

# Understanding art? (teacher's notes)

## 1. Warm-up (Activity 1) 5 mins

**Aims:** to break the ice and generate the interest in the topic.

**Procedure:** Ask students to describe and discuss the photos in pairs

(key: they are remakes of famous paintings.)

Extra information for teachers:

Some students don't like this topic, however, it might be beneficial for everyone. This [TED video](#) explains how art can help to analyze.

## 2. Vocabulary work (Activity 2) 10 mins

**Aims:** to revise and learn topic-related vocabulary

**Procedure:** Ask students to create a mind map of art vocabulary in pairs, then they should compare their mind maps with other pairs, add more words and phrases from the list below. Check open class.

Key:

Types of art: photography, architecture, installation, painting, sculpture, graffiti etc.

Paintings genres: landscape, still life, a portrait, history painting, religious, seascape, cityscape, interior.

Style: impressionism, abstract, cubism.

Materials: acrylics, oils, crayons, watercolours, chalk, pen and ink, pencils.

Colours: soft, bright, cold, transparent, bold, deep, light, soft and delicate.

Parts of the painting: midground, background, layers, foreground, the centre/middle of the painting, In the far distance, on the left/ right

Adjectives to describe paintings: lifelike, dreamlike, outstanding, confusing, colourful, romantic, lyrical, powerful, outstanding, impressive.

## 3. Discussion (Activity 3) 10 mins

**Aims:** to provide free speaking practice and apply new vocabulary in the discussion

**Procedure:** Ask students to discuss the questions in pairs. Change partners and let them report the most interesting information which they've found out about their previous partners.

#### 4. Top famous paintings (Activity 4) 10 mins

**Aims:** to expand the knowledge on the topic of famous paintings.

**Procedure:** Ask the students to match the names of the paintings with their names and then match with the artists. Students compare their answers in pairs and then watch the video to check.

**Play the video:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=UFrqngK\\_iKw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=UFrqngK_iKw)

1. Mona Lisa – Leonardo da Vinci.
2. The Last Supper – Leonardo da Vinci.
3. The Creation Of Adam – Michelangelo.
4. Starry Night – Vincent van Gogh.
5. The Scream – Edvard Munch.
6. The Persistence Of Memory – Salvador Dali.
7. Girl With A Pearl Earring – Johannes Vermeer.
8. The Night Watch – Rembrandt van Rijn.
9. Self-Portrait Without Beard – Vincent van Gogh.
10. Guernica – Pablo Picasso.

**More information:**

<https://10mosttoday.com/10-most-famous-paintings-in-the-world/>

#### 5. Reading for gist (Activity 5) 5 mins

**Aims:** to provide reading for gist

**Procedure:** Ask the students to read the description of the painting and guess what painting it is.

**Key:**

Starry Night – Vincent van Gogh.

**Then the students should complete the gaps with the words from the box.**

**Key:**

This painting, which belongs to the brush of Vincent van Gogh, is an abstract landscape of an expressive night sky over a small hillside village. In the foreground of the night scene there is a flame-like cypress reaching almost to the top edge of the canvas, serving as a visual link between land and sky. Considered symbolically, the cypress looks like a bridge between life, as represented by the earth, and death, as represented by the sky, commonly associated with heaven.

In the background, On the right, van Gogh depicts a nameless European village amidst a dark wilderness. It stretches from the foot of the hills in the silence of the night and create color depth. he Starry Night is perhaps his greatest masterpiece of Vincent van Gogh.

## 6. Follow - up discussion (Activity 6) 5 mins

**Aims:** to provide free speaking practice and apply new vocabulary in the discussion

**Procedure:** Ask students to describe any painting from activity 4. Their partners should listen carefully and add more details or ask follow up questions. Change partners and let them report the most interesting information which they've found out from their previous partners.

## 7. Sum up 3-5 mins

Put errors on the board or whiteboard and let students correct them.

Summarise the lesson and tell students what results they have achieved (Now you can ... After our reading and speaking lesson you will be able to....). Ask them if they have any questions.

## 8. Homework

Give students the links and ask to learn more about this topic –

**Understanding of art:**

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/why-is-vermeer-s-girl-with-the-pearl-earring-considered-a-masterpiece-james-earle>

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/why-is-this-painting-so-captivating-james-earle-and-christina-bozsik>

**visiting a museum visit**

<https://www.metmuseum.org/>

<https://www.moma.org/>

## 9. Extra (Activity 7) 10 mins

**Aims:** to provide listening for detail and better understanding of the painting “Starry night”

**Procedure:** Ask students to discuss the questions in pairs, then students should watch the video and answer the questions.

**Play the video:** <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1y31Geces3uyfpc21AzrkIKpf7vwsE8vG>

**Full video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oz908BHg55Y>

**Key:**

1. post impressionism, emotional and psychological impressions through style, symbols and colours
2. the Netherlands
3. his surrounding, usual people, still life, nature etc
4. he had a mental disease
5. there are several opinions: luminance, psychological turbulence of van Gogh, clouds
6. a balanced picture of a vertical movable cypress, a horizontal still town, diagonal mountains and a sky in spectacular motion
7. to see the sky not as it looks but how it feels, to feel our smallness standing on the big earth and hugeness above us