Worksheet 1  Introduction to Vermeer

You’ve probably seen *Girl with a Pearl Earring* before, but how much do you know about the story behind it? Did you know the painting has inspired a book, a poem and a film? Let’s find out more about what makes it so special. First, let’s find out about the artist, Johannes Vermeer.

Go to [http://www.ibiblio.org/louvre/paint/auth/vermeer/](http://www.ibiblio.org/louvre/paint/auth/vermeer/)

**Now tick the correct answer.**

1. What was his nationality?
   - □ Belgian
   - □ German
   - □ Dutch
   - □ Swedish

2. Where was he from?
   - □ Antwerp
   - □ Delft
   - □ Hamburg
   - □ Gotenberg

3. When did he live?
   - □ 1400s
   - □ 1500s
   - □ 1600s
   - □ 1700s

4. How many paintings did he create?
   - □ over 100
   - □ 35
   - □ 75
   - □ 25

5. His paintings usually show:
   - □ street scenes
   - □ one or two people inside a room
   - □ horses and dogs
   - □ country scenes
Worksheet 2

Vermeer’s Life

Let’s find out more about the life of this influential artist.

Go to http://notablebiographies.com
Search for Jan Vermeer.
Read the biography.

Now tick the correct answer.

1. Vermeer’s father was:
   - [ ] an artist and an innkeeper
   - [ ] an art dealer and a shopkeeper
   - [ ] an art dealer and an innkeeper
   - [ ] a shopkeeper and an artist

2. How many children did Vermeer and his wife have?
   - [ ] six
   - [ ] eleven
   - [ ] fifteen
   - [ ] three

3. As well as painting Vermeer also:
   - [ ] sold paint
   - [ ] had an inn
   - [ ] had a farm
   - [ ] sold paintings for other artists

4. How old was Vermeer when he died?
   - [ ] 75
   - [ ] 32
   - [ ] 43
   - [ ] 56

5. Which statement is true?
   - [ ] He made a lot of money from his paintings.
   - [ ] He died in a war.
   - [ ] He had money problems when he died.
   - [ ] He was famous in his lifetime.
Worksheet 3  

Vermeer and Delft

Let’s find out about the other artists Vermeer knew in Delft.

Go to http://www.delft.nl/webEN/
Click on Vermeer
Read about Johannes Vermeer, his life and work and the Delft School.
Now answer these questions.

1. Name four characteristics of the golden era of painting in Delft.
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

2. When was it?
   _________________________________________________________________

3. Name six famous and/or influential painters from this area.
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

4. Which of these painters influenced Vermeer?
   _________________________________________________________________

5. Which painting by de Hoogh was important to Vermeer?
   _________________________________________________________________

6. What is the name of the famous city painting by Fabritius?
   _________________________________________________________________

7. What do you need to view this picture?
   _________________________________________________________________
Worksheet 4  Vermeer’s Neighbourhood

Here you can learn about the area where Vermeer lived.

Go to http://www.essentialvermeer.com/
Click on Vermeer’s neighbourhood.
Look at the map and table.
Then complete the table below.

Where was the painter raised? ______________
What was the name of the artist’s guild? ______________
What was the name of Vermeer’s mother-in-law? ______________
Where was Vermeer buried? ______________

Click on Mechelen.
Now answer these questions.

1. a) What was Vermeer’s father’s name?

_______________________________________________________________

b) How much did he buy the inn for?

_______________________________________________________________

c) How many fireplaces did the inn have?

_______________________________________________________________

2. a) When did Vermeer become vice dean of the guild?

_______________________________________________________________

b) When was the guildhouse built?

_______________________________________________________________

c) What was the name of the street it was on?

_______________________________________________________________

3. a) When did Vermeer and his family move to his mother-in-law’s house?

_______________________________________________________________
b) What was the name of the area the house was in?

_______________________________________________________________

c) How many people in the town were Catholics?

_______________________________________________________________

4. a) When was the church started?

_______________________________________________________________

b) What is wrong with the tower?

