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| **Topic: Letters of Vincent Van Gogh** | | | | |
| **Instructor:** | **Level:** | **Age:** | **Number of Students:** | **Length:** |
| Stella (Hyun) Namkoong | Upper Intermediate | Adult | 13 | 25 minutes |
| **Materials:**  Images of paintings for eliciting, explaining and activity  Letters of Vincent Van Gogh for each group  Colored clips  Board, Marker | | | | |
| **Aims:**  SWBAT draw a sketch in groups after reading a letter of Vincent Van Gogh describing one of his paintings, compare it to the original painting and introduce the painting to Ss in other groups while going through a Gallery Walk activity. | | | | |
| **Language Skills:**  Reading- Reading the given letter, instructions and text on board  Listening- Listening to teacher’s explanation, instructions for activities, classmate’s ideas and opinions during activities  Speaking- Participating in the group discussion and Gallery Walk activity  Writing- Homework will be given to write a reply to the letter | | | | |
| **Language Systems:**  Lexis- Learning new vocabulary and expressions used in the letter  Discourse- Making discussion in groups, giving presentation during the activity, writing a reply as a homework  Function- Reading comprehension during the task preparation | | | | |
| **Assumptions:**  Ss are at an upper-intermediate level and thus have the basic vocabulary to understand the given letter.  Ss are able to express their ideas and opinion in English.  Ss are used to working in groups and actively participate in activities.  Ss know or have heard of Vincent Van Gogh and seen some of his famous paintings. | | | | |
| **Anticipated Errors and Solutions**  There might not be enough time.   * Be flexible with time. Give Ss more time on the activity if needed and cut off time from the TTT.   Ss may not be familiar with art related terms and vocabulary and may have difficulty to comprehend for certain phrases.   * Explain a few technical terms before starting the activity, ask Ss to read and discuss the letter in groups and monitor discreetly if they are having any trouble.   Ss may be confused of the complexity of the activity.   * Give simple and clear instructions, ask ICQ’s to check their understandings. If they don’t seem to get the idea, ask more ICQ’s and make it clear for them.   There are 13 Ss which will make one person may be left out from the Gallery Walk.   * Make 1 student do the demonstration before activity if time allows. | | | | |
| **References:**  Roskill, Mark (EDT) / Van Gogh, Vincent. (2008). *The letters of Vincent Van Gogh*. Simon & Schuster  Vincent van Gogh. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent_van_Gogh>  Theo van Gogh (art dealer). (n.d.) In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved December 8, 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theo_van_Gogh_(art_dealer)>  Johanna van Gogh-Bonger. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia.* Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johanna_van_Gogh-Bonger>  877 To Theo van Gogh. Auvers-sur-Oise, Tuesday, 3 June 1890. (n.d.) In *Vincent Van Gogh The Letters.* From <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let877/letter.html>  705 To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Tuesday, 16 October 1888. (n.d.) In *Vincent Van Gogh The Letters.* From <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let705/letter.html>  691 To Theo van Gogh. Arles, on or about Saturday, 29 September 1888. (n.d.) In *Vincent Van Gogh The Letters.* From <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let691/letter.html>  676 To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Saturday, 8 September 1888. (n.d.) In *Vincent Van Gogh The Letters.* From <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let676/letter.html>  The Starry Night. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia.* Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Starry_Night>  Starry Night Over the Rhone. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia.* Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Starry_Night_Over_the_Rhone>  The Night Café. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia.* Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Night_Caf%C3%A9>  Portrait of Dr. Gachet. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia.* Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait_of_Dr._Gachet>  Bedroom in Arles (n.d.) In *Wikipedia.* Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bedroom_in_Arles>  French standard sizes for oil paintings. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia.* Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_standard_sizes_for_oil_paintings>  Paul Gauguin. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia.* Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Gauguin>  Émile Bernard. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia.* Retrieved December 8 2015, from  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Bernard> | | | | |
| **Notes:** | | | | |

