



Abstract Art



Reading to Writing Summary

EXAMPLE

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Teacher's Notes

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Instructions

Option 1 [Medium] **** [B2/C1]

1. Distribute the text a week /day before the test. Students read, check vocabulary & meanings.
2. Test day: distribute a **new copy of text** and the **summary question**.
3. Set 1 hour to read the text, take notes and write a one-paragraph summary of 200-250-words.
4. Feedback¹: take in and mark [\[use our correction code*\]](#).
5. Feedback²: distribute **completed outline & model answer**. Students compare with their own work.
6. Summary marking: **should contain at least 4 main ideas with support – see summary key points**.
7. Extra: **critical thinking questions / group discussion (30 minutes)**.

Option 2 [More challenging] **** [C1]

1. Set 1 hour to read the **text** and write a one-paragraph summary of 200-250-words.
3. Feedback¹: take in and mark [\[use our correction code*\]](#).
4. Feedback²: distribute **completed outline & model answer**. Students compare with their own work.
5. Summary marking: **should contain at least 4 main ideas with support – see summary key points**.
6. Extra: **critical thinking questions / group discussion (30 minutes)**.

Link for Additional Material

Correction code	www.academic-englishuk/error-correction
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Understanding Abstract Art

By A. Watson (2025) **EXAMPLE**

1. Abstract art is a style of visual art [redacted] reality. Instead, it uses shapes, colours, forms, and gestural marks to achieve its effect. Emerging in the early 20th [redacted] a radical break from traditional forms of art, such as realism or naturalism, where the goal was to create [redacted] (Chilvers, 2019).
2. [redacted] Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky. He believed that art should express the inner life of the artist and that colour and form could convey emotion in the same way music does (Kandinsky, 1912). [redacted] instead to capture spiritual or emotional truths. Around the same period, Dutch artist Piet Mondrian [redacted] Using grids of vertical and horizontal lines and primary colours, Mondrian reduced visual elements to their most basic forms, believing that this would [redacted] (Blotkamp, 2011).
3. Another significant figure in abstract art was [redacted] most famous work, *Black Square* (1915), challenged viewers to confront a canvas with no recognisable [redacted] to pure geometric form was a way of freeing art from the burden of representation and engaging directly [redacted] to distil visual language into its essential components, setting the stage for mid-century developments [redacted]
4. The rise of abstract art was not merely an aesthetic movement but also a reflection of changing [redacted] the world underwent rapid industrialisation, technological change, and political upheaval, [redacted] captured the complexity of modern life. Abstract art, with its emphasis on subjective experience and [redacted] visual language to express uncertainty, transformation, and freedom (Harrison and Wood, 2003). [redacted] conventions [redacted] art could be. Philosophers and theorists, too, began to consider abstraction as part of a broader cultural shift toward modernity, breaking with [redacted]
5. In the United States, abstract art reached new [redacted] of Abstract Expressionism. Artists like Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Willem de Kooning used scale, [redacted] the unconscious mind and emotional intensity. Pollock's drip painting technique, for example, [redacted] canvases laid on the floor. This method allowed him to engage directly with the medium and produce [redacted], and energy. Rothko, in contrast, used vast fields of colour to evoke deep emotional states, inviting viewers into a contemplative space. De Kooning's work combined abstraction with traces of [redacted]
6. Despite its popularity, abstract art has often divided opinion. Critics have sometimes dismissed it as [redacted] argue that its value lies in its ability to evoke personal interpretation and emotional response Unlike figurative art, [redacted] to participate actively in making meaning. The viewer's reaction becomes part of the artwork's experience, [redacted]. This openness [redacted] and public circles, where questions about artistic intention, technique, and value continue to surface (Corris, 2013).
7. Today, abstract art [redacted] installation, and performance. Contemporary artists build on the legacy of early abstract pioneers while experimenting with new

minimalist perception, identity, and the boundaries of visual language. As global communication and technology as a vital and adaptive form of creative expression. Many artists now explore issues such as abstract forms, connecting personal experience with global concerns (Elkins, 2020).

References

Blotkamp, C. (2011) *Mondrian: The Art of Destruction*. London: Reaktion Books.

Bowlit, J. E. (2021) New York: Thames & Hudson.

