



Early 1650s

Oil on panel

13 3/16 x 19 3/8 inches (33.5 x 49.2 cm)

**JACOB ISAACKSZ. VAN
RUISDAEL**

Dutch (active Haarlem and
Amsterdam)

John G. Johnson Collection,
1917, Cat. 563

LET'S LOOK

Find a man and his dog in this painting. How would you describe how this man is feeling? Is the man's mood reflected at all in the landscape? How?

Imagine that the man and the dog were not in the painting. How would that change the effect of the landscape?

Why does Ruisdael decide to focus on the landscape rather than on the man and the dog?

DUNES

Rather than presenting us with a densely wooded landscape, or the ruins of an abbey, here Jacob van Ruisdael portrays the sand dunes that bordered his native Haarlem. He probably spent many hours roaming the dunes around Haarlem as a young man musing over how to capture such a landscape in paint. This range of dunes served as a natural levy protecting Haarlem from the North Sea. In this work, a lone man and his dog walk the rutted path along the hills of the dunes. Ruisdael uses powerful contrasts of light and dark, texture, and space to create the scene. Notice the difference between the fragile and stippled brush strokes of the grass and shrubs, in contrast to the broad brushstrokes he uses for the sky. The immediacy of this landscape makes it hard to believe that Ruisdael probably never painted outdoors. As was standard practice among seventeenth-century artists, he made drawings outdoors, which were used as studies for landscapes painted in the studio.