine Arts

1896:
for the first time
one of his
paintings
in an exhibition



Pablo's uncle sent him money for further study in Madrid, and the youth passed entrance examinations for advanced courses at the Royal Academy of San Fernando in the city. However, **he would abandon the classes by that winter**. **His everyday visits to the Prado seemed much more important to him**. At first, he **copied the old masters, trying to imitate their style**; later they would be the **source of ideas for original paintings** of his own, and he would re-arrange them again and again in different variations.

In **1899, he came back to Barcelona**, where he frequented **Els Quatre Gats** (Catalan for "The Four Cats"), a café. There artists and intellectuals used to meet. He made **friends**, among others, with the young painter **Casagemas**, and the poet **Sabartés**

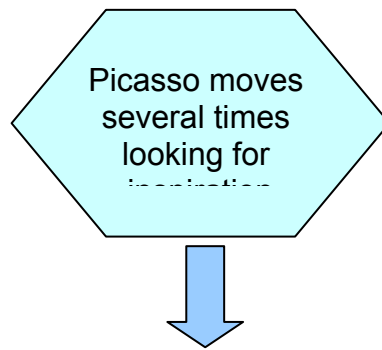
In Quatre Gats Picasso **met vivid representatives of Spanish modernism, including Rusinol and Nonell** and he was very enthusiastic about new directions in art. This was the point when he **said farewell to "classicism" and started his long-lasting search and experiments**.

In **October 1900** Picasso and Casagemas **left for Paris**, the most significant artistic center of the time, and **opened a studio in the Montmartre**. The **art dealer Pedro Manach offered Picasso his first contract**: 150 francs per month in exchange for pictures. His **first Paris picture** was "***Le Moulin de la Galette***".

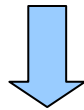


In **December**, he moved to Madrid where he became co-editor of the magazine **Arte Joven**.

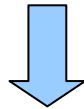
In **May 1901 he was back in Paris**. This restlessness and constant travel from one corner of Europe to another continued throughout his life, and though he would slow his pace in his latter years, **he never did finally settle down**.



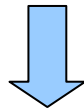
- **MADRID** —→ His uncle pays his studies there, but he prefers going to the Prado in his search for inspiration.



- **BARCELONA** —→ He goes often to “The four Cats”, where he meets other artists and makes friends with them. The young painter Casagemas is one of them.



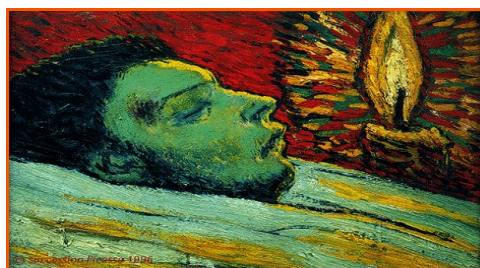
He starts is experimental period.



- **PARIS** —→ He opens a studio in Montmartre with Casagemas and receives his first contract with an art dealer: “Le Moulin de la Gallette” is his first work in Paris.

◆ *The **Blue** and **Rose** periods: 1901-1906*

In **February 1901** Picasso's friend **Casagemas committed suicide**: he shot himself in a Parisian café. His death was a **great shock to Picasso**, and the painter would return to it again and again in his art: he painted the [Death of Casagemas](#) in color,



the *Death of Casagemas* again in blue and then “*Evocation – The Burial of Casagemas*”.



Picasso began to use **blue and green almost exclusively**.

In **1904 Picasso finally settled in Paris**, at 13 Rue Ravignan, called “Bateau-Lavoir”. He met Fernande Olivier, a model, who would be his mistress for the next seven years. They paid frequent visits to the Circus Médrano, whose bright pink tent at the foot of the Montmartre shone for miles and was quite close to his studio. There, Picasso got ideas for his pictures of circus actors.



