# **AE** Academic English UK

# TED-Ed Art Listening Worksheet
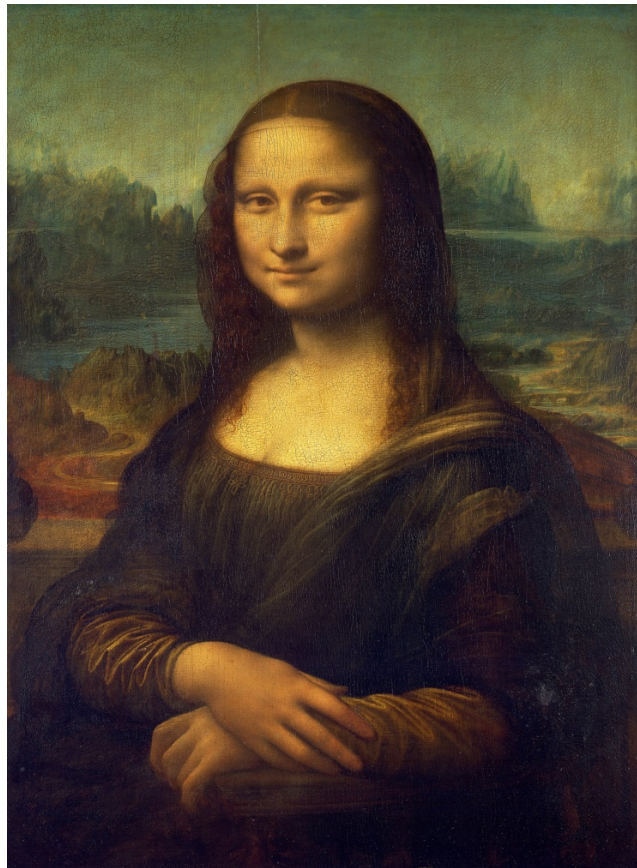


## The Mona Lisa (1519)
by Leonardo da Vinci

# Lecture Listening Comprehension

**Aim:** *To develop the students' ability to listen to a short lecture, to take notes, use those notes to answer a number of comprehension questions and then reflect on the lecture critically.*

**Lesson Time:** *Approximately 1:00 hour*

## Lead in

- Ask Students to read the 'title' & predict the content of the lecture.
- Ask students to write down key terms & language from the discussion.
- Feed in / check key vocabulary.

## Differentiation

### Challenging

1. Students listen once & take notes *(Use the blank note-taking pages or pages with section headings).*
2. Give 3 minutes to tidy notes.
3. Listen again & add to notes (use a different colour pen).
4. Distribute questions. Set 10 minutes to answer using their notes.
5. Feedback: Distribute or project ANSWERS.

### Medium

1. Students listen once & take notes *(Use the blank note-taking pages or pages with section headings).*
2. Distribute questions. Set 10 minutes to answer using their notes.
3. Listen again. Students answer the missed questions as they listen.
4. Give an extra 5 minutes to consolidate answers.
5. Feedback: Distribute or project ANSWERS.

### Easier

1. Distribute questions. Students have 5 minutes to read the questions.
2. Students listen & answer the questions.
3. Give 5 minutes to tidy answers.
4. Students listen again. Check answers & answer the missed questions.
5. Give 5 minutes to tidy answers.
6. Feedback: Distribute or project ANSWERS.

## Critical thinking questions

**Option 1:** Students individually reflect on the lecture by answering the questions, making notes of their responses, and writing a short critical response paragraph to submit for teacher or peer feedback.
**Option 2:** Students take part in a seminar by discussing the questions in small groups.
**Option 3:** Students prepare and deliver a short presentation on one of the questions.

