

Year 4 Art Assessment: The Expressive World of Vincent van Gogh

Learning objective: To evaluate knowledge of Vincent van Gogh's painting techniques, use of colour, and emotional expression in art.

Read each question carefully. Use full sentences for written answers. Refer to your knowledge of Van Gogh's artistic style and the specific techniques he used to create texture and mood.

Vincent van Gogh was a Dutch artist who lived in the late 19th century. Unlike many artists of his time who sought to paint realistic scenes, Van Gogh focused on how a scene made him feel. He is famous for his thick application of paint, known as 'impasto', and his swirling, energetic brushstrokes that seem to move across the canvas. He often used bold, complementary colours, such as bright yellows placed next to deep blues, to make his paintings stand out and vibrate with energy.

Word bank: Impressionism · Post-Impressionism · Impasto · Complementary colours · Brushstrokes · Vibrant · Composition · Perspective

1. Define the term 'impasto' and explain why Van Gogh chose to use this technique in his work. (2 marks)

2. Name one pair of complementary colours. Why do artists like Van Gogh choose to place these colours side-by-side in a composition? (3 marks)

3. How do Van Gogh's brushstrokes differ from the smooth, blended style of traditional portrait painters? (3 marks)

4. Compare and contrast Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' with a realistic landscape photograph. What is the main difference in how they represent the night sky? (4 marks)

5. Justify why Van Gogh's work is categorised as 'Post-Impressionist' rather than 'Realist'. (4 marks)

6. Imagine you are Zara the Zebra, an artist observing a sunflower. Write a paragraph (approx. 50-75 words) describing how you would use Van Gogh's signature style to paint that flower. Focus on texture, colour, and emotion. (5 marks)

7. What might happen to the emotional impact of a Van Gogh painting if the artist had used thin, watery paint and dull, grey tones instead of his signature bold colours? (4 marks)

Draw: In the box below, recreate a small section of a landscape using Van Gogh's 'swirling' brushstroke technique. Use at least three different colours to show how you can create movement and texture on paper.



Extension challenge: Total: /25. Extension task: Research a modern artist who was inspired by Van Gogh. Create a comparison chart showing three similarities and three differences between their styles.