

# Is it talent or hard work?

When children are asked to draw or paint a picture, they are happy to oblige. And they are willing to talk about and show their creation to anyone they meet. But when adults are asked to do the same thing, they typically get nervous and refuse to even try, claiming that they have no talent.

Most adults see themselves as lacking the "artistic gene." However, when you look at drawings made by artists when they were children, their work doesn't differ much from the scribbles and sick figures all children draw when they are young. When Don Lipski, who makes a successful living as a professional artist, looks back at drawings that he made as a child, he doesn't find any early evidence of his own artistic talent. "I was always making things . . . doodling and putting things together. I didn't think of myself as a creative person. I was just doing what all kids do."

The general belief is that artistic talent is something one is born with: a person either has talent or does not. Clearly, great artists like Michelangelo or Picasso had natural talent and possessed more artistic ability than the average person. However, one factor that isn't often considered is the role that years of training, practice, and



All young children scribble, doodle, and draw sick figures.

hard work have played in the creation of great pieces of art. In addition, most artists are successful because they are passionate about their art—they love what they do. Their passion motivates them to continue to create—and improve their ability—day after day. While natural talent may be an advantage, hard work appears to be a necessary part of the creative process.

In *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, author Betty Edwards argues that while few people are born with natural artistic talent, all of us have the potential to improve our artistic ability. We just have to be willing to keep working at it. She claims that anyone can learn to use the right side of the brain, the side that governs visual skills like drawing and painting. In other words, artistic ability can be learned.

**A** **RECOGNIZE THE MAIN IDEA** Choose the main idea of the article.

- a. Artistic skill can be taught.
- b. Children are better artists than adults.
- c. To draw well, you have to be born with artistic talent.
- d. Few people are born with artistic talent.

**B** **IDENTIFY SUPPORTING DETAILS** Read each statement. Check True or False, according to the article. Support your choice with details from the article.

		True	False
1	Young children generally don't worry if they are talented or not.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Most adults think they are not talented.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	It's easy to see which children are going to be artists when you look at their drawings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	There isn't much difference between famous artists and other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Talent is all one needs to create great artistic work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	People who don't have natural talent can improve their artistic skill.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## READING EXERCISE

### A. Check the statements that are true, according to the reading.

- 1. Most children don't want to show their drawings.
- 2. Adults usually don't even try when they're asked to draw or paint.
- 3. Most people don't believe they have artistic talent.
- 4. Don Lipski is a professional artist.
- 5. Lipski knew he had artistic talent, even as a child.
- 6. One reason why artists are successful is because they are passionate about their work.
- 7. To be successful as an artist, you must work hard.
- 8. According to Betty Edwards, few people have the potential to improve their artistic ability.