_______________________________________________________________

c) How many tombstones does Vermeer have?

_______________________________________________________________
Worksheet 5

The Painting

Now let’s look at different aspects of the painting itself.

Go to http://www.girl-with-a-pearl-earring.20m.com/
Under the heading 'Subject Matter' click on the young girl and read the information.
Then do the same for the turban, the pearl, the dress and the dark background.
Now complete the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The turban</th>
<th>Vermeer’s name and the signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The turban depicted in the painting is of _____ origin. It is made of _____________ ___ material which highlights the ____ shape of the girl’s head. Scholars believe that the material is some kind of __________ cloth such as ____ or caffa.</td>
<td>Vermeer was baptized Johannes Vermeer. Some books call him <em><strong>Vermeer but the painter ____ used that name. The surname is a contraction of Van der Meer which means ‘</strong></em>_ ___ ____’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The signature of Girl with a Pearl Earring is located in the _____ _____ ______. It is larger than signatures in other paintings by Vermeer. Sometimes Vermeer’s signature is _____ in tone placed against a ____ background. Sometimes Vermeer’s signature is ______ in a corner of the painting. Other times it jumps immediately to the ________ ___. |
The young girl

The identity of the young girl in the painting is _______. There are four possible candidates:
Maria, Vermeer’s ______-year-old ______,
Magdalena Van Riujven, the daughter of
Vermeer’s principle ______, the girl from
*The Art of Painting* and a _____ called
Griet – although there is __ __________ to support this.

The pearl

In the ____________-_______ pearls were an extremely important ______ ______. They are linked with ______ and ___________. The pearl earring in this Vermeer painting is in the shape of a ____ or ____.

The background

The ____ background contributes to the _____ ______ ______ of the painting. It was originally ______ in colour, a combination of two pigments: ______ and weld.

The dress

The girl is wearing a ______ dress with heavy ______ and a _____ ______.
Worksheet 6  The Painting and Science

Vermeer’s paintings look very natural, like photographs. But he lived before photography was invented. Many people think Vermeer used a camera obscura in his paintings – a kind of early camera.

Go to http://historyforkids.utah.gov
Click on Fun and Games
Click on Photo Facts and Fun
Click on History of Photography and read the information.

Now tick the correct answer.

1. What do the words ‘camera obscura’ mean?
   - hidden camera
   - hidden room
   - dark room
   - light room

2. Who invented the first camera obscura?
   - Aristotle
   - the Chinese
   - the Romans
   - the Spanish

3. When was the camera obscura first used by artists like Michelangelo?
   - in the 1700s
   - in the 1600s
   - in the 1500s
   - in the 1800s

4. The sitter is outside the camera obscura and the artist is:
   - inside
   - outside
   - under
   - on top

5. A camera obscura in a box was invented in the 1700s. People found that they got a better picture by using:
   - a mirror
   - a lens like in a pair of spectacles
   - a piece of glass
   - a window
Worksheet 7

Pearls

The beautiful pearl earring that the young girl is wearing has fascinated art historians. But do you know where pearls come from?

Go to [http://www.karipearls.com/index.html](http://www.karipearls.com/index.html)
Click on Video Index
Click on Understand how Natural Pearls are Formed
Choose the correct answer.

Another name for oysters is crustaceans/molluscs.

How often do you find a natural pearl? 1 in 1,000 oysters / 1 in 10,000 oysters.

Why does the oyster make a pearl? because some sand or dirt gets in/because it makes them like seeds from a plant.

What is the material called that the oyster makes? luster/nacre.

This white material is made of calcium carbonate/sodium carbonate.

It is composed of millions of microscopic crystals/microscopic fibres.
Worksheet 8  The History of Pearls

Some more history now. Pearls used to be very expensive – how much do you know about their history?

Go to http://www.karipearls.com/index.html
Click on Video Index
Click on Natural Pearls in History

Tick the correct answer.