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| **Pre-Task:** | | | |
| **Aims:** | | | **Materials:** Images of paintings and Van Gogh’s family |
| **Time** | **Set Up** | **Student** | **Teacher** |
| 5 min. | Whole Class | *Ss answer*  *Ss may answer*  *Ss may answer – some might say “Van Gogh”*  *Ss may answer*  *Ss may answer – some might say “Van Gogh”*  *Ss answer – “Van Gogh”*  *Ss may answer*  *Ss may answer* | Good morning. How was your weekend?  *(Greetings may change due to the time)*  Today we are going to learn about some art history. Sounds exciting? Do you like art?  *(showing an image of a painting)*  Does anyone know whose painting this is?  It is not Van Gogh’s. Just because his name is one the board, doesn’t mean I’m showing you his work right away. Any other guesses?  This is a painting of Paul Gauguin. He is also a very famous artist, and he used to be a very close friend of Vincent Van Gogh. Maybe you know that Van Gogh cut his ear. It was after having a fight with this guy, Gauguin. Sad story.  Ok, and are you familiar with this painting?  *(showing another image of a painting)*  This is Emile Bernard’s painting. He was also an artist and a close friend of Van Gogh and Gauguin. Van Gogh liked this painting so much he actually drew a copy of it in watercolors. So you may have seen a very similar work to this from Van Gogh as well.  *(showing the last image of a painting)*  Now, at last, this is your chance to get it right. Whose painting is this?  Yes. This one is Vincent Van Gogh’s painting. All of you must have seen it, something’s wrong if you haven’t. It is one of the most famous paintings in history, which is called “The Starry night”. There are some other versions of the starry night, one you will see later, he was really inspired of the concept, but this is the most famous one and the most expensive one among the starry night series.  Now, do you know how many paintings have Vincent Van Gogh painted throughout his life?  About 900 oil paintings in only 10 years. And that is a lot! And how many do you think was sold while he was alive?  One. Only one piece out of 900 was sold. So he was making no money at all while he was painting, and it was his brother, Theodore Van Gogh, who supported him financially and emotionally. This guy Theo was an art dealer, so Vincent sent all his work to him and often wrote letters describing his work. They were very close.  So after both of them died, Theo’s wife, Johanna Bonger, has found all these letters and reading through she realized that her husband’s brother was not just a useless crazy man, he was actually a genius. She translated all the letters in English, published it, and held several exhibitions as well. Her son, also Vincent Van Gogh – who was named after his uncle – finished his mother’s work and organized his uncle’s work, started planning the Vincent Van Gogh museum in Amsterdam. After that was a huge success as you can see how famous he is now. So it was Theo and his family who made him famous as he is now. |
| **Notes:** | | | |
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| **Task Preparation:** | | | |
| **Aims:** | | | **Materials:** Handouts clipped in groups with colored clips – letters and a blank sheet of paper for drawing. |
| **Time** | **Set Up** | **Student** | **Teacher** |
| 7 min. | *Groups* | *Ss answer*  *Ss answer*  *Ss discuss and draw sketches* | So we’re going to see some letters today and do a little drawing.  *(Handing out the materials for each group)*  You will work in groups. Each group will get different parts of different letters. Now see these clips on top? This is a gift. Choose one each and keep it. This color will later define your new groups.  Now, read these in groups. One of you should read it out loud to make sure your group is reading altogether. If there are any terms you’re not familiar with, please discuss with your group. I will be around so you may ask questions as well.  You’ll get to the part where Vincent is describing his new work to his brother. Read that part carefully and try to visualize it. You see the blank sheet of paper? Draw a rough sketch there, how you think the drawing would look like. You don’t need to draw in every detail. This is not your main task. Just a rough sketch for outlines would be fine. Ok?  You may see some names like Gauguin, Bernard, Jo, and you know who they are, right? Who is Jo?  Yes. Jo from Johanna. The little one is the little Vincent. Now, just some terms I’ll tell you in advance. You’ll see this word *(writing on board – a no.30 canvas)* and this is just one of a standard canvas size for oil painting. It’s something like 92x73(cm). So when he says ‘I’m using a no.30 canvas’, it means he’s just using this size of canvas for this work. And what is a croquis? *(Write on board)* It’s a quick drawing, like a sketch.  Now, are you reading silently, individually?  No. You are reading in groups, out loud. Ok? I’ll give you 5 minutes. Let’s get started.  *(Monitor actively)* |