**Full URL Link:** https://www.ted.com/talks/noah_charney_why_is_the_mona_lisa_so_famous

# Why is the Mona Lisa so famous?

[Listening Comprehension Questions]

**Author:** Noah Charney
**Subject:** Art
**Date:** January 2022
**Time:** 5:19
**Level:** ***** [B2/C1]
**Link:** https://www.ted.com/talks/noah_charney_why_is_the_mona_lisa_so_famous

Check these words before listening:

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## Key vocabulary

1. Dawn.
2. Hoisted.
3. Arguably.
4. Status.
5. Portrait.
6. Optic.
7. Pioneer.
8. Hazier.
9. Illusion.
10. Subtle.
11. Outstanding.
12. Canvas.
13. Display.
14. Biography.
15. Hypnotic.
16. Enviable.
17. Aristocracy.
18. Treacherous.
19. Gaze.
20. Embodiment.
21. Iconic.
22. Heist.
23. Interrogated.
24. Patriot.
25. Smuggled.
26. Mocked.

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**Note-taking sheet (blank) Page 1**

# Note-taking sheet (section headings) page 1

**1. The Theft of the *Mona Lisa***

**2. The Origins of the Painting**

**3. Leonardo's Artistic Techniques**

**4. Early Recognition and Royal Ownership**

**5. Growing Obsession in the 1800s**




**6. The Heist and Worldwide Fame**




**7. Modern Celebrity and Cultural Status**

# Why is the Mona Lisa so famous?

https://www.ted.com/talks/noah_charney_why_is_the_mona_lisa_so_famous

**Task**

Use your notes to answer the following questions using the sections headings to help you.

## 1. The Theft of the *Mona Lisa*

1.1. When and where did the theft of the *Mona Lisa* take place?

| i. | | ii. | |
|---|---|---|---|

1.2. What problems did Vincenzo Peruggia face as he tried to escape? Tick ✓ the statements that are true according to the talk.

| Statement | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| He was caught immediately by the police. | | |
| The museum exit was locked. | | |
| He heard someone coming as he tried to leave. | | |
| He left the painting behind to avoid getting caught. | | |

## 2. The Origins of the Painting

2.1. When and why did Leonardo da Vinci start to paint the *Mona Lisa*?

| i. | | ii. | |
|---|---|---|---|

2.2. What is known about the painting's completion?

| i. | | ii. | |
|---|---|---|---|

## 3. Leonardo's Artistic Techniques

3.1. What scientific field did Leonardo study that influenced his painting techniques?

| i. | |
|---|---|

3.2. What are the effects of two of the techniques that Leonardo used?

| | Technique | Effects |
|---|---|---|
| i. | Atmospheric perspective | |
| ii. | Sfumato | |

## 4. Early Recognition and Royal Ownership

4.1. How did the *Mona Lisa* gain early recognition? Complete the five gaps in the paragraph.
**ONE-word answers only.**

King François I _____ the *Mona Lisa* and put it on _____. Later, a popular _____ described the painting as a _____ imitation of life. It eventually became part of the French _____ Collection.

## 5. Growing Obsession in the 1800s

5.1. How did 19th-century writers describe the Mona Lisa? Match the writers with their statements.

| | Writer | | Statement |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. | Alfred Dumesnil | a. | Her mocking lips and gaze promising unknown pleasures. |
| ii. | Theophile Gautier | b. | The embodiment of timeless feminine beauty. |
| iii. | Walter Pater | c. | The Mona Lisa's smile imparted a treacherous attraction. |

| i. | | ii. | | iii. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

*End of page 1*

### 6. The Heist and Worldwide Fame

6.1. What events followed the theft of the *Mona Lisa*? Tick ✓ the statements that are true according to the talk.

| | Statement | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. | The theft made international headlines. | | |
| ii. | The police interviewed Pablo Picasso during the investigation. | | |
| iii. | The empty wall where the painting hung attracted large crowds. | | |
| iv. | The painting was returned the next day. | | |

### 7. Modern Celebrity and Cultural Status

7.1. What does the Mona Lisa represent in the modern era?

| | |
|---|---|
| i. | |
| ii. | |

### *That is the end of the listening comprehension task.*

### Critical Thinking Questions

These questions are designed to support seminar discussion, presentations or extended writing tasks. Ask your teacher what they would like you to do next as a follow activity.

