A. Read the Audio script. Select the correct option to complete the sentences.

Hello, everyone. Today we're going to be discussing two painters from the Dutch Golden Age: Rembrandt van Rijn and Johannes Vermeer. Today, their paintings sell for millions of dollars **–1-** auction, and they are considered among the greatest artists in history. But for one of them, this was not always true.

Option a	Option b	Option c	Option d
in	at	on	to

Rembrandt was born in 1606 in Leiden, where he opened an art studio before he was 20 years old. In 1631, he moved to Amsterdam and quickly gained a reputation as an excellent portrait artist. He produced a lot of paintings in his life. The exact number is unknown, but it was at least several hundred paintings, a similar number of prints, and a few thousand drawings. These works sold well, but **-2-** this, Rembrandt had money problems later in life, and died in poverty in 1669. **Position 1**

Option a	Option b	Option c	Option d
despite	however	although	even though

Vermeer was born in 1632 in Delft, where he became a member of a local association of painters when he was 20 or 21 years old. He gained some degree of success and fame selling his works to local people. He worked slowly, however, and probably produced no more than three or four paintings a year. Again, it's hard to give an exact figure, but evidence suggests that he might have painted just 40 works in his entire career. As with Rembrandt, when he died in 1675, Vermeer had **-3-** problems and left his family with large debts.

Option a	Option b	Option c	Option d
financially	financial	finance	finances

You can see a number of **-4-** between the lives of the two artists, but after their deaths, things were different. Rembrandt had a reputation as a great artist in his lifetime and his reputation grew after his death. In contrast, after his death Vermeer's name was **-5-** unknown for nearly 200 years. Why? Several factors stand out.

	Option a	Option b	Option c	Option d
Blank 4	Similar	Realities	Qualities	parallels
Blank 5	basic	virtually	contemporary	wane

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First, let's consider the number of works by each artist. As we've seen, Rembrandt produced many more works than Vermeer did. Why does this matter? Well, simply put, more art lovers bought, sold, and discussed works by Rembrandt than works by Vermeer. And reputations tend to decline if people are not discussing an artist or his or her work.

A second point, and one that's related to the first, is that we know Rembrandt tutored a number of other artists. **Position 2**. There is no evidence that Vermeer took on any students, however, and so he lacked this advantage.

Third, we can **-6-** where each artist lived and worked. Rembrandt was born in Leiden and moved to Amsterdam, both of which were major centers of art in the Dutch Republic. This is important because we can conclude that people with influence knew about and talked about Rembrandt. In comparison, far fewer people knew of Vermeer or talked about his works. The reason? He spent his entire life in Delft, a small city that was not a center of art.

Option a	Option b	Option c	Option d
think about	think in	think on	think

The final reason comes down to social position. Rembrandt married into a family with a high social position. He also had a wealthy patron, that's a kind of investor, who helped him receive **-7-** from members of the upper classes, including a prince. **Position 3** The upper classes were considered more important, more newsworthy, if you like, and Rembrandt's higher social status meant that he was more widely discussed than Vermeer both before and after his death.

Option a	Option b	Option c	Option d
commissions	contemporary	parallels	standings

OK, so we've seen why and how the reputation of Rembrandt grew while Vermeer's diminished. But the contemporary assessment is that both Rembrandt and Vermeer are true Dutch Masters. So why did Vermeer's standing improve? One word: quality. **Position 4**

Simply put, Vermeer's paintings are great works of art. Many of his works were seen as great art and people continued to **-8-** and collect them even during the time when few people knew the name of Johannes Vermeer. And that's a surprisingly common thing to happen, as we'll see in future classes. An artist's name may be forgotten, but if he or she creates art of exceptional quality then, eventually, his or her reputation will grow.

Option a	Option b	Option c	Option d
wane	bid	acquire	outsource

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B. Answer the following questions

(9) Where are the painters from?

a. Germany **b.** Belgium **c.** Netherlands **d.** Denmark

(10) When did they live?

a. 15th century **b.** 16th century **c.** 17th century **d.** 18th century

(11) **Which word is a correct antonym for the word decline in paragraph 5.**

a. Improve **b.** Wane **c.** Hype **d.** Fall

(12) What can we infer from the text?

a. Reputations are built, in great part, from your social connections.

b. Vermeer had a bad reputation because he was poor.

c. Artists don't have a good reputation if they don't come from a small city.

d. If Rembrandt hadn't tutored other artists, his reputation would have been questionable.

(13) Which is not mentioned in the text?

a. That quality of work is as valuable as the networking you make to build a reputation

b. Which museums currently host works by these two Dutch artists.

c. Biographical information of the two painters

d. Approximate cost of the works of art by Rembrandt and Vermeer

(14) What is the best position in the text to insert the sentence

"I mention this because Rembrandt's students produced works in his style, allowing his name to spread more widely."

a. Position 1 **b.** Position 2 **c.** Position 3 **d.** Position 4

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