| **Notes:** | | | |
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| **Task Realization:** | | | |
| **Aims:** | | | **Materials:** Images of Vincent Van Gogh’s paintings |
| **Time** | **Set Up** | **Student** | **Teacher** |
| 8min. | Groups | *Ss may answer*  *Ss may answer*  *Ss answer*  *1 student from the group of 4 will raise hand*  *The student will demonstrate*  *Ss get into new groups*  *Ss answer*  *Ss go through Gallery Walk* | I see you’re pretty much done with your sketches. How did it go?  Ok. Now I’m going to show you the exact paintings those are described in your letters.  *(Handing out the images for each group)*  Does it look similar to your sketch? Is there a group having a very similar sketch with the original?  These are all very very famous paintings. I hope you recognize them.  Now, what you are going to do now is to be Theo, and what’s his job?  Yes, he’s an art dealer and he is trying to sell his brother’s new painting. When you’re not playing Theo, you’re going to be the buyers, who may ask questions or give comments, but eventually everyone will get a chance to be Theo, since we’re going to rotate.  You all have the clips? You know your color, right? You’ll get into new groups in a minute.  Now, here are some expressions you may use when you are playing Theo.  *(pointing the target sentence on board)*  “This is a brilliant new piece of work I just received from the artist.”  “The painting is worth its price.”  You will explain why the painting is valuable, why it’s worth buying. You read the artist’s intention and inspiration from his letter. Tell the buyers about it or explain details. Ok?  And then, would you say this? *(pointing the error correction on board)*  “He is a very famous artist.”  No. He is not famous at the time. (*write ‘x’)*  “He is my brother.”  Not really. It wouldn’t look professional.  (*write ‘x’)*  “He is very talented and unique.”  Well, this would be ok since he thinks so. (*write ‘o’)* You may add “in my opinion.” Here.  Now we have 13 people, which is a prime number. So who got the red clip?  Congratulations. You are doing the demonstration to the class. Please come up.  Now, don’t fear. Just give it a try. You have 1 minute to convince these people to buy the painting.  Good job! See how it works? So let’s get into your new groups. Yellow here, green here, and blue over there. (To the student with black color) You may join the blue team for this.  So you will be Theo when your painting is on the table, ok? You each will have 1 minute to speak as Theo. After 1 minute, you’ll hear this. *(Ring the alarm)* Then rotate this way. How long are you being Theo?  Let’s get started!  *(Monitor discreetly, check time and play set for the alarm every 1 minute)* |
| **Notes:** | | | |
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| **Post Task:** | | | |
| **Aims:** | | | **Materials:** |
| **Time** | **Set Up** | **Student** | **Teacher** |
| 5 min. | Whole Class | *Ss answer*  *Ss answer*  *Ss answer*  *Ss answer* | Sorry that we didn’t have much time and it has been a little tight, but thank you all for your participation, you did a wonderful job.  Now, who made you think you should really buy this painting? Can you pick your best Theo from your group?  What did s/he say that was interesting?  *(Make error corrections if there have been any during the activity – I’ve heard some of you say… )*  Good. I hope you enjoyed the class. Let’s see if you have learned something today.  Who is Theo?  And why is he important in the history of art?  *(If there is time, explain that besides being known for Vincent Van Gogh’s brother, he also played a vital role in the introduction of contemporary Dutch and French art to the public)*  What have we learned through Vincent Van Gogh’s letter?  Good. I hope it was enjoyable going through some of the most famous paintings in history.  You have homework, which is to write a reply to Vincent, so you’re still Theo here, and you will tell him that you’ve tried to sell his painting today, which probably didn’t work, so what you think about it.  Ok. That’s it for today. Thanks and have a wonderful day! |
| **Notes:** | | | |

