

Unit 12 A Famous Portrait

B : The *Mona Lisa* is one of the most famous paintings in the world. It was painted by the great Italian artist, Leonardo da Vinci, between the years 1503 and 1505. The portrait was done with oil paint on a simple piece of wood. The portrait shows a woman in front of a landscape with mountains. Many people believe that the model for the painting was the wife of an important man in the area. However, some people now think that da Vinci actually drew a picture of himself. They say the face looks similar to his. Apparently, da Vinci loved the painting so much that he carried it with him at all times until he sold it to the king of France.

The portrait is famous for several reasons. The best-known reason is for *Mona Lisa*'s unusual smile. It is difficult to say if she is being pleasant or looking arrogant. Another reason the painting is famous is that it was stolen from an art museum in 1911. Both France and Italy sent people to look for the lost painting. It was then found two years later in a hotel in France. It is currently on display at the Louvre Museum in Paris. People from all over the world go to the museum each year to see the *Mona Lisa*. In fact, the painting has so much appeal today that it has been copied many times.

Unit 13 Leonardo da Vinci

M: When most people hear the name Leonardo da Vinci, they think of art. But in fact, he was a man of many talents. He was a scientist, an inventor, and an artist.

Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1452 in Vinci, Italy. When he was 14, his father sent him to Florence to train under Andrea del Verrocchio, one of the best artists in the area. Leonardo became better than Verrocchio. By his early twenties, Leonardo was famous for his painting. He was especially good at painting colors and details. This made his paintings very lifelike. His most famous paintings are the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*.

Leonardo was also a great scientist. He was a good observer of life and nature. He would ask himself simple questions like, "How do

birds fly?" Then he would try to find the answers. He was interested in everything. For example, he studied the inner workings of the human body. He would cut up dead bodies to examine their insides.

Leonardo was also a talented inventor. He believed that by understanding how each part of a machine worked, the parts could be changed and combined in different ways to make new machines. Using his artistic talent, Leonardo drew pictures of many inventions. However, few of them were built and tested during his lifetime. For example, his parachute wasn't built until 1783. Also, his war tank wasn't used until World War I in 1917.

Unit 14 Ludwig van Beethoven

G : Ludwig van Beethoven was a musical genius. He composed hundreds of songs in his lifetime. The first four notes of his Fifth Symphony—*bom bom bom bommmmm*—are the most famous in the world. These notes are played on a trombone. Beethoven was the first composer to use trombones in a symphony. A symphony is a very complex and beautiful song. Beethoven wrote nine symphonies in all. He said that he first composed symphonies in his head. He heard the part for every instrument in his mind before he wrote the first note on paper.

Beethoven was born in 1770 in Bonn, Germany. His birthday was probably in December. Nobody is sure. He gave his first public performance at age seven. He wrote his first composition before he was 12. Sadly, at the age of 28, he started to go deaf. But he continued to compose music and to lead the orchestra. He never got married.

After his death in 1827, friends found love letters that he had written to someone he called "Immortal Beloved." To be immortal means to live forever. "Beloved" is a way of saying you love someone. His lover's name still remains a mystery.

For these reasons, and because of his wonderful music, he is remembered as a remarkable man in history. Perhaps no other composer has had such a large effect on the history of western music as Beethoven.

Unit 15 A Nice Gift

- W: We've been invited to Lisa and Tom's wedding in August, so we need to get them a present. Do you have any ideas about what to buy them?
- M: I don't know. I'm not very good at buying gifts for people. What do you usually buy people for wedding gifts?
- W: I'd like to buy something that they have especially asked for. Most couples who are getting married go to several department stores and make a list of what they would like, and the stores put the list into a computer system. Then you can go and print out the list and choose something that they would like.
- M: Are Lisa and Tom registered somewhere?
- W: Yes, they are registered at two department stores. I've already printed out their list from one store.
- M: What have they asked for?
- W: Well, they have asked for different things for their new house. They would like towels, linens, decorations for the house, small appliances for the kitchen, china, silverware, crystal glasses, garden tools, and a patio set.
- M: Wow! That's a lot of stuff, how should we decide what to get them?
- W: They have listed a coffee maker as one of the things they want, so why don't we buy them a nice coffee maker?
- M: OK, how much is it?
- W: It's forty dollars.
- M: Maybe we could get them some nice coffee cups and some coffee to go with it.
- W: That's a great idea. I think that will make a lovely wedding present.

Leisure and Entertainment

Unit 16 Collecting Stamps

- M: Hello, everyone. My name is Franklin. I'm the president of the Greenville Stamp Collecting Club. Many people ask me why stamp collecting is such a popular hobby. There are several reasons. First, stamp collecting is inexpensive. Most

letters come with stamps on them. All you need to do is remove the stamp from the envelope. It's true that nowadays we may not get as many letters as we used to. In that case, you might want to buy your first set of stamps. Stamp dealers often sell a lot of stamps for only three dollars!

Second, stamp collecting is educational. Stamps have pictures of everything from world leaders to endangered animals to various sports. It is interesting to learn about the people and things that are pictured on the stamps. It's much more exciting than reading a boring history book.

Also, stamp collecting can help build friendships between people from around the world. Stamp collectors in India, for example, can build stamp-trading friendships with people from Mexico. They can learn about each other's culture while they exchange stamps.

Finally, collecting stamps is something that families can do together. Parents and children can spend time enjoying the same hobby and build a closer relationship, instead of sitting in front of the television each night.

So there you have four good reasons why stamp collecting is the world's number one hobby. I hope you have enjoyed my talk. There are refreshments in the lobby. Thank you.

Unit 17 Rock, Paper, Scissors

- G: Come on, Tony, let's go to a movie tonight.
- B: We went to a movie on Saturday, Mary, but we haven't gone bowling for a long time.
- G: I know, let's play rock, paper, scissors to decide!
- B: Rock, paper, scissors? It sounds like an interesting sort of game! How do you play it?
- G: First, we each make a fist with our right hand, and then we shake our fists at the same time: one, two, three. On the count of three, you can keep your hand in a fist—that's rock—or open your hand with the palm flat—that's paper—or keep your fist, but put out your first and middle fingers—that's scissors. The winner is the person who has the stronger item.
- B: That sounds stupid, because rocks are stronger than paper and scissors, so the rock will win every time.