
Looking at Van Gogh

Van
Gogh
Museum
Amsterdam

Town and country

Welcome to the Van Gogh Museum! Learn all about Vincent van Gogh's work with this guide. Form your own, personal opinion of his paintings. Make use of what you see, what you *know*, and what you can *find out*.

Vincent mostly painted subjects from his own surroundings. He lived in various places. That offered him lots of cityscapes and village scenes, where town and country took centre stage.



1 Cityscape

Look for a cityscape of Paris or Arles. Which did you choose?

| |
|-------------|
| Title |
| Year |
| Place |

2 People?

A Imagine that you have to describe this cityscape to someone who can't see it. Write down what you would say.

In this cityscape

.....

B Are there people visible in your cityscape?

Yes No

C Why do you think Vincent painted people in this cityscape?

Because

.....

3 Striking?

A Vincent didn't always choose beautiful, important buildings. Absolutely not. He mostly painted the messy urban fringes. In your painting too?

Yes No

B If you were to make a cityscape, what would you paint?

.....

.....

4 High or low?

A Did Vincent paint this cityscape from a high or low point of view?

- The point of view is high (bird's eye view).
- The point of view is low (frog perspective).

B What effect does his viewpoint have on the painting's composition*?

.....

.....

.....



* Composition: the way objects are placed in the image; the arrangement.

5 Village scene

Now choose a painting of the countryside with one or more buildings in it. Which painting did you choose?

| |
|-------------|
| Title |
| Year |
| Place |

6 What do you see?

A How many buildings do you see in the painting?
What are they for (home, barn, church)?

I count buildings. They are for

.....

B Do you see something particular or strange in the landscape?

I see

.....

C Is there anything you would add or take away?
What and why?

.....

.....

7 City or country?

A Look at the proportion of buildings to landscape.
Is this painting more about buildings or about landscape?

This painting is about **the buildings / the landscape**.

B Why?

Because

.....

8 Mood

A In his paintings, Vincent often exaggerated the things he saw. By using bright colours, for example, or making them darker than they really were. That gave his paintings a certain atmosphere. What kind of mood does this painting suggest to you?

Anxiety Irritation Dreaminess

Happiness Sorrow Energy

Fury Jealousy Amazement

Other (please specify)

B Why?

Because

.....

9 Special Effects

What effects has Vincent used to create mood in the painting? Cross out the ones you don't agree with:

Extra dark / extra bright colours

Lots of / not many different colours

Lots of / not much contrast between light and dark

Brushstrokes in **every direction / one direction**

