

Match the following names to the paintings.

A) *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Vermeer

B) *American Gothic* by Wood

C) *Mona Lisa* by Da Vinci

D) *Self-Portrait with a Straw Hat* by Van Gogh



1



2



3



4

\*Source: Reuters

### Understanding the introduction

Read the extracts from the beginning of the script and number them in the correct order from 1 - 8. The first one is done for you.

A girl reading a letter. A piano lesson. A portrait artist at work. \_\_\_\_

a painting often referred to as the 'Mona Lisa of the North'. \_\_\_\_

Belonging to a Dutch style of idealised, sometimes overly expressive paintings known as 'Tronies', the *Girl with the Pearl Earring* has the allure and subtlety characteristic of Vermeer's work. \_\_\_\_

But this painting stands apart from the quiet narrative scenes that we observe from afar in many of Vermeer's paintings. \_\_\_\_

Is she turning towards you or away from you? No one can agree. 1

She's the mysterious subject of Dutch master Johannes Vermeer's *Girl with the Pearl Earring*. \_\_\_\_

These paintings give us a sense of intimacy while retaining their distance - a drawn curtain often emphasises the separation. \_\_\_\_

We can witness a milkmaid serenely pouring a bowl of milk, but that milk isn't for us. We're only onlookers. \_\_\_\_

**Part A: Match the following words to their definitions.**

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>invoke</u> (v)         | a. a change in the shape or appearance of something or the sound that it makes, so that it is unusual or different |
| 2. <u>foreshortening</u> (n) | b. a person who supports a cause, a charity or artists, usually financially  |
| 3. <u>distortion</u> (n)     | c. interesting but difficult to understand completely as it's not clear  |
| 4. <u>portraiture</u> (n)    | d. something which isn't there, an illusion  |
| 5. <u>patron</u> (n)         | e. the act of making something appear smaller or closer than it really is within a painting, drawing or photograph |
| 6. <u>spearhead</u> (v)      | f. the art of representing people's faces in paintings, drawings or photographs                                    |
| 7. <u>mirage</u> (n)         | g. to give someone a particular feeling or sense of something  |
| 8. <u>enigmatic</u> (adj.)   | h. to start something new and lead the way   |

Now watch the rest of the video (01:01 - 04:32) and decide on the best answer for the following questions.

1. What do Vermeer's paintings usually do to create their effect?
  - a. They use a variety of colours and unusual shapes to create a feeling of uncertainty.
  - b. They are precisely organised and use perspective to create a sense of balance.
  - c. They focus on sharp details of the face to create a feeling of realism and being close to the subject.
2. What is the meaning of *chiaroscuro*?
  - a. a simple portrait of a woman who is usually beautiful
  - b. a painting which uses colour in an unusually dramatic manner
  - c. a painting which uses light and darkness to create a 3D effect
3. According to the video, what is it about the painting which makes it fascinating?
  - a. The impression she gives that she is just about to speak together with the way she is looking at us.
  - b. The soft tones of the skin make her seem life-like, as though we can touch her.
  - c. There is a familiarity about her face as if we know her from a dream.

4. What political events had an effect on Dutch painting in the 17th century?
  - a. The rejection of Spanish rule and the religious order that came with it.
  - b. The end of the Netherlands being governed by a royal family and the beginnings of democracy.
  - c. The Catholic church having increased power within Dutch society.
5. What did the new patrons of the arts want to see in paintings?
  - a. romanticised versions of the Dutch countryside which they could have with them on their journeys abroad
  - b. attractive women painted in a life-like manner for them to place in their bedrooms
  - c. everyday scenes from middle-class houses with common objects
6. What does the pearl in the earring tell us?
  - a. Vermeer has the ability to create an impression of something which doesn't exist.
  - b. The size of the pearl makes it clear that the girl came from a very wealthy family.
  - c. The pearl is clearly a fake, which makes us question the girl and her family background.
7. In which city is *Girl with the Pearl Earring* on display?
  - a. Paris
  - b. The Hague
  - c. Amsterdam

### Discussing vocabulary

Look at the following extracts from the script and discuss the meaning of the word in bold. Write down their meanings.

With the **chequered** floor in many of his works...

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Vermeer would even hide the leg of an easel for the sake of **composition**.

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Her eye contact and slightly **parted** lips...

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Cities like Delft were **unsupervised** by kings or bishops...

4. \_\_\_\_\_

It created a **merchant** class...

5. \_\_\_\_\_

... these merchants preferred **middle-class** subjects ...

6. \_\_\_\_\_

Upon close **inspection**, we are reminded...

7. \_\_\_\_\_

...her presence is simultaneously **penetrating** and subtle.

8. \_\_\_\_\_