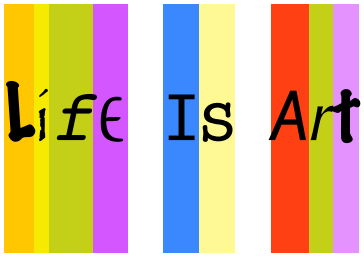
Easy Access English



Activity One – **Ask** and **answer** the questions with your partner.

- How do you define art?
- Do you own any art?
- Do you admire any particular artists?
- What is your favourite art form?
- Why do you think people like art?

Activity Two - ***Read*** the text

Art is all around us. With the clothes we wear, the way we decorate our houses, the way we design our gardens, the shoes we wear, the ties; when a man buys a neck tie he is making an aesthetic decision and so on and so on. And we can extend it to the whole of life and the whole of life, human life, is made more exciting by what we call art. Without art human life can very drab and in fact there are hardly any cultures in the world that don't have some form of artistic expression. All of these activities that human beings engage in, which we generally call 'the Arts', they are all to do with making life more exciting, more elaborate, more colourful, more extraordinary.

Most of us like to make our own bit of art. And that is when we pick up our cell phones or our cameras and take a snap. And we do that, when do we do that? When something is nice, something is memorable and we are very afraid of forgetting it. In other words, for me, art begins with the idea that there are things that we keep forgetting but want to hold on to. So what is it we are trying to hold on to? Partly, it's the look of our children when they're looking sweet or when we are in a beautiful place and we want to capture a feeling that's in that place etc. But we're very forgetful creatures. So what we like to keep around us are memorials to our best possibilities, people that we love the most, the countries that have tried to move us. And I think you could look at a lot of works of art as very sophisticated reminders of things that are quite simple but very important, like be kind, or don't lose hope, or remember that life is short, or don't forget me. These are the sorts of things that the great works of art, that we don't know by such simple language, but that's really what they're doing deep inside and I think it's good to know that when entering a museum or a gallery because museums and galleries are terribly unhelpful about telling us what's going on.

Questions:

1. Think about what you are wearing today.

2. Do you consider your outfit to be a piece of art? If so, why? If not, why not?

3. In which contexts do you encounter art on a daily basis?

4. What was the last photograph you took? Why did you take it?

5. In your opinion, what is the function of an art gallery?

Activity Three - **Descriptions** in English.

The use of adjectives is essential when trying to describe a noun or pronoun. Good writers and speakers are able to use adjectives to create clear, mental images for the reader or listener. Multiple adjectives can be used to give more detail to a description. Using more than three physically descriptive type adjectives in sequence to describe one noun or pronoun would sound a little awkward. When using multiple adjectives in a sequence, you must be aware of the correct adjective order.

The correct order of adjectives is listed below along with some examples for each category.

1. **Determiners** – a, an, the, my, your, several, etc.
2. **Observations** – lovely, boring, stimulating, etc.
3. **Size** – tiny, small, huge, etc.
4. **Shape** – round, square, rectangular, etc.
5. **Age** – old, new, ancient, etc.
6. **Color** – red, blue, green, etc.
7. **Origin** – British, American, Mexican, etc.
8. **Material** – gold, copper, silk, etc.
9. **Qualifier** – limiters for compound nouns.

Here are some examples:

The **multi-colored**, **shiny**, **wet** paint has made a **beautiful, arched** rainbow on the paper.



Three, **big**, **fat**, **black** flies buzz around the **large**, **clear**,**glass** jar with a **tiny**, **green** lizard in it.



An **electrifying** man with **big**,**jagged**, **white** bolts of lightning shooting from his fingertips.



Activity Four - Describe the following pictures using the orders for adjectives given above:









Activity Five - **Styles and movements in art.**

Let's test your general knowledge! You have two minutes, in teams to brainstorm as many artistic movements as possible and name some of the corresponding artists.Let's see who finds the most!