1. Queen Elizabeth I of England had many dresses covered in pearls. How many did she have?
   - □ 500
   - □ 1000
   - □ 3000
   - □ 5000

2. Queen Elizabeth I also had many wigs full of pearls. How many wigs did she have?
   - □ 100
   - □ 50
   - □ 40
   - □ 80

3. Ordinary or common people were forbidden to wear pearls by the:
   - □ Indians
   - □ Romans
   - □ Chinese
   - □ Greeks

4. Pearls were called ‘tears of the moon’ by the:
   - □ Chinese
   - □ Ancient Greeks
   - □ Romans
   - □ Indians
Worksheet 9  

Tracy Chevalier

*Girl with a Pearl Earring* inspired a book by Tracy Chevalier, an American writer who now lives in England and studied writing at university in England. What inspired her to write about the girl in Vermeer’s painting?

I have had a copy of that painting for a long time. I love it because it is so beautiful and mysterious. The expression on the girl’s face is ambiguous – sometimes she looks happy, sometimes sad, sometimes innocent, sometimes seductive. I was always curious about what she was thinking, and one day I wondered what Vermeer did to her to make her look like that…. I thought there must be a story behind her look, but when I found out that we don’t know who the model for the painting was, I realized I would have to make up the story myself.

**Source:** [http://tchevalier.com/](http://tchevalier.com/)

Tracy Chevalier loves all Vermeer’s paintings and she has seen all thirty-six of them. She thinks there are stories in all his paintings but she decided to tell this one.

Now go to [http://tchevalier.com/](http://tchevalier.com/)
Click on **Books**
Click on *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (the book cover)
Click on **Story**
Now answer these questions.

1. In the book the name of the girl is:
   - [ ] Greta
   - [ ] Gertruud
   - [ ] Grazia
   - [ ] Griet

2. How old is she?
   - [ ] 14
   - [ ] 16
   - [ ] 18
   - [ ] 20
3. Vermeer’s wife is called:
   - □ Greta
   - □ Cornelia
   - □ Maria
   - □ Catharina

4. Vermeer has a daughter who causes trouble with the girl. She is called:
   - □ Maria
   - □ Elisabeth
   - □ Cornelia
   - □ Agnes

5. The girl’s job is:
   - □ a cook
   - □ a maid
   - □ a model
   - □ a children’s nurse

6. Vermeer asks the girl to help him with his work. His wife is:
   - □ pleased
   - □ angry
   - □ worried
   - □ relaxed

Before you read part of the book have a look at one reader’s review.
Go to [http://blogcritics.org/archives/2004/10/05/205117.php](http://blogcritics.org/archives/2004/10/05/205117.php) and read Dana Huff’s review.
Now answer the following questions.

7. Did the reader enjoy the book?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

8. What didn’t she like about the book?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

9. What did she think Tracy Chevalier missed out?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
10. How does the review writer feel about the character of Griet?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

11. What does the writer say is a good word to describe the book?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
Worksheet 10 The Book

Let’s look in greater detail at the first chapter of the novel.

Go to [http://tchevalier.com/](http://tchevalier.com/)
Click on Books
Click on *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (the book cover)
Click on First Chapter
Read the first section of the first chapter of the story.

Then tick the correct answer.

1. What was the girl doing when the visitors arrived?
   - [ ] cleaning the floor
   - [ ] washing
   - [ ] chopping wood
   - [ ] chopping vegetables

2. The woman visitor looked:
   - [ ] tired
   - [ ] upset
   - [ ] untidy
   - [ ] very beautiful

3. The man, Vermeer, was:
   - [ ] noisy
   - [ ] relaxed
   - [ ] unfriendly
   - [ ] bored

4. Vermeer asked the girl why she had put the vegetables in a circle. She said:
   - [ ] her mother told her to do it
   - [ ] she was playing a game
   - [ ] they are in the right order
   - [ ] the colours look better like that

5. The man and woman came to the girl’s house:
   - [ ] to paint her
   - [ ] to give her a job
   - [ ] to eat soup
   - [ ] to see her father

6. The girl needed to work because:
   - [ ] she was bored
   - [ ] her mother didn’t like her
   - [ ] her father had had an accident
   - [ ] her father was dead
Worksheet 11

The Film

The director of the movie, Peter Webber, had studied art history and this helped him make the movie. When he first read the script he didn’t want to make the movie, but later he realized it was a fascinating story about power, attraction, money and art. He also looked at the work of other artists like Rembrandt to get the effects of light and shadow he wanted.