| | Questions | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Why do you think the theft of the Mona Lisa had such a powerful effect on its fame?<br>→ *How might the painting's status be different today if it had never been stolen?* | |
| 2. | The speaker says that many factors beyond the painting itself contributed to its fame. Do you agree?<br>→ *Can you think of any other artworks or cultural objects that became famous for reasons other than their artistic quality?* | |
| 3. | Some 19th-century writers described the Mona Lisa using emotional or even erotic language. Why might that have influenced how people viewed the painting?<br>→ *Do you think modern media still shape how we interpret works of art? Why or why not?* | |
| 4. | The talk describes Leonardo's techniques in scientific and artistic terms. What does this suggest about the relationship between art and science in the Renaissance?<br>→ *Do you think this relationship still exists today? In what ways?* | |
| 5. | The speaker ends by saying the Mona Lisa is less about art and more about celebrity. What does this suggest about modern culture?<br>→ *Do you think it's possible to separate true artistic value from public attention or fame?* | |

# Why is the Mona Lisa so famous? *(KEY)*

## 1. The Theft of the *Mona Lisa*

1.1. When and where did the theft of the *Mona Lisa* take place?

| i. | *August 21ˢᵗ 1911* | ii. | *The Louvre* |
|---|---|---|---|

1.2. What problems did Vincenzo Peruggia face as he tried to escape? Tick ✓ the statements that are true according to the talk.

| Statement | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| He was caught immediately by the police. | | ✓ |
| The museum exit was locked. | ✓ | |
| He heard someone coming as he tried to leave. | ✓ | |
| He left the painting behind to avoid getting caught. | | ✓ |

## 2. The Origins of the Painting

2.1. When and why did Leonardo da Vinci start to paint the *Mona Lisa*?

| i. | *Around 1503* | ii. | *It was commissioned by a Florentine businessman.* |
|---|---|---|---|

2.2. What is known about the painting's completion?

| i. | *Leonardo worked on the Mona Lisa for over 10 years.* | ii. | *The painting was still unfinished when Leonardo died.* |
|---|---|---|---|

## 3. Leonardo's Artistic Techniques

3.1. What scientific field did Leonardo study that influenced his painting techniques?

| i. | *Human optics* |
|---|---|

3.2. What are the effects of two of the techniques that Leonardo used?

| | Technique | Effects |
|---|---|---|
| i. | Atmospheric perspective | *Creates illusion of depth / hazier background* |
| ii. | Sfumato | *Softens edges / subtle gradations between colours* |

## 4. Early Recognition and Royal Ownership

4.1. How did the *Mona Lisa* gain early recognition? Complete the five gaps in the paragraph. **ONE-word answers only.**

> King François I *purchased* the *Mona Lisa* and put it on *display*. Later, popular *biography* described the painting as a *hypnotic* imitation of life. It eventually became part of the French *Royal* Collection.

## 5. Growing Obsession in the 1800s

5.1. How did 19th-century writers describe the Mona Lisa? Match each writer with their statement.

| | Writer | | Statement |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. | Alfred Dumesnil | a. | Her mocking lips and gaze promising unknown pleasures. |
| ii. | Theophile Gautier | b. | The embodiment of timeless feminine beauty. |
| iii. | Walter Pater | c. | The Mona Lisa's smile imparted a treacherous attraction. |

| i. | *c* | ii. | *a* | iii. | *b* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

*End of page 1*

### 6. The Heist and Worldwide Fame

6.1. What events followed the theft of the *Mona Lisa*? Tick ✓ the statements that are true according to the talk.

|      | Statement                                                         | Yes | No |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| i.   | The theft made international headlines.                            | ✓   |     |
| ii.  | The police interviewed Pablo Picasso during the investigation.    | ✓   |     |
| iii. | The empty wall where the painting hung attracted large crowds.    | ✓   |     |
| iv.  | The painting was returned the next day.                           |     | ✓   |

### 7. Modern Celebrity and Cultural Status

7.1. What does the *Mona Lisa* represent in the modern era?

|      |                                                                       |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| i.   | *It has been the target of mockery, theft, and public obsession over time.* |
| ii.  | *It reflects how society creates and maintains celebrity.*            |