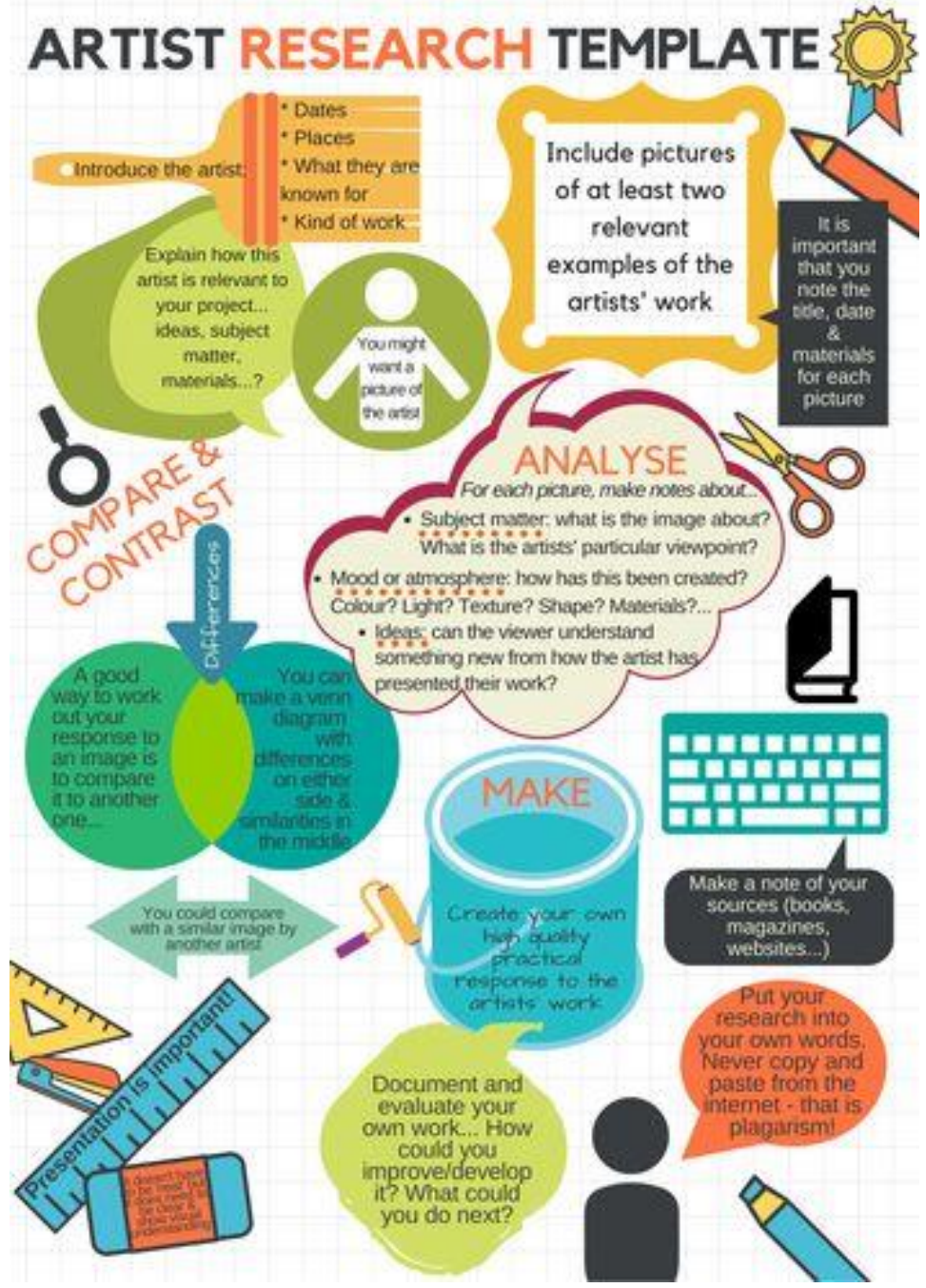


ARTIST RESEARCH TEMPLATE



Vincent Van Gogh – Still Life with Onions, Oil on Canvas, 1889.



Subject Matter: Obvious objects include onions, a wine bottle, a pipe, a letter, a book, and a candle, all arranged on a drawing board. The overall theme of what we see conveys a relaxed day at home or a sunny day off work, most likely in Van Gogh's own living room/kitchen. All man-made objects except for the natural onions. The objects could suggest that the artist is going to be cooking, or is having a relaxed day where he reads, write letters to his friends, while having some wine and smoking. The empty wine bottle could also suggest the artist has drunk too much and could be troubled.

Composition: Objects are arranged in a natural, randomly placed manner, and do not look deliberately positioned. Eye level view, makes us feel like we are sitting right at the table. Divided into foreground/midground/background with the wine bottle/letter in front, onions/book in middle, and the candle/kettle at back. Division of areas gives the painting more depth and dimension. The **Focal Point** of the painting is the onions, because they are in the centre, and placed on a white plate white catches our eye because it's so bright, and the rounded shape acts as a frame to the onions. The wine bottle at the front also acts as a pathway, pointing up towards the onions. Overall there is a subtle triangular shaped composition, due to the wine bottle and letter being left and right of the foreground, and the kettle being at the centre back. This shape leads our eye around the painting well.