The producer, Andy Paterson and his wife, screenwriter Olivia Hetreed, read the book and decided Griet was a very interesting character. She wanted to be free at a time when poor people couldn’t choose how to live. The author Tracy Chevalier was very pleased with the movie and thought it was true to the book and even had some good extra ideas.

To read a film review go to http://bbc.co.uk/films
Click on Movies
Click on Reviews Archive
Under the film reviews section click on the letter G
Click on Girl with a Pearl Earring
Read the review by Susan Hodgetts.

Find the answers to the following questions.

1. The movie is described as a costume drama. What adjective is also used to describe it here?

2. Who will like the film?

3. The review says the main actors are:
   - [ ] good
   - [ ] bad
   - [ ] excellent
   - [ ] average

Now go to http://www.girlwithapearlearringmovie.com/
Tick the correct answer(s).

4. When was the movie made?
   - [ ] 2005
   - [ ] 2002
   - [ ] 2003
   - [ ] 2004
5. How many Academy Award nominations did the movie have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

6. Who played Griet?

_______________________________________________________________

7. Who played Vermeer?

_______________________________________________________________

Now go to http://movies.about.com/ and search for ‘Girl with a Pearl Earring Movie Trailer’.
Then click on the link to the trailer and watch it.

8. What is the attitude of Vermeer’s wife?

- relaxed
- unfriendly
- friendly
- bored

9. What does Vermeer ask Griet to look at?

- a painting
- the clouds
- the sea
- the river

10. Which colour doesn’t she say?

- grey
- blue
- white
- yellow
Webquest Project  Girl with a Pearl Earring

You have learnt a lot about the background of a very famous painting and the book and film that it inspired.

Think of other works that have inspired writers or artists, for example Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Romeo and Juliet’s story has been told in a film, a ballet and an opera.

Work in pairs or small groups. Choose an artistic work that has inspired several different versions. These versions could be in the form of a book, a film or a play. For example, Tolkien’s book trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* has inspired a film and a musical. J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* books have become successful films.

In your groups complete the chart and decide which version you prefer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i.e. book, film, play, musical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>author/director/artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>main characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where/when the story is set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>main points of the story</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
positive points

negative points

differences between the versions

my opinion

I prefer... because...

In your groups write a review or prepare a short presentation, saying why you prefer one version to another. Use these ideas and phrases to help you.

**Introducing your review/presentation**

- title
- type of book/film/play
- who was the author/director?
- when was it written/produced?

**Characters and story**

- when/where is it set?
- who are the main characters?
- what are they like?
- what are the key events in the story?
- are there any important differences between the different versions?
Your opinion
which did you enjoy the most? Why?
would you change anything?
which would you recommend?

Useful phrases
..... was written/produced by ..... in ....
..... tells the story of ....
It is based on a book/film/play of the same name.
It takes place in the country of ..... in the ..... 
As the story unfolds ..... 
In the end ..... 
In my opinion ..... 
I preferred the ..... to the ..... because
What I liked was the way ..... 
I didn’t think ..... worked as well as ..... 
What I didn’t like was ..... 
I would/n’t recommend ..... because ..... 
Answer Key

Worksheet 1
1. Dutch
2. Delft
3. 1600s
4. 35
5. one or two people inside a room

Worksheet 2
1. an art dealer and an innkeeper
2. eleven
3. sold paintings for other artists
4. 43
5. He was famous in his lifetime.

