VINCENT VAN GOGH

Lesson For Ages 5 - 7
Step 1 - Introducing the Master Artist: Slideshow Guide

MOTIVATION

BEGIN READING HERE

Today's famous artist's name is Vincent Van Gogh. I need your help to be our pretend Vincent Van Gogh today. This is your chance to be a famous artist! (OPTIONAL: DRESS CHILD IN BEARD, HOLD BRUSH) Vincent, are you ready? We are going to see some of your art and learn 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. (OPTIONAL: PLACE HAT ON CHILD) Passersby would have to tell him when his hat was going to catch on fire!

Click Start Lesson To Begin

1. 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) Actually, when he painted this he was only about 30 years old. Look closely at his face. All those lines you see are brushstrokes. He wasn't old enough for all those lines to be wrinkles. At one time, artists were 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.

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. 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 show 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 guests feel welcome.

2. SUNFLOWERS IN A VASE

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?

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.

Do you like to look at the stars at night? 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 great suns whirling in space. Our artist, Van Gogh, did not have to know astronomy to be able to feel the action. One night, lying sick in a hospital, Vincent looked out at the stars and felt the energy and 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? - Click Next To Change Slide
3. 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 hands. We start by pointing to a make-believe dot in the center of the sky and start a circle around that 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 made great spirals with lots of movement, like those we saw in Starry Night.

Do you like this painting of *The Starry Night*? This was a favorite of the real Vincent Van Gogh! – **Click Next To Change Slide**

4. 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.

**Click Next To Change Slide**

5. 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. It would be very rough if we could touch it. Van Gogh knew our eyes could tell texture without our hands feeling it.

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 1,700 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. All of his popularity came after he died, so he was never able to enjoy it. Would you like to see the only painting he ever sold?

**Click Next To Change Slide**
6. 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.

Click Next To Finish Lesson

Did you enjoy learning about our Master Artist? Now it’s time to practice the techniques you will use in your art activity.

to exit this unit click Back To Units
Step 2 - Learning From: Worksheets

Drawing Textures

When you draw texture, you show what things feel like.

Put texture on the shapes below. Make the texture show the meaning of the word under each shape.

- Thorny
- Scaly
- Smooth
- Hairy
- Cracked
Drawing Textures

Those animals are missing texture on their bodies. Can you give them the texture they need? Copy the texture from the box onto each animal.
Van Goghs Texture

Van Gogh used lines of many colors to make his paintings seem alive.

First color the shape.

Then draw a broken line around the shape. Make it as you can to the shape without touching it.

Draw a shape in the box below. Outline your shape again and again with many colors until your lines bump into the frame.
The last few pages of this section contain the Art Activity for Vincent Van Gogh’s Starry Night. This step-by-step outline will be a guide for instructing your child(ren) through the activity.

The parent/teacher should review all steps necessary to complete this project before beginning any work.

Cut out the Artist Profile Slip below and attach it to the back

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**Vincent van Gogh**

*(van-GOE) - Dutch (1853-1890)*

The results of Van Gogh’s unhappy and tragic life are beautiful, expressive paintings of a world that did not accept or understand him.

**ART ACTIVITY EMPHASIS:** Texture  
**MEDIA:** Oil Pastel on black construction paper.

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Step 3 - Working With: Art Activity Instructions

ARTIST
Vincent Van Gogh *(GOE)*
(1853-1890) Dutch

VOCABULARY
Texture, spiral, broken line, horizon line

ART ELEMENTS
Texture

VISUALS
Print: The Starry Night (page xxv)

MEDIA
Oil Pastels

SUGGESTED MUSIC
"Vincent" by Don McLean
or Music of the 1800’s

EMPHASIS
Van Gogh’s strokes of colored texture

MATERIALS FOR INSTRUCTOR AND CHILDREN
One 9” x 12” black construction paper
One sheet of newsprint paper (preferably 9” x 12”)
One paper towel *(for wiping fingers)*
Artist Profile Slip (page 23)
One box of oil pastels (broken and peeled work best!)
Glue

PREPARATION

Place the Van Gogh print where it can be easily seen. Construct an example to become familiar with the procedure. Place your 9” x 12” black demo paper where you can work on it and where students can see it. Have your oil pastels close by.

SET-UP [ 5 minutes ]

Distribute the following materials to each child:
SUPPLIES: Oil pastels
PAPER: One black 9” x 12” construction paper, one sheet of newsprint, one paper towel, and the artist profile slip.