Visual Elements: Colour – Primary red/yellow/blue= bright/childlike. Secondary green = contrast to red. Over-exaggerated vivid/garish colours. **Tone** – Very bright, looks like midday somewhere sunny, lots of highlights but very little shadows. Shadows are light blue rather than black to keep the tone bright. **Shape** – Mix of smooth curves and straight edges, providing contrast and interest. **Pattern** – Horizontal lines on table contrast vertical lines on back wall. Separates the areas and gives depth. **Texture** – Looks rough and risen, paint unblended and obvious brushstrokes present. Gives painting a busy/rushed feel.

Mood and Atmosphere: Bright Colours & Tones give happy/bright/relaxed mood, but possibly sad due to the over-exaggeration of colour/light. **Texture & Pattern** gives a busy/chaotic/overwhelming mood. **Subject Matter & Composition** can give a calm relaxed vibe, or a depressed vibe due to empty wine bottle/pipe. A total contrast in moods created by different elements - makes us feel conflicted about how Van Gogh really felt.

Media Handling/Technique: (See Pattern/Texture.) Oil paint is thick and highly pigmented, creating bright colours and rough textures. Style of using paint straight out the tube is called **Impasto**. Paint applied very fast, straight onto the canvas without being mixed. Brushstrokes are left unblended. Key characteristics of Van Gogh's later paintings when he was mentally ill. "Movement & Emotion" key to his signature **Post-Impressionist** style.

Elements of Art

Line



Line is a mark on a surface that describes a shape or outline. It can create texture and can be thick and thin. Types of line can include actual, implied, vertical, horizontal, diagonal and contour lines.

Shape



Shape is a 2-dimensional line with no form or thickness. Shapes are flat and can be grouped into two categories, geometric and organic.

Form



Form is a 3-dimensional object having volume and thickness. It is the illusion of a 3-D effect that can be implied with the use of light.

Value



Value is the degree of light and dark in a design. It is the contrast between black and white and all the tones in between. Value can be used with color as well as black and white.

Color



Color is made up of three properties: hue, value, and intensity. Hue is the name's color. Value is the hue's lightness and darkness (black and white added). Intensity is the quality of brightness and purity.

Space



Space is the area around, within, or between images or elements.

Texture



The surface quality of an object that we sense through touch. All objects have a physical texture. Artists can also convey texture visually in two dimensions.

SURREALISM

RENE Magritte

René Magritte, a 20th-century Belgian Surrealist, changes aspects of the world around him. His art is mostly based on memories, feelings, and dreams.

The Lovers
I think the painting is called "The Lovers" because it is exactly what the picture looks like. Two Lovers. I think the surrealist device is Juxtaposing.

The Unexpected Answer
I think the painting is called "The Unexpected Answer" because what had happened in the painting was unexpected, and the answer is unknown. The surrealist device is transformation.

The Postcard
I think the painting is called "The Postcard" because it looks as if the man is staring into a giant postcard with an apple as part of the drawing on the postcard. I think the surrealist device is evocation.

The False Mirror
I think this painting is called "The False Mirror" because when an image enters the pup the image is inverted. I think the surrealist device is Juxtaposing.

Time Transfixed
I think this painting is called "Time Transfixed" because the train's time and place had been switched. The surrealist device is dislocation.

A guide to writing Art criticism

General reaction

What is your first response to this work?
How does this make you feel?
What does it make you think?
What does it remind you of?

Now, consider how and where you saw the work.
Did you see the original on a gallery?
If so, then you can fully appreciate the scale, colour and textures.

Did you see a picture of it on the internet or in a book? If so you need to find out further information about the original, including dimensions and if an outdoor piece, the original setting.

Description

Thematic, Formal and Technical qualities

What images do you see?
What colours/forms/textures are there?
Are there any outstanding or unusual features you notice?
What else do you see?
How has the artist made use of light/dark areas, and/or rough or unusual textures?
How do you think this work was made?
What types of techniques can you see, such as brushstrokes/sculptural finish/photographic finish, etc?
What is the artists view point? What are your clues?

Formal relationship of Shapes and Images

What colours/shapes/textures/lines dominate the work? Why?
Are their significant negative areas/spaces in the work?
Is there a sense of movement? If so, what elements and or principles cause it?
Do you see contrast? What causes it?
If there are figures, where are they looking/facing?
Where does the focus lie in this work?
What causes you to look there?
Is there a single focus? Why/Why not?
What features cause us to see it that way?

Formal Characterization

What mood is presented? How are we meant to feel in the presence of this piece? Why?
What's the evidence?
Why are we meant to focus where we do?
Is this realistic? Formalistic? Expressive? Is this slick, aggressive, bold, intellectual, overpowering, timid, monumental, fluid, abstract, static, rhythmic, ...How/ Why? Whats the evidence?

Contextual Examination

When and where was the Art done?
What did the artist said about this piece of work? What did other critiques or artists say about it?
Was there anything happening in the artists life or in the society or the greater world around them that may have influenced their work?
What was the artists point or intention?
How does it reflect that place and that time?
What style is it considered to be?
Does it have, or ever had, a FUNCTIONAL or a RELIGIOUS purpose? If so, what?
What influenced its production?
What impact did the work had on work that came later on or in society in general?
What does the work tell us about the people who originally made it and used it?

Interpretation

What do you think this work means?
If the work is highly abstract, what does it remind you of?
What title would you give it if you were the artist, and what?

Evaluation

Have your perceptions/feelings about this work changed since you started critiquing it?if so, how?
Does the work exhibit a high degree of technical, compositional and/or conceptual skill?
Do you think this is an effective piece of work? Why/why not and what criteria do you base your answer on? (your answer could involve, skills, processes, expressive power, beauty and other qualities found in the work.