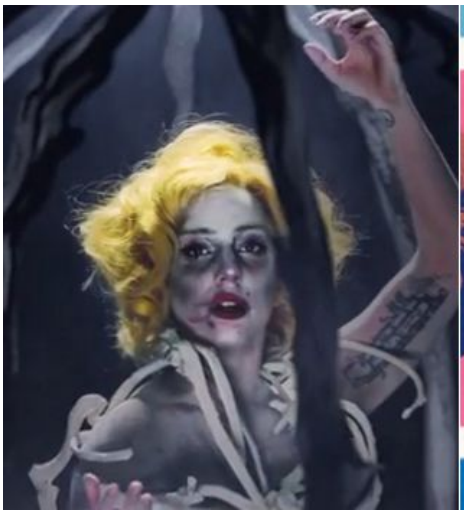
Activity Six - Compare the photos -do they look similar?



Lady Gaga 'Born This Way'



Francis Bacons' Self Portrait (1973)



Lady Gaga 'Applause'



Andy Warhol Marilyn Monroe Portrait

Activity Seven - Art References in Lady Gaga's work Watch the video and see how many art references you can find. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pco91kroVgQ

Activity Eight - Article (please do not read at home)

Let's read the article together (watch on the video projector)

http://www.out.com/entertainment/music/2013/08/20/art-history-guide-lady-gagas-applause-music-video?page=full

Activity Nine - Listen to the audio extract and answer the questions

What is art for? (BBC Radio 4 Broadcast 6/10/2013) http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03c44kv

Questions -

1. What is Desmond Morris's most recent book called?
2. What examples does Desmond Morris give of art being all around us?
3. What adjectives are used in this extract this extract to describe art?
4. For Alain de Botton what sort of memories does art hold on to?
5. What is the oldest piece of art known to man called? What is it? Where was it found?
6. For Alain de Botton what is the most exciting part of a museum visit?
7. Why does Alain de Botton think art is so therapeutic to our chaotic lives?
8. What did Desmond Morris do with the chimpanzee? What was remarkable about it?
9. What kind of people does Alain de Botton think are attracted to minimalist art and design?
10. Why are people attracted to minimalist art and design?

Activity Ten - Make some Art!

With your partner make some art - it could me a photograph composition, a life sized posing model, a sketch, modern classical or surreal... Prepare to present your artwork to the class and tell them what it all means!

Then we will have a class vote for the best artwork!!

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Optional Homework - listen to the rest of this recording while reading the transcript below.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03c44kv

(2:20:00- 2:28:17)

What is art for? Now there's a big question. And it's one being addressed by two books out this month by leading thinkers. Desmond Morris was one of the pioneers of popular science, his 1967 book "The Naked Ape" sold millions worldwide. And now he's followed it up with "The Artistic Ape" which examines the zoological explanations for artistic endeavour. Meanwhile the bestselling author, Alain De Botton has written a book called "Art as Therapy" a philosophers take on why art is important to us. We bought the two of the together. Desmond Morris first.

Desmond Morris: Art is all around us. With the clothes we wear, the way we decorate our houses, the way we design our gardens, the shoes we wear, the ties; when a man buys a neck tie he is making an aesthetic decision and so on and so on. And we can extend it to the whole of life and the whole of life, human life, is made more exciting by what we call art. Without art human life can very drab and in fact there are hardly any cultures in the world that don't have some form of artistic expression. All of these activities that human beings engage in, which we generally call 'the Arts', they are all to do with making life more exciting, more elaborate, more colourful, more extraordinary.

Alain de Botton: My starting point was the way that religions look at art. And what religions do is they see art as a support for their philosophy of life. So if you look at Christian art, which was after all was what art was in the West for a thousand years it's really all about giving life to the Christian philosophy of life. Now, once we do away with Christianity as we have done in the art establishment, what happens next? What is art supposed to be about? And I argue in this book that art should be about serving the needs of our psyches; that in a way theology used to be what art was about, now it should be psychology. So, beautiful works of art often give us a sense of hope, of possibility. We are as creatures, I hope I'm not being merely autobiographical, are prone to despair, prone to surrender, to lose confidence. Certain works of art, thinking of something like Matisse's 'La Ronde', an incredibly optimistic, joyful picture. But also work of art are a place that we go with our sadness.

