

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 which you can choose from depending on the length of your class. However, these are just suggestions and there are plenty of 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

BE AN ART CRITIC

1. Use Google Images to bring up *No. 14* by Mark Rothko, *The Anatomy Lesson* 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 colours in the painting are important? If so, what do you think the colours 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 the Be an art critic worksheet 1 and ask the 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 the 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 lots 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 language box 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 up 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 on 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 that you now want the students to work in pairs and ask each other questions about their own bedrooms. Write the following prompts on the board.

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

Focus on the text prompts. Explain that they are designed to help the students make questions. Demonstrate the activity by encouraging the 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 it in turns to read out their sentences.

5. Can the students deduce anything about their partner from the information they have about their rooms? For example, *My partner is a tidy 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 towards **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.
Colour here is used to express **feelings**.



Be an art critic worksheet 1

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

This painting symbolizes the artist's attitude towards _____.
 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 _____.



LANGUAGE BOX



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
The lovers
Woman in blue