Worksheet 3
1. people’s clothing, interiors, exteriors and cityscapes
2. in the (mid) 17th century
3. famous painters: Leonaert Bramer, Michiel Jansz. van Mierevelt
   particularly influential painters: Paulus Potter, Jan Steen, Carel Fabritius, Pieter de Hoogh
4. Pieter de Hoogh
5. Woman Weighing Coins
6. View of Delft
7. a special box with a peephole

Worksheet 4
Answers to table: Mechelen, St. Luke’s Guild, Maria Thin, Oude Kerk
1  a) Reynier Jansz. Vos; b) 2,500 guilders (200 guilders in cash plus two mortgages with the total value of 2,500 guilders); c) six
2  a) 18 October 1662; b) 1661; c) Voldersgracht
3  a) sometime between 1653 and 1660; b) Papist’s Corner: c) about 25%
4  a) 1200; b) it’s leaning; c) two

Worksheet 5

| The turban | The turban depicted in the painting is of Turkish origin. It is made of ultramarine blue material which highlights the oval shape of the girl’s head. Scholars believe that the material is some kind of reflective cloth such as silk or caffa. |

This page has been downloaded from www.onestopclil.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The signature</th>
<th>Vermeer was baptized Johannes Vermeer. Some books call him Jan Vermeer but the painter never used that name. The surname is a contraction of Van der Meer which means ‘from the sea’. The signature of <em>Girl with a Pearl Earring</em> is located in the upper left corner. It is larger than signatures in other paintings by Vermeer. Sometimes Vermeer’s signature is light in tone placed against a dark background. Sometimes Vermeer’s signature is hidden in a corner of the painting. Other times it jumps immediately to the viewer’s eye.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The young girl</td>
<td>The identity of the young girl in the painting is unknown. There are four possible candidates: Maria, Vermeer’s twelve-year-old daughter, Magdalena Van Riujven, the daughter of Vermeer’s principle patron, the girl from <em>The Art of Painting</em> and a maid called Griet – although there is no evidence to support this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pearl</td>
<td>In the seventeenth-century pearls were an extremely important status symbol. They are linked with vanity and virginity. The pearl earring in this Vermeer painting is in the shape of a drop or tear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The background</td>
<td>The dark background contributes to the expressive effect of the painting. It was originally greenish in colour, a combination of two pigments: indigo and weld.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dress</td>
<td>The girl is wearing a yellow dress with heavy folds and a white collar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Worksheet 6**
1. dark room
2. the Chinese
3. in the 1500s
4. outside
5. a lens like in a pair of spectacles

**Worksheet 7**
1. molluscs
2. 1 in 1,000 oysters
3. because some sand or dirt gets in
4. nacre
5. calcium carbonate
6. microscopic crystals
Worksheet 8
1. 3000
2. 80
3. Romans
4. Greeks

Worksheet 9
1. Griet
2. 16
3. Catharina
4. Cornelia
5. a maid
6. angry
7. Yes, she loved the book. She thought it was technically better than Chevalier’s *The Virgin Blue*. She also thought it was a good example of the fascinating genre of art-inspired literature.
8. The book didn’t speak to her in the same way that *The Virgin Blue* did. She was also troubled by the negative portrayal of Vermeer and his wife Catharina.
9. The reviewer thinks that Chevalier missed out the fact that the Vermeer family were deeply in debt. She also missed out the fact that the Vermeer family’s debt with their baker was settled because the baker was willing to take Vermeer’s artwork as payment.
10. She liked the character of Griet a great deal. She had sympathy for her as a peasant woman living in a time when her life was dedicated to serving the Vermeers and her husband.
11. Quiet.

Worksheet 10
1. chopping vegetables
2. untidy
3. relaxed
4. the colours look better like that
5. to give her a job
6. her father had had an accident

Worksheet 11
1. superior
2. anyone who likes serious, intelligent drama and gentle erotic tension
3. excellent
4. 2003
5. 3
6. Scarlett Johansson
7. Colin Firth
8. unfriendly
9. the clouds
10. white