

# Mastering Texture and Colour: The Art of Vincent van Gogh

*Learning objective: To analyse the artistic techniques of Vincent van Gogh, focusing on impasto brushwork, colour theory, and emotional expression.*

Use your knowledge of Post-Impressionism to respond to the following questions. Provide detailed justifications where required to demonstrate your understanding of Van Gogh's unique style.

Vincent van Gogh was a Dutch Post-Impressionist painter who transformed the art world with his unique approach to light and colour. Unlike artists who aimed for realistic representation, Van Gogh used thick, swirling layers of paint—a technique known as impasto—to convey his internal emotions and the energy of the natural world. He often utilised complementary colours, such as placing vibrant yellows next to deep violets, to make his paintings appear to 'vibrate' on the canvas. His work serves as a window into his perspective, where every stroke is intentional and full of movement.

*Word bank: Impasto · Complementary colours · Expressionism · Brushstrokes · Vibrant · Post-Impressionism · Composition · Texture*

**1. Explain why Van Gogh chose to use the 'impasto' technique rather than painting flat, smooth surfaces. How does this choice affect the viewer's experience of the painting? (3 marks)**

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**2. Define the term 'complementary colours' and describe how using them together can impact the mood of an artwork. (2 marks)**

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**3. Compare and contrast the style of a traditional landscape painter with Van Gogh's approach. What are the key differences in their goals? (3 marks)**

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**4. Justify why Van Gogh is categorised as a 'Post-Impressionist' rather than a 'Realist'. Use evidence from his brushwork techniques to support your argument. (3 marks)**

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**5. What might happen to the emotional impact of 'The Starry Night' if the swirling, energetic brushstrokes were replaced by thin, precise lines? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)**

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**Draw:** Zara the Zebra wants to paint a view of the local park in the style of Van Gogh. Draw a landscape scene using short, thick, rhythmic lines. Focus on using complementary colours (like blue and orange) to create a sense of movement in the sky and grass.



*Extension challenge: Research a specific painting by Van Gogh that depicts a bedroom or a café. Write a short poem, in the style of Leo the Lion, that captures the 'feeling' of that room based on the colours and textures the artist chose. How does the choice of colour reflect the atmosphere of the space?*