ORIENTATION [ 5 minutes ]

Texture is how something feels when we touch it. There is texture we can feel, such as how our hair feels (SOFT) and how the bottom of our shoe feels (ROUGH). In art there is texture we can see with our eyes. Do you remember the name of the artist who used texture in this painting, The Starry Night? (VAN GOGH) How did he make the stars swirl through the sky?
VINCENT VAN GOGH – AGES 5 – 7

(WITH TEXTURE AND BRUSH STROKES) What do you think the weather was like on that night? (CLEAR AND WINDY) What kinds of colors did Van Gogh use to make it seem like night? (COOL AND DARK WITH BRIGHT YELLOW STARS) Let’s get ready to use texture to make our starry night just like Van Gogh’s.

DEMONSTRATION AND ACTIVITY

ORGANIZE YOUR WORK AREA [ 3 minutes ]

1. Put your black paper horizontally in the middle of your work space.
2. Open your oil pastels and put them beside the black paper.
3. Put your artist profile slip and paper towel at the top corner of your work area.
4. Put your newsprint on top of your black paper.

DRAWING WITH OIL PASTELS [ 3 minutes ]

How are pastels different from crayons? (SOFTER, BRIGHTER, OIL BASED INSTEAD OF WAX; THEY SMELL OF OIL; THEY ARE MESSIER)
1. Roll up your sleeves.
2. Peeled and broken pastels will work the best.
3. As you use the pastels, put them back in the box, not on the desk. Put one color per row.
4. Wipe your fingers on your paper towel if your hands get messy.
5. When you are done put all the pastels flat in the box, one color per row, before you close the lid.

PRACTICING A BROKEN LINE SPIRAL [ 7 minutes ]

Demonstrate the three lines and let the children practice the lines on their newsprint. Children can choose any color pastel.
1. Let’s first try a circular line that connects and becomes a shape. What shape is it? (A CIRCLE) Is that a closed line or an open line? (CLOSED)
2. Now let’s try a line that starts at the center and circles out… What do we call this type of line? (A SPIRAL) Is it open or closed? (OPEN)
3. Let’s try a spiral starting out from the center. Each time we will make a short stroke and pick up our pastel, make a small space, and start again. Each time we will go around at least twice, and then change colors. Is this line open or closed? (OPEN. IT IS A BROKEN LINE SPIRAL.)
4. What happens if we go around once and stop? (IT LOOKS CLOSED!) Now set the newsprint aside.

DRAWING A HORIZON LINE OF HILLS [ 5 minutes ]

Teacher should demonstrate with a light pastel for visibility.
1. Have the black paper centered horizontally in front of you.
2. Using your black pastel, measure one hand’s width up from the bottom of the paper and put a small mark. We want to save a lot of sky area for our starry night.
3. Starting at the mark, we will now draw an interesting horizon line that looks like low, gently curving hills. Let your line wave and curve.

**DRAWING THE SPIRAL STAR IN THE TEXTURED SKY [ 15 minutes ]**

(Depending on ability, one star works well for ages 5 and 6, and one to three stars for ages 7 and higher.)

1. Using a white or yellow pastel, put 1 to 3 dots in the sky. (Not too close together or too close to the edge of the paper or hills.)
2. Use any color to begin.
3. Start a broken line spiraling out from your center dot.
4. When you change colors go around at least twice to keep it open.
5. Keep the lines close together.
6. Use lots of different colors and use lots of pressure to keep your colors very bright.
7. Work out to the edges of the paper and the line of the hills.
8. When a line bumps into the line of the hills, another star pattern or the edge of the paper, you need to jump, imagine how it would continue, and then start it again.

**Music works well now.**

**DRAWING THE HILLS WITH ANOTHER TEXTURE TECHNIQUE [ 5 minutes ]**

(Demonstrate and let the children practice this technique on their newsprint. Pastels must be peeled and broken.)

1. Pinch a short piece of oil pastel between your thumb and first two fingers, to expose the long, vertical side of the pastel.
2. Using the side of the pastel with a lot of pressure, pull a line of color following your horizon line.
3. Fill the hills with interesting lines that wave and move. Start on one side of the paper and go across to the other side horizontally.
4. Overlap slightly, and try not to go over your lines more than once.
MOUNTING THE ARTIST PROFILE SLIP [2 minutes]

(Profile slips give a brief description of the artist, the technique, and the media used in the art activity. They should be mounted on the back of each art project after it is completed.)

1. Using glue, mount the profile slip on the back of your artwork.
2. Encourage children to discuss their artwork with others using this artist slip of information.

I see very beautiful starry nights! The stars are shimmering with your wonderful texture. Pick up your artwork and let’s make the stars shimmer even more (Demonstrate slightly moving paper). What magnificent movement you have created with your colors and texture!

This Concludes The Vincent Van Gogh Unit.