



INTRODUCING VINCENT VAN GOGH

Dutch 1853-1890 (GOE)

BEGINNING LEVEL

PROPS

AUDIO: Music - Late 1800s

CARD: Artist Name – Date

DRESS-UP: Straw Hat with Candles, Painter's Smock, Palette, Paintbrush, and Easel

PRINT – Large Van Gogh Poster

VOCABULARY

Self-Portrait, Brushstrokes, Background, Texture, Spiral

SLIDES

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Artist Name/Date | 8. <i>The Starry Night</i> |
| 2. Self-Portrait | 9. Close-Up: <i>Starry Night</i> |
| 3. Close-up: Self-Portrait | 10. <i>Peach Trees in Bloom</i> |
| 4. Painting Sunflowers | 11. Close-up: <i>Peach Trees</i> |
| 5. Sunflowers in a Vase | 12. Self-Portrait with Straw Hat |
| 6. Close-up: Sunflowers | 13. <i>The Red Vineyard</i> |
| 7. Photo of Night Sky | 14. Self-Portrait at Easel/Vocabulary |

1. SLIDE – ARTIST NAME/DATE

MOTIVATION

Today our famous artist's name is Vincent van Gogh. I need a volunteer to be our pretend Vincent van Gogh today. This is your chance to be a famous artist! (SELECT CHILD TO DRESS IN PAINTER'S SMOCK, HOLD PALETTE AND BRUSH) Vincent, are you ready? We are going to show some of your art and tell about your life. We will discover what made you such an outstanding artist. Is that all right with you? One more thing -- Vincent van Gogh liked to paint at night, and because there was no electricity, he wore a hat with lighted candles on it. (PLACE HAT WITH CANDLES ON CHILD) Passersby would have to tell him when his hat was going to catch on fire!

We will let you paint while we show some of the paintings that made you famous. (CHILD SHOWS FACES VAN GOGH PRINT AND PRETENDS TO PAINT) Let's take a look at a self-portrait of the real Vincent van Gogh. Do you think he will look like our Vincent van Gogh?

DEVELOPMENT

2. SLIDE – SELF-PORTRAIT

Let's look closely at this picture of van Gogh. How do you think an artist paints a picture of himself? (MIRROR, PHOTO, WHAT HE THINKS HE LOOKS LIKE) An art word for an artist painting himself is SELF-PORTRAIT. Have you ever tried a self-portrait? Did it look like you?

Do you think van Gogh looks like an older man in this painting? (YES) When he painted the picture he was about your parent's age. Look closely at his face. All those lines you see are brushstrokes. He wasn't old enough for all those lines to be wrinkles. Once, artists had been proud to hide their brushstrokes. They tried to make their work look smooth without any sign of BRUSHSTROKES. But Vincent van Gogh was interested in how we see color. He began to paint so that each stroke of color showed up. Let's take a closer look.

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3. SLIDE – CLOSE-UP: SELF PORTRAIT

Do you see a lot of dabs, dots, and dashes of color? (YES) Look at the space behind the head. That part of the painting is called the **BACKGROUND**. He even painted this area with lots of different colors. (TURN TO CHILD) Van Gogh, show us your palette. Instead of mixing colors on his palette, van Gogh dipped his brush in the color, put it on the canvas, and let it stay that way. He did not make it smooth.

What word would you use to describe how van Gogh is feeling in this self-portrait? (SAD, UNHAPPY, TIRED, RESTLESS) Vincent van Gogh wanted his brushstrokes to show feelings. Do you think these brushstrokes in his self-portrait showed feelings? (YES) Vincent was lonely, because he did not have any friends. He also was upset, because he could not sell any of his paintings on which he worked so long and hard. He seemed all mixed up in his feelings about being an artist. He loved his art, but no one else seemed to think he was a good artist, except his brother.

What do you think an artist does to make his home prettier when expecting company? (CLEANS IT, ARRANGES FLOWERS, HANGS HIS PICTURES) This is how Vincent van Gogh made his guest feel welcome.

4. SLIDE – PAINTING SUNFLOWERS

Van Gogh had met another artist he liked very much. His name was Paul Gauguin (go-GAN) and he was coming for a visit. To please his guest, van Gogh filled his house with pictures of sunflowers he had painted. Does this painting look cheerful and happy to you? That's how Vincent wanted Paul to feel when he entered his home. Yellow was van Gogh's favorite color. Is yellow a favorite color of yours?