DM: Alain talks about psychology, to me, in a sense you could argue that the human brain requires activity, it needs activity. And so when it gets beyond survival, beyond the basic survival needs, it has to entertain itself in some way and it does this with the Arts. This means involving oneself in exaggerations of nature. Art has a number of rules and the rules include things like, exaggerating proportions or size or number, purifying shapes, so art becomes an exaggeration of drab life. Shakespeare said that 'art allows us to take the unpleasantly mundane and make in remarkable and wonderful.'

A de B: Most of us like to make our own bit of art. And that is when we pick up our cell phones or our cameras and take a snap. And we do that, when do we do that? When something is nice, something is memorable and we are very afraid of forgetting it. In other words, for me, art begins with the idea that there are things that we keep forgetting but want to hold on to. So what is it we are trying to hold on to? Partly, it's the look of our children when they're looking sweet or when we are in a beautiful place and we want to capture a feeling that's in that place etc. But we're very forgetful creatures. So what we like to keep around us are memorials to our best possibilities, people that we love the most, the countries that have tried to move us. And I think you could look at a lot of works of art as very sophisticated reminders of things that are quite simple but very important, like be kind, or don't lose hope, or remember that life is short, or don't forget me. These are the sorts of things that the great works of art, that we don't know by such simple language, but that's really what they're doing deep inside and I think it's good to know that when

entering a museum or a gallery because museums and galleries are terribly unhelpful about telling us what's going on.

DM: I do agree. The one thing we do agree about is that…

A de B: (Surely there are more things that one.)

DM: Exactly, that the museum world is important but, it's only one of what I have identified as 9 different roles that art plays in our lives and that's just one of them.

A de B: And do you know that I've got seven. So I've got seven, and you've got nine,and that one of us is wrong and I don't know who.

DM: It's interesting we've come to the same basic thought which is that art isn't to be confined to 'art for art's sake' or to museums, is something much bigger and more important in life, that we agree about.

A de B: But I think many people leave museum visits slightly puzzled. And the nicest and most exciting part of any museum visit for most people is the gift shop! And the reason for that is that you can buy the postcard and integrate it into your daily life. That's what we naturally want to do, but the art establishment is very ambivalent about this. If we clearer about what we were trying to do with this stuff, we would treat the whole museum a little bit more like the gift shop. Not in the sense that we buy the thing off the wall but that we would much clearer about what we can do with it. We'd take the art and put it in our lives in a much more natural and spontaneous way.

DM: Yes, it's interesting that the oldest piece of art known is called the 'Makapansgat pebble'. It is a pebble with a face on it. The face is probably an accident of nature, we don't know. But it was a pebble that was collected by an ape-man from a river bed several miles from his cave, and carried all the way back to his cave and when he got it there, he kept it, where it was found in the 1920s by an excavation. That meant that three million years ago, an ape-man who saw a face on a pebble wanted to take it home with him and keep it. This business of collecting an art object is very important because we do like to surround ourselves with objects that make our lives less drab, more interesting.

A de B: Also, I think Karma, I think the other thing common to a lot of works of art is that they are in opposition to chaos. They show the human being ordering and I think that because our lives are essentially chaos and heading towards chaos and disintegration, there is something inherently pleasing in things like symmetry, balance, order; and many, many works of art show that.

DM: Yes, and that was what I found even at the level of a chimpanzee. Extraordinary that if I put, say, a square on the right hand side of a piece of paper and gave it to him, he would mark on the opposite side, balancing the square that I put there. And I couldn't believe this as I watched it, I mean it was surprising enough to see that he was controlling where he was putting his lines, but the fact that he was prepared to balance something left to right meant that even at the level of a chimpanzee brain there was this urge to have some sort of composition, some sort of control over visual input.

A de B: And I think also, I think really what we're seeing that it's a compensation, the desire for certain works of art is a desire to compensate for things that are lacking, or threatened in the external environment. So if you're living a very chaotic life you might be incredibly moved and stirred by something that is ordered, serene, beautiful. So, in other words, when you see some who loves very peaceful, minimalist design and art, don't think this is someone who is very peaceful and calm. It's probably someone who really struggles to find that peace and calm, and is therefore very attracted to it when they find it in art. So, in a way I think that a lