



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

QUIZ

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reading Explorer 3: Unit 11 Lesson A

**DIRECTIONS:** Choose the best answer for each question.

#### Van Gogh's World

[A] Starry nights and sunflowers, self-portraits and cafe settings - all painted in bold, intense colors. Today, people around the world immediately recognize these as the work of Vincent van Gogh, the Dutch painter. Probably no other artist, at any time in any culture, has achieved such popularity. But who was this man and why, even today, do his art and life have such an ability to move us?

#### An Artist is Born

[B] Vincent van Gogh was born on March 30, 1853, in Zundert, a small village in southern Holland. As a child, he was serious and sensitive. He loved to draw, and his work showed talent, but no one encouraged him to become an artist. Instead, his father thought he should take a "sensible" job - something like a salesclerk or carpenter. As a young adult, he wandered from job to job with little success and very little money, becoming more depressed with each failure. In March 1880, however, just before his 27th birthday, something changed inside van Gogh. He realized that he was meant to be a painter, and he began to study art in Brussels, receiving financial help from his brother Theo.

#### Discovering Color

[C] In 1886, van Gogh moved to Paris, hoping to learn more about the color techniques being used by Impressionist artists there. Instead of grays and browns, his work began to emphasize blue and red, and then yellow and orange. Soon he began to see life differently: *Go slow. Stop thinking. Look around. You'll see something beautiful if you open yourself.* These were the principles that guided his art. With his innovative color combinations, van Gogh wanted to show others how to better appreciate a flower, the night sky, or a person's face.

#### Descent into Madness

[D] Few who lived in van Gogh's time appreciated his work, however. Many laughed when they saw his paintings, which hurt the sensitive artist terribly. In February 1888, he moved away from Paris to Arles, a town in southern France. Often he could not eat or sleep, and stayed up into the early morning hours painting. Days passed, and he spoke to no one. Following an argument with fellow artist Paul Gauguin, van Gogh took a razor and cut off his own earlobe.

[E] He never explained why he injured himself, but by now, many were convinced that van Gogh was crazy, and, indeed, his mental health started to decline. He began to have attacks during which he would hear strange sounds and think people were trying to hurt him. In the spring of 1889, he was sent to a mental hospital in Saint-Remy, a town near Arles.

[F] What exactly was van Gogh suffering from? No one knows for certain, but some now think it may have been a form of manic depression. Whatever his condition, van Gogh's illness both inhibited and inspired his creativity. When his attacks came, he could not paint. But during his periods of calm, he was able to complete more than a hundred masterpieces, including the classic *The Starry Night*. "Working on my pictures," he wrote, "is almost a necessity for my recovery."

[G] Following his release from the hospital in May 1890, van Gogh took a room in Auvers-sur-Oise, a town just north of Paris. For the 70 days that he lived there, he produced, on average, a painting a day. Until his death, however, he was unable to sell a single one; today, those paintings would be worth more than a billion U.S. dollars.

[H] It was at this time that van Gogh either borrowed or stole a gun. On the afternoon of July 27, 1890, he went out to the country and shot himself in the stomach. Two days later, Vincent van Gogh died at age 37. What caused him to take his own life - his lack of financial success, mental illness, loneliness?

### Van Gogh's Legacy

[I] Over a century after his death, van Gogh remains extremely popular. His story - of a man who resisted materialism and greed, who was alone and unappreciated - gives people something they need. We find pieces of ourselves in him. This may also explain the high prices paid for van Gogh's work. His *Portrait of Dr. Gachet* sold in 1990 for more than \$80 million to a Japanese businessman, breaking the world record for a painting. Many of his other works have also sold for millions. Of course, people are buying great art when they purchase one of van Gogh's paintings, but they are also buying a piece of his story, which, like his work, will live on forever.

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Which would be the best alternative title for this passage?
  - a. Two Artistic Sons
  - b. Genius and Madness
  - c. High Priced Art
  - d. A Greedy Artist
- \_\_\_\_ 2. How did the art of Impressionist artists influence Van Gogh?
  - a. He started painting more flowers.
  - b. He started to paint more slowly.
  - c. He started to use fewer grays and browns.
  - d. He started to focus on faces more.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. What does *it* refer to in paragraph F?
  - a. artistic creativity
  - b. a masterpiece
  - c. what van Gogh was suffering from
  - d. van Gogh's recovery
- \_\_\_\_ 4. Where did van Gogh last live?
  - a. in a town north of Paris
  - b. in Zundert in south Holland
  - c. in Arles in southern France
  - d. in Paris, the capital of France
- \_\_\_\_ 5. According to paragraph I, why is van Gogh still popular?
  - a. Many people in the 1850s lived lives that were similar to van Gogh's.
  - b. His *Portrait of Dr. Gachet* broke the world record for the price of a painting.
  - c. His artwork is extremely expensive, and is highly sought after in the art world.
  - d. People can relate to the struggles he faced during his life.



