**UNIT 4: VINCENT VAN GOGH**

***Worn Out,*** pencil on watercolour paper, 1882. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

He was born on 30 March 1853 and died on 29 July 1890. Vincent was a Dutch post-impressionist painter who is among the most famous and influential figures in the history of Western art. In just over a decade, he created about 2,100 artworks which include landscapes, still lives, portraits and self-portraits, and are characterized by bold colors and dramatic, impulsive and expressive brushwork that contributed to the foundations of modern art. He was not commercially successful, and his suicide at 37 came after years of mental illness and poverty.

Born into an upper-middle-class family, Van Gogh drew as a child and was serious, quiet and thoughtful. As a young man he worked as an art dealer, often travelling, but became depressed after he was transferred to London. His younger brother Theo supported him financially, and the two kept up a long correspondence by letter. In 1886, he moved to Paris, where he met members of the *avant-garde* (experimental and radical art). Van Gogh suffered from psychotic episodes and delusions and though he worried about his mental stability, he often neglected his physical health, did not eat properly and drank heavily. His friendship with Gauguin ended after a confrontation with a razor when, in a rage, he severed part of his own left ear. He spent time in psychiatric hospitals, including a period at Saint-Rémy. His depression continued and on 27 July 1890, Van Gogh shot himself in the chest with a revolver. He died from his injuries two days later.

Van Gogh was unsuccessful during his lifetime, and was considered a madman and a failure. He became famous after his suicide and is remembered as an important but tragic painter whose troubled personality typifies the romantic ideal of the tortured artist. Today, Van Gogh's works are among the world's most expensive paintings to have ever sold at auction, and his legacy is honored by a museum in his name, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

**VOCABULARY**

|  |
| --- |
| Pastor financially to aggravate Insight |
| Bring up in earnest approximately lucidity |
| Cultured provide notably recognition |
| Religious influence to dedicate to alternate |
| Profession unstable recognition comprehension |
| Introspective volatile accurately depression |
| temperament incident  Life-long emotional |
| Emotional to undermine to pursue argument |
| Self-confidence disastrous melancholic passionate |

**PHRASES**

|  |
| --- |
| A vast amount well known as on the contrary |
| was born in was absorbed in the effort to as well as |
| A keen mind was brought up in earnest |
| come to terms with dedicated herself to |

**WORD BUILDING EXERCISES**

**ADJECTIVES**

|  |
| --- |
| Religion – religious Appeal-appealing emotion-emotional difficulty-difficult |
| Youth-young favour – favourite disaster-disastrous |
| Culture-cultured Self-confidence-self-confident nerve-nervous |
| Art/artist- artistic society-social alternate-alternative |
| Depression-depressed fame-famous melancholy-melancholic |
| Recognition-recognisable expense-expensive passion-passionate |

**NOUNS**

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| --- |
| Describe-description recognize-recognition suggest-suggestion preserve-preservation  Paint-painter-painting teach-teacher discover-discovery support-support  Engage-engagement apply-application express-expression absorb- absorption  impress-impression-impressionism- impressionist meet-meeting  respond-response discuss-discussion combine-combination  decide-decision argue-argument imagine-imagination  explain-explanation dedicate-dedication establish-establishment  provide-provision |

**CAN YOU FIND THE ADVERBS IN THE TEXT?**

**Financially,** ….

**QUESTIONS**

1. Was he influenced by his father’s job? Par.1
2. Find all the adjectives in the text which can describe Vincent van Gogh.
3. What can someone understand by the “vast amount of letters they sent each other” about the painter? Par.2
4. His artistic intention was to describe what was in front of his eyes? Par.4/last lines
5. Why was he a “difficult companion”? par.5
6. How did he finally die? Par. 7
7. Can you imagine why he wrote so many letters to his family and friends?
8. Collect the most important information of his life to provide a summary of the text.