

DID YOU KNOW?

1 Look at the pictures. Can you guess what connects these three pieces of art?



J M W Turner



Mother and Child Divided



No woman, no cry

Now read the text to find the answer.

The Turner Prize

A garden shed, a lot of rice, a hospital door, an electric light bulb, dead animals. What is the connection between these things? They have all been shown in Turner Prize exhibitions. This exhibition is for a British artist younger than 50, who has created the best piece of art in the past twelve months. The Turner Prize is worth £20,000 (about 30,000).

The Turner Prize is named after the famous painter J M W Turner, 1775-1851, who painted in a very 'modern' style. The exhibition began in 1984 and in the last twenty years there have been many unusual winning exhibits. In 1993, Damien Hirst won the prize with a piece called *Mother and Child Divided*. He used the dead bodies of a mother cow and her calf. He cut the animals in half and placed each half in a glass case. Many people thought this was clever and new, but not everyone agreed that it was art. In 1998, Chris Ofili won the prize with a painting called *No woman, no cry*. It is a beautiful collage, made from many different materials, including elephant excrement! Recently, artists have also won the prize for film and video. Steve McQueen's silent film, *Deadpan*, won the prize in 1999. The film is 4 minutes 30 seconds long. In the film a house collapses. A man stands completely still in the middle of it and the expression on his face does not change. And in 2001, Martin Creed's exhibit, *The lights going on and off, 2000*, won. The exhibit was an empty gallery, with two neon lights in the ceiling going on and off at 5-second intervals.

In the past twenty years, the Turner Prize has caused a great deal of discussion and argument about the meaning of art. People don't always agree about the prize-winners, but the Prize certainly makes the British public talk about modern art.

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Everyone thinks the Turner prize winners are very good.
- 2 Only paintings can win the Turner prize.

3 Do you know any modern artists in your country? Do you like their work?