Chilvers, I. (2019) *The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*. 5th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

of Modernism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elkins, J. (2020) *What Painting Is: How to Think About Oil Painting Using the Language of Alchemy*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.

Harrison, C. and Wood, P. (Oxford: Blackwell.

Kandinsky, W. (1912) *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. Translated by M.T.H. Sadler. London: Tate Publishing.

New York: The Museum of Modern Art.

Summary: Key Points

Task: Take notes on the key points of the text.

1. Main idea:
Support:
2. Main idea:
Support:
3. Main idea:
Support:
4. Main idea:
Support:
5. Main idea:
Support:
6. Main idea:
Support:
7. Main Idea:

Summary: Key Points (Suggested Answers)

Task: Take notes on the key points of the text.

1. Main idea: Early development of abstract art
Support: • Early 20th century → [REDACTED] • Aim: non-representational, focus on shapes, colours, forms, gestures. • [REDACTED]
2. Main idea: Early pioneers
Support: • Kandinsky (Russian) → art [REDACTED] (Kandinsky, 1912). • Mondrian (Dutch) → neoplasticism: grids + primary colours; universal aesthetic order [REDACTED] • [REDACTED]
3. Main idea: Malevich & Suprematism
Support: • [REDACTED] • No recognisable imagery → pure geometric form. • [REDACTED] • Influenced later movements, especially mid-century developments.
4. Main idea: Cultural/philosophical context
Support: • Industrialisation, tech change, political upheaval → need for new art forms. • [REDACTED] (Harrison & Wood, 2003). • Philosophers/theorists: abstraction as cultural shift away from objectivity.
5. Main idea: Abstract Expressionism (US, mid-20thC)
Support: • [REDACTED] • Rothko → colour fields; deep emotion; contemplation. • De Kooning → [REDACTED]
6. Main idea: Criticism & interpretation
Support: • [REDACTED] • Supporters: value = personal meaning, emotional response. • [REDACTED] • Ongoing debates: intention, technique, value.
7. Main idea: Contemporary developments
• Abstract art evolves with digital, installation, performance. • [REDACTED] • Links to global concerns: environment, race, gender (Elkins, 2020). • [REDACTED]

Summary

Task: Write a 200-250-word summary on the key features of the text using your notes to help you.

Word Count: _____

Sample Summary for Comparison

EXAMPLE

Abstract art emerged in the early 20th century as a [redacted] direct representation in favour of shapes, colours, and forms. Pioneers such as Wassily Kandinsky [redacted], while Piet Mondrian developed neoplasticism, reducing art to grids and primary colours to [redacted] [redacted] eliminating imagery to focus on pure form and intuition, influencing later movements. The rise of [redacted] [redacted], and political upheaval. Artists sought new visual languages to capture the [redacted] and theorists framed abstraction as part of a wider move away from classical objectivity. In mid-20th-century America, [redacted]. Jackson Pollock's drip paintings conveyed energy and the unconscious, Mark Rothko's colour fields [redacted] [redacted] highlight tensions between control and spontaneity. Although critics dismissed abstract art as meaningless or inaccessible, supporters argued that its value lay in encouraging personal [redacted] Contemporary abstract art incorporates digital media, installation, and performance, addressing global issues such as identity, [redacted], abstraction remains a dynamic mode of artistic exploration and cultural expression.

Word count 222

⇒ How does your summary differ from the sample? Complete the table with the similarities and differences. Consider *coverage of main points, balance of ideas, conciseness, clarity and use of examples*.

	Summaries
Similarities	
Differences	

Critical Thinking Questions

i) What's the stance of the author? What is the evidence for this?

[2 points]

ii) Is this a ? Yes /no – why?

[2 points]

iii) Highlight four ideas in the text you would use for an essay titled: *Abstract art is sometimes criticised*
 _____ *what extent do you agree that its value lies in*
'personal interpretation'? Discuss with reference to specific examples.

[4 points]

iv) Highlight two or lack evidence.

[2 points]

Critical Thinking Questions Suggested Key for Comparison

i) What's the stance of the author? What is the evidence for this?

The author's stance is broadly supportive of abstract art as an important and evolving movement. The text highlights its role as a "radical break" from tradition and frames it as a meaningful response to modern social, political...

ALL ANSWERS INCLUDED IN PAID VERSION...

[2 points]