*691*

*To Theo van Gogh. Arles, on or about Saturday, 29 September 1888*

My dear Theo,

Thank you very much for your letter and for the 50-franc note it contained. It’s not a rosy prospect that the pains in your leg have come back – my God – it should have to be possible for you to live in the south as well, because I always think that what we need is sunshine and fine weather and blue air as the most dependable remedy. The weather’s still fine here, and if it was always like that it would be better than the painters’ paradise, it would be Japan altogether. How I think of you and of Gauguin and Bernard, everywhere and at all times! It’s so beautiful, and I’d so much like to see everyone over here.

Included herewith little croquis of a square no.30 canvas – the starry sky at last, actually painted at night, under a gas lamp. The sky is green-blue, the water is royal blue, the fields are mauve. The town is blue and violet. The gaslight is yellow, and its reflections are red gold and go right down to green bronze. Against the green-blue field of the sky the Great Bear has a green and pink sparkle whose discreet paleness contrasts with the harsh gold of the gaslight. Two small coloured figures of lovers in the foreground.

…

Good handshake and more soon, and thank you very much, and I hope your pains won’t last. Have you seen a doctor again? Look after yourself, because physical pain is so annoying.

Ever yours,   
Vincent

*705*

*To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Tuesday, 16 October 1888*

My dear Theo,

At last I’m sending you a little croquis to give you at least an idea of the direction the work is taking. Because today I’ve gone back to it. My eyes are still tired, but anyway I had a new idea in mind, and here’s the croquis of it. No. 30 canvas once again.

This time it’s simply my bedroom, but the colour has to do the job here, and through its being simplified by giving a grander style to things, to be suggestive here of rest or of sleep in general. In short, looking at the painting should rest the mind, or rather, the imagination.

The walls are of a pale violet. The floor — is of red tiles. The bedstead and the chairs are fresh butter yellow. The sheet and the pillows very bright lemon green. The bedspread scarlet red. The window green. The dressing table orange, the basin blue. The doors lilac.

And that’s all — nothing in this bedroom, with its shutters closed. The solidity of the furniture should also now express unshakeable repose. Portraits on the wall, and a mirror and a hand-towel and some clothes. The frame — as there’s no white in the painting — will be white.

This to take my revenge for the enforced rest that I was obliged to take.

I’ll work on it again all day tomorrow, but you can see how simple the idea is. The shadows and cast shadows are removed; it’s coloured in flat, plain tints like Japanese prints.

I won’t write to you at length, because I’m going to start very early tomorrow with the fresh morning light, to finish my canvas.

How are your pains? Don’t forget to give me news about them. I hope you’ll write in the next few days. One day I’ll do you some croquis of the other rooms as well.

I shake your hand firmly.

Ever yours,  
Vincent

*877*

*To Theo van Gogh. Auvers-sur-Oise, Tuesday, 3 June 1890*

My dear Theo,

For several days now I’d have liked to write to you with a rested mind, but have been absorbed in work. This morning your letter arrives, for which I thank you and for the 50-franc note it contained. Yes, I think that it would be good for many reasons that we were all together again here for a week of your holidays, if longer isn’t possible. I often think of you, Jo and the little one, and I see that the children here look well in the healthy fresh air. And yet it’s difficult enough to raise them, even here, all the more is it rather terrible sometimes to keep them safe and sound in Paris on a fourth floor. But anyway, one must take things as they are.

Mr. Gachet says that father and mother must feed themselves quite naturally, he talks of taking 2 litres of beer a day &c., in those amounts. But you’ll certainly enjoy furthering your acquaintance with him, and he’s already counting on it, speaks of it every time I see him, that you’ll all come. He certainly appears to me as ill and confused as you or I, and he’s older and a few years ago he lost his wife, but he’s very much a doctor, and his profession and his faith keep him going however. We’re already firm friends, and by chance he also knew Bruyas of Montpellier and has the same ideas on him as I have, that he’s someone important in the history of modern art. I’m working on his portrait the head with a white cap, very fair, very light, the hands also in light carnation, a blue frock coat and a cobalt blue background, leaning on a red table on which are a yellow book and a foxglove plant with purple flowers. It’s in the same sentiment as the portrait of myself that I took when I left for here.

…

I hope that the little one will continue to be well, and you two also until we see each other again, more soon, I shake your hand firmly.

Vincent

*676*

*To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Saturday, 8 September 1888*

My dear Theo,

Thank you a thousand times for your kind letter and the 300 francs it contained1 — after some weeks of worries I’ve just had a much better one. And just as worries don’t come singly, nor do joys, either. Because actually, always bowed down under this money problem with lodging-house keepers, I put up with it cheerfully. I’d given a piece of my mind to the said lodging-house keeper,2 who isn’t a bad man after all, and I’d told him that to get my own back on him for having paid him so much money for nothing, I’d paint his whole filthy old place as a way of getting my money back.

…

The room is blood-red and dull yellow, a green billiard table in the centre, lemon yellow lamps with an orange and green glow. Everywhere it’s a battle and an antithesis of the most different greens and reds; in the characters of the sleeping ruffians, small in the empty, high6 room, some purple and blue. The blood-red and the yellow-green of the billiard table, for example, contrast with the little bit of delicate Louis XV green of the counter, where there’s a pink bouquet.

The white clothes of the owner, watching over things from a corner in this furnace, become lemon yellow, pale luminous green.

I’m making a drawing of it in watercolour tones to send you tomorrow, to give you an idea of it.

So many thanks and good handshake; till tomorrow.

Ever yours,  
Vincent