In **1906** the art dealer **Ambroise Vollard** bought most of Picasso's "**Rose**" pictures. This marked the beginning of Picasso's prosperity: he would never again experience financial worries. **Deeply impressed by the Iberian sculptures at the Louvre, he began to think over and experiment with geometrical forms.**

Cubism 1907-1917

In **1907**, after numerous studies and variations Picasso painted his **first Cubist picture** - "***Les demoiselles d'Avignon***". Impressed with African sculptures at an ethnographic museum he **tried to combine the angular structures of the "primitive art" and his new ideas about cubism.** The critics immediately dubbed this stage in his work the "Negro" Period, seeing in it only an imitation of African ethnic art.



*"In the Demoiselles d'Avignon I painted a **profile nose into a frontal view of a face**. I had to depict it sideways so that I could give it a name, so that I could call it 'nose'. And so they started talking about Negro art. Have you ever seen a single African sculpture -- just one -- where a face mask has a profile nose in it?"* Picasso wrote.

Picasso's new experiments were received very differently by his friends, some of whom were sincerely disappointed, and even horrified, while others were interested. The art dealer Kahnweiler loved the Demoiselles and took it for sale. Picasso's new friend, **the artist Georges Braque (1882-1963), was so enthusiastic about Picasso's new works that the two painters came together to explore the possibilities of cubism over several of the following years.**

◆ Wartime Experience 1937-1945

“Guernica, the oldest town of the Basque provinces and the center of their cultural traditions, was almost completely destroyed by the rebels in an air attack yesterday afternoon. [...] a group of German aircraft [...] dropped bombs [...] on the town. [...] low-flying fighter planes fired machine-guns at the inhabitants [...]. Guernica was in flames in a very short time.”
The Times, April 27, 1937.

The Spanish government had asked Picasso to paint a mural for the Spanish pavilion at the Paris World Exhibition. He planned to depict the subject “a painter in his studio”, but when he heard about the events in Guernica, he changed his original plans.

After numerous sketches and studies, Picasso gave his own personal view of the tragedy. His gigantic mural [*Guernica*](#) has remained part of the collective consciousness of the twentieth century, a forceful reminder of the event.



Though painted for the Spanish government, it wasn't until 1981, after forty years of exile in New York, that the picture found its way to Spain. This was because Picasso had decreed that it should not become Spanish property until the end of fascism. In October 1937, Picasso also painted the [*Weeping Woman*](#) as a kind of postscript to “Guernica”.

In 1940, when Paris was occupied by the Nazis, he handed out prints of his painting to German officers. When they asked him “Did you do this?” (referring to the pictures), he replied, “No, you did”.

With his [*Charnel House*](#) of 1945, Picasso concluded the series of pictures that he had started with “Guernica”. The connection between the paintings becomes immediately obvious when we consider the rigidly limited color scheme and the triangular composition of the center.

The Charnel House was painted under the impact of reports from the Nazi

concentration camps which had been discovered and liberated. It was a time when the lives of millions of people had been literally pushed aside, a turn of phase which **Picasso expressed rather vividly in the pile of dead bodies** in his Charnel House.

After WWII. The Late Works. 1946-1973.

In **1944**, after the liberation of Paris, **Picasso joined the Communist Party** and became an **active participant of the Peace Movement**. In **1949**, the **Paris World Peace Conference** adopted a dove created by Picasso as the official symbol of the various peace movements.

The **USSR** awarded **Picasso the International Stalin Peace Prize** twice, once in **1950** and for the second time in **1961**.

Picasso bought the Chateau Vauvenargues, **near Aix-en-Provence**, and **this was reflected in his art with an increasing reduction of his range of colors to black, white and green.**

A number of elements had become **characteristic in his art of this period**: Picasso's use of **simplified imagery**, the way he let the **unpainted canvas** shine through, his **emphatic use of lines**, and the **vagueness of the subject**.

In the **last years of his life**, **painting became an obsession** with Picasso, and **he would date each picture with absolute precision**, thus creating a vast amount of similar paintings -- as if **attempting to crystallize individual moments** of time, but knowing that, in the end, everything would be in vain.

Pablo Picasso passed away at last on April 8, 1973, at the age of 92. He was buried on the grounds of his Chateau Vauvenargues.