5. SLIDE – SUNFLOWERS IN A VASE

6. SLIDE – CLOSE-UP: SUNFLOWERS

If you touched these sunflowers, how would they feel? (SOFT, MOIST, ALIVE) Would the round flowers feel the same way as the spidery flowers? (NO, POINTY, STIFF, BRISTLY) How would the vase feel? (SMOOTH) All those words you just gave me are **TEXTURE** words - smooth, prickly, soft. They all describe how something feels. Since this is a painting, we can't feel the flowers with our fingers, but we can "feel" the texture with our eyes. Texture was a very important part of all of van Gogh's painting. Van Gogh used texture for the parts he wanted you to look at first.

Have you noticed where the artist signed his name? (ON VASE) Most artists sign their names in the corners of their paintings, but Vincent chose a bolder spot.

7. SLIDE – PHOTO OF NIGHT SKY

Do you like to look at the stars at night? Before you go to bed, you may open the window and look up at the stars. How still they seem, shining way up high in the sky. Yet those same stars, which seem to shine so calmly way up there, are probably great suns whirling in space.

Scientists know this. Our artist, van Gogh, did not have to know science to be able to feel the attraction. One night, Vincent, lying sick in a hospital, looked out at the stars. He felt the energy, the force of the seemingly still night. He felt the power of the universe. He painted what he felt with wildly swirling brush strokes. Would you like to see the painting van Gogh made that night?

8. SLIDE – THE STARRY NIGHT

9. SLIDE – CLOSE UP: STARRY NIGHT

Do you feel the energy in this painting? Does it seem to move? Notice the **SPIRALS**. A spiral is a circle that keeps on going around and around until it sweeps away. Let's make a spiral with our

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hands. We start by pointing to a make-believe dot in the center of the sky and start a circle around the dot with our moving finger, but our circle won't close. (DEMONSTRATE) It will keep on going around getting bigger and bigger until we sweep away. You showed great spirals with lots of movement, like the spirals we saw in *The Starry Night*.

(TURN TO CHILD PORTRAYING ARTIST) Van Gogh, do you like this painting of *The Starry Night*? This was a favorite of the real Vincent van Gogh!

10. SLIDE – PEACH TREES IN BLOOM

Do you see a lot of texture in this painting? (YES) Do van Gogh's brushstrokes go in many different directions? (YES) Do you see brushstrokes in the sky that look like dots and dashes? (YES) This painting is titled *Peach Trees in Bloom*. Have you ever seen a fruit tree in bloom?

Give me some texture words to describe how the peach blossoms would feel if you could touch them. (SOFT, LIGHT, THIN, DELICATE, WET) Very good! Now look at the fence in front of the trees, and give me a word to describe how it would feel if you touched it. (STIFF, HARD, ROUGH) Let's take a really close-up look at the trees and fence to see if our texture words were right.

11. SLIDE – CLOSE-UP: PEACH TREES

Did your texture words match what you see now? Look at how he used thick white paint to show the soft white flowers. Notice the fence. Did he use more than one color? (YES) He used brushstrokes of several colors to show us a fence that has been out in the sun, wind and rain for a long time, so it would be very rough if we could touch it. But van Gogh knew our eyes could tell texture without our hands feeling it.

12. SLIDE – SELF PORTRAIT WITH STRAW HAT

Van Gogh painted this picture near the end of his life. He lived to be only 37 years old and only painted for 10 years. But during those ten years he painted all the time, even all night wearing his special hat! So in those ten years he painted and drew almost 1700 works of art. That means Vincent finished about one painting every other day for ten years! Do you think his paintings were well liked? During his lifetime he only sold one painting for about \$80.00. All of his popularity came after he died, so he never was able to enjoy it. Would you like to see the only painting he sold?

13. SLIDE – THE RED VINEYARD

These are workers picking grapes in the field. What bright colors do you notice? (RED, ORANGE, YELLOW) What time of year do we see those colors? (AUTUMN, FALL) That's right! Van Gogh used the colors of changing leaves to paint a sunny, autumn day.

14. SLIDE – SELF PORTRAIT AT EASEL/VOCABULARY

Let's all pretend to be at our easels like we see Vincent here. Pick up your pretend paintbrushes (DEMONSTRATE) and paint a swirling sky with short dots and dashes of paint. Do you think your *Starry Night* would look like the painting our pretend Vincent has been working on today?

CONCLUSION

(TURN TO CHILD PORTRAYING ARTIST) Vincent, I know you have been busy painting your masterpiece for us. Please show us your painting. ("*THE STARRY NIGHT*" BY VAN GOGH ON EASEL) Do you like this painting by van Gogh? (RAISE HANDS) Did you use a lot of paint? Vincent, to give the painting texture? (YES) Also, did your brushstrokes give the painting texture? (YES)

Thank you very much Vincent van Gogh! I can see why you are a master artist! Let's give our pretend van Gogh a round of applause for helping us meet the real Vincent today in this special way.