**DIRECTIONS: Choose the best answer for each question.**

### **Screaming Across Time**

[A] At some point in your life, you will probably have come across *The Scream*, one of the most famous pieces of art in human history. The painting's central image is a solitary man in dark clothing, standing on a path with both hands to his face. His mouth, which is opened as wide as humanly possible, looks to be letting out a profound<sup>1</sup> scream. Though the scenery around him looks like it could be very beautiful, the artist's brush has made it look terrifying, with the sky a deep red and the land an unrecognizable blob of blue and gray. This is all part of the expressionist style - a type of art that aims to present the world as it is emotionally, rather than realistically, experienced. With regard to this particular painting, this style is supposed to give us the feeling that the man holding his face is going through a particularly painful emotional experience.

[B] As a result of its striking image, art collectors have purchased authentic versions of *The Scream* for incredible sums of money. In fact, one pastel<sup>2</sup> version of the painting was sold at an auction for the astronomical sum of 120 million U.S. dollars. This made it the second most expensive piece of art in modern history. For this reason, authentic versions of *The Scream* have also suffered the fate of being stolen. Fortunately, all four original versions of *The Scream* have now been recovered and are currently displayed at various museums.

[C] Despite these incredible prices, the production of a large number of copies and prints has ensured that ordinary people have been able to reflect on *The Scream* as well. Indeed, the image of the emotionally distressed man has appeared on everything that one can possibly imagine: buttons, posters, T-shirts, coffee cups, and desktop wallpapers. It has also been a classic object of parody,<sup>3</sup> frequently appearing in movies and cartoons that copy its imagery. Perhaps you even have a copy of *The Scream* somewhere in your own house. But do you know who painted *The Scream* or the reason why it was created?

[D] The answer to this first question is Edvard Munch, a Norwegian painter who lived from December 12, 1863 until January 23, 1944. Growing up in a family that suffered from serious mental illness, Munch always worried deeply that he was slowly losing his mind. Although this originally made painting very difficult for him, he was encouraged by other artists to explore his own emotions within his work. The result of this was a series of highly innovative pieces of art. While conservatives within Norwegian art circles did not immediately appreciate Munch's contributions, he would later gain great fame for his expression of strong human feelings.

[E] The image of the man at the center of *The Scream* is perhaps the best example of this expression. Although this image may appear humorous to some people, it reflects the real emotional suffering that Munch was personally experiencing at that stage in his life. With this in mind, the next time you pick up your coffee cup with this man's tormented face on it, you should remember one thing. This all-too-famous image is the masterpiece of a man who translated his darkest times into a piece of artistic brilliance. As a result of the painting's honesty, it is likely that Munch's art will continue to scream at us through the canvas for centuries to come.

#### **Words to study**

1 Something that is **profound** shows strong feelings or has a strong effect.

2 A **pastel** is a tool similar to chalk which is used to draw pictures.

3 A **parody** copies something in a humorous way.

6. What is the main purpose of the first paragraph?
  - a. to introduce the life of Edvard Munch
  - b. to explain the meaning behind the expressionist art style
  - c. to connect our feelings with feelings expressed in *The Scream*
  - d. to provide readers with a mental image of *The Scream*
7. Which of the following would be a suitable heading for paragraph B?
  - a. In High Demand
  - b. Costing a Fortune
  - c. You Get What You Pay For
  - d. Second Best
8. In paragraph C, what does the word *distressed* mean?
  - a. weak
  - b. troubled
  - c. cold
  - d. carefree
9. In the fourth sentence of paragraph D, what does the word *this* refer to?
  - a. the history of mental illness in his family
  - b. the encouragement of other artists
  - c. the emotions that Munch was feeling
  - d. the attention that Munch received
10. In the last sentence of paragraph D, what does *Munch's contributions* refer to?
  - a. his opinions on art
  - b. his artwork
  - c. his friends in the art world
  - d. his mental illness

**DIRECTIONS: Read the passage. Can the information in each statement be inferred from the passage?**

- \_\_\_ 11. The writer believes that the expressionist style of art is difficult to understand.
- \_\_\_ 12. The writer believes that it is likely for *The Scream* to be stolen again.
- \_\_\_ 13. The writer believes that many people do not know who painted *The Scream*.
- \_\_\_ 14. Edvard Munch had the same type of mental illness as his family members.
- \_\_\_ 15. Conservatives in Norwegian art circles later came to appreciate Munch's work.

**DIRECTIONS: Match each underlined word(s) with the word with the same meaning.**

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. appreciated | f. recovery  |
| b. classic     | g. resist    |
| c. creativity  | h. sensible  |
| d. innovative  | i. sensitive |
| e. purchased   | j. wandered  |

- \_\_\_ 16. Some organic farmers are against the production of genetically modified food.
- \_\_\_ 17. This tablet is popular because of its novel and unique features.
- \_\_\_ 18. A suit and a tie is the traditional attire for a formal occasion.
- \_\_\_ 19. When the principal retired, parents came forward and told her they were grateful for her years of service.
- \_\_\_ 20. The unusual and unique painting shows that the young artist has the ability to think of new ideas.
- \_\_\_ 21. The illness is not a serious one; you can expect a quick return to health after some rest.
- \_\_\_ 22. My sister is usually practical about money, and does not buy things she does not need.
- \_\_\_ 23. Medieval scholars called the Goliards moved from place to place throughout Europe.
- \_\_\_ 24. Lisa's parents bought lots of art supplies for her when she said she wanted to be a painter.
- \_\_\_ 25. Bill is always quick to notice how other people feel, and help them out if they need it.

**Thanks!**