

**Level:** Elementary – Intermediate (A1–B1)

**Age:** Teenagers

**Time:** This lesson can be divided up in various ways to suit the time you have with your students. Below are three time options that you can choose from depending on the length of your class. However, these are just suggestions and there are many other ways you could divide the lesson up.

90 minutes – Complete all activities in Be an art critic, Be an artist, and Vincent's bedroom.

60 minutes – Complete all activities in Be an art critic and Vincent's bedroom.

45 minutes – Complete all activities in Be an artist.

**Summary:** This lesson is divided into three sections: Be an art critic, Be an artist, and Vincent's bedroom. Students will (depending on the length of the lesson):

- 1 give opinions about art;
- 2 draw a picture;
- 3 pretend to be art critics;
- 4 describe a picture of a room;
- 5 talk about their own room.

**Key skills:** Speaking, writing

**Subskills:** Giving opinions about art, describing rooms

**Materials:** One copy of Be an art critic and Be an artist per student; scissors and Blu Tack or tape

## BE AN ART CRITIC

1 Use Google Images to bring up *No. 14* by Mark Rothko, *Philosopher in Meditation* by Rembrandt, and *Woman with Folded Arms* by Pablo Picasso (a painting from his blue period) on screen.

**Note:** You may want to check these images first before the class to make sure they are suitable for your students.

For each painting, ask students:

- Have you seen this painting before?*
- Do you know the artist?*
- Do you know the title?*
- What does the painting mean?*
- What can you see in each painting?*
- Why do you think the artist painted the subject in this style?*
- Do you think the colors in the painting are important? If so, what do you think the colors mean?*

2 Then ask them:

- Which painting do you like best?*
- Which one would you least like to have on your bedroom wall?*

3 Now hand out Be an art critic worksheet 1 and ask students to read the art critic's comments. Ask them if any of the comments apply to any of the paintings you showed them at the beginning of the lesson. (Many of the comments apply to the Picasso.)

4 Can students change the words in bold so that the comments apply to one of the other paintings? Write their suggestions on the board.

5 Now hand out Be an art critic worksheet 2. Ask students to discuss the questions on the worksheet with a partner. The first question asks, "Should artists always show a lot of technical skill?" You may want to pre-teach the term *technical skill* by reminding them of (or showing them again) the Rothko painting, telling students that it is an example of a famous (and priceless) painting that, arguably, demonstrates little technical skill. You can compare it to the Rembrandt painting.

Before they begin, refer students to the Phrasebook on the worksheet. It shows them ways of giving opinions, asking for opinions, and agreeing and disagreeing with the opinions of others. Go over the language with them and encourage them to use it during their discussion.



## BE AN ARTIST

1 Explain that it's now time to stop talking about art and be an artist. Hand out the Be an artist worksheet and tell students to look at the blank canvas. Their job is to create a picture in the frame and give it a title. If they need some inspiration, they can choose one of the titles provided.

**Note:** Some students will not like the idea of drawing a picture. It's important to assure students that the picture doesn't have to be perfect.

2 When they have finished their picture, they can cut out the frame and exhibit their work on the classroom wall. The classroom is now an art gallery. Students work in pairs, walking around the gallery looking at each picture. They pretend to be art critics and make comments about each picture. They can adapt the comments on Be an art critic worksheet 1 to help them, simply substituting the words in bold with their own ideas about the picture they are looking at.

**Note:** For this activity, ask students to make positive or neutral comments on their classmates' pictures. Ask them to avoid making any offensive or hurtful comments.

As an optional additional activity, you and your students could compare their pictures to the originals. Do this by searching Google Images for the original pictures and encouraging students to discuss the similarities and differences between their pictures and the original images.

## VINCENT'S BEDROOM

1 Use Google Images to bring up a picture of *Vincent's Bedroom in Arles* by Vincent van Gogh. Ask students to describe the room and elicit room vocabulary.

2 Ask students to decide how they would make the room modern. What would they add to the picture and where? Give an example to help them get started:

*We should add a TV to the room, on a table at the end of the bed.*

Write down any new vocabulary for students to refer to for the next activity. Alternatively, if you have an IWB in class, you could ask students to draw in the objects they would add to the image and label them so that at the end of the task you have a new painting to admire, as well as vocabulary to use in the next activity.

3 Explain to students that you now want them to work in pairs and ask each other questions about their own bedrooms. Write the following prompts on the board:

<i>clothes</i>	<i>where?</i>
<i>bed</i>	<i>comfortable? read in bed?</i>
<i>window</i>	<i>view? noise?</i>
<i>mirror</i>	<i>where? how big?</i>
<i>pictures</i>	<i>how many? what? who?</i>
<i>music system</i>	<i>type of music? where?</i>
<i>other furniture</i>	<i>what? where? size?</i>
<i>floor</i>	<i>carpet?</i>
<i>other</i>	<i>other things in the room?</i>

Focus on the text prompts. Explain that they are designed to help students make questions. Demonstrate the activity by encouraging students to ask you about your room.

4 Students do the activity. When they have finished, they write three sentences about their partner's room. Students then take turns reading their sentences out loud.

5 Can students deduce anything about their partner from the information they have about their rooms? For example, *My partner is a neat person* or *My partner likes his privacy*.

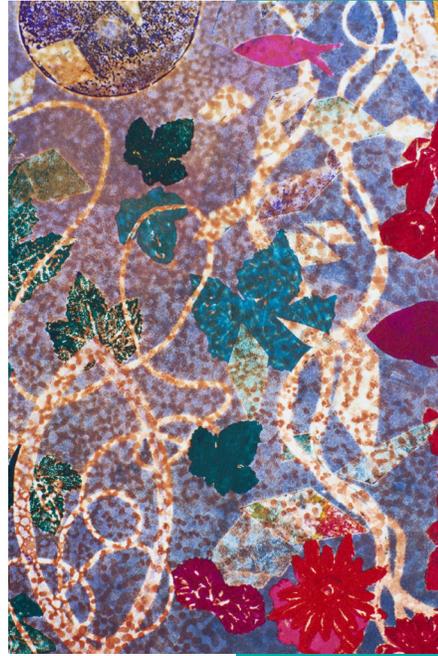
## HOMEWORK TASK

Students write detailed responses to one or more of the discussion questions on Be an art critic worksheet 1.

## BE AN ART CRITIC

Read the art critic's comments.

This painting symbolizes the artist's attitude toward love.  
Clearly, this one was painted in the artist's blue period.  
This painting is so expressive, so full of emotion.  
The artist was obviously depressed when he painted this one.  
Like all great art, this picture says so much with so little.  
I love the contrast between light and dark in this one.  
Color here is used to express feelings.



Now adapt the art critic's comments by choosing your own words to describe the other paintings.

This painting symbolizes the artist's attitude toward \_\_\_\_\_.

Clearly, this one was painted in the artist's \_\_\_\_\_ period.

This painting is so \_\_\_\_\_, so full of \_\_\_\_\_.

The artist was obviously \_\_\_\_\_ when he painted this one.

Like all great art, this picture \_\_\_\_\_.

I love the \_\_\_\_\_ in this one.

\_\_\_\_\_ here is used to express \_\_\_\_\_.

## PHRASEBOOK



### Opinions

#### Asking for someone's opinion

- What do you think of ... ?
- What's your honest opinion of ... ?

#### Giving your opinion

- Personally, I think ...
- I don't think ...
- As far as I'm concerned, ...
- I think it's crazy that ...

### Giving other people's opinions

- Critics say that ...
- According to ...

### Agreeing with someone

- Yes, I agree completely.
- Yes, I think you're right.

### Disagreeing with someone politely

- Maybe, but don't you think that ... ?
- I'm sorry, but I disagree.

Discuss these questions with your partner.

Should artists always show a lot of technical skill?

Children paint from the heart. Does this make them good artists?

What kind of art makes you feel ...

- ... happy?
- ... sad?
- ... angry?
- ... impressed?

Do you think it is crazy that some art is worth millions of dollars?

Why is art important?



## BE AN ARTIST

You are going to draw a picture. To give you some inspiration, look at the list of titles below.

Choose a title or invent one and put your own work of art in the frame.

Abstract 43	Morning Break	Still Life	Memory
Evening Falls	Starry Night	The Storm	Time
Figures in the Night	Self-Portrait	Silence	Woman in Blue

