

Vincent van Gogh: A Master of Light and Colour

Learning objective: To explore the life, techniques, and expressive style of Vincent van Gogh, identifying how his use of colour and brushwork conveys emotion.

Study these flashcards to master the key facts about Van Gogh's artistic journey. Use them to test your knowledge of post-impressionist techniques and historical context.

Who was Vincent van Gogh?

A Dutch Post-Impressionist painter who became one of the most famous and influential figures in the history of Western art.

What is 'Impasto' technique?

A technique where paint is laid onto the canvas in very thick layers, so that it stands out from the surface and shows the texture of the brushstrokes.

How did Van Gogh use colour in his paintings?

He used vibrant, non-naturalistic colours to express his emotions and the 'mood' of a scene rather than just replicating reality.

What does 'Post-Impressionism' mean?

An art movement that emerged in the late 19th century; artists wanted to go beyond the simple recording of light and focus more on symbolic content and personal expression.

What is the subject of 'The Starry Night'?

It depicts the view from his asylum room window in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, including a swirling night sky, a glowing crescent moon, and a dark cypress tree.

Why did Van Gogh use short, rhythmic brushstrokes?

To create a sense of movement and energy across the canvas, making his paintings feel alive and dynamic.

Where was Van Gogh born?

He was born in the Netherlands in 1853.

What was the significance of 'The Potato Eaters'?

It was one of his early masterpieces showing his empathy for the working class, using dark, earthy tones to reflect the humble life of peasants.

How did Van Gogh's mental health affect his art?

His experiences shaped his intense, emotional style, leading him to use art as a way to find comfort and express his inner thoughts.

What are 'complementary colours'?

Colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel, such as blue and orange, which Van Gogh often placed side-by-side to make his paintings 'pop'.