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7. Identify the painting. How does the painting represent a radical break with many of the traditions of Western art?
(10 minutes)

This painting is by "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" by Pablo Picasso, an early representative of Analytic Cubism. Here, the idea of orderly, balanced pictorial space with carefully modeled figures has been shattered. The five females are broken apart and constructed in jagged planes, that occupy both space and mass.

Two figures on the right have energetic, stripped faces, perhaps influenced by African masks, contrasting with the calm features of the three on the left. The woman in the lower right is depicted in a new variation of the representation of the human figure, as multiple views are combined into a stacking whole. This widely controversial form has 3 quarter back views of the right and right, body, with a full face, showing a combination of front and back poses. This, this image of bright wavy passed edges, intersecting planes, flat geometric forms stressing two dimensionality, radically broke with western art.
The painting was done by Picasso. The title is "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon." Picasso often took ideas and images from an African culture and created his own style of cubist, hard-edged looks.

The faces on each figure are not the "normal" faces generally seen in typical Western art. They are symbolic of African tribal masks. As mentioned before, the figures are not of the normal Western culture. These figures are more basic, probably to draw attention to more important aspects of this piece such as the African mask-like faces. This scene also may suggest some type of tribal meeting often shown in non-Western cultures. Traditionally, such pieces would be more realistic including natural poses with more anatomically figures. It is obvious Picasso breaks from that tradition and is influenced by the African simplified art created by that culture. Also the background of this piece has no apparent form unlike the backgrounds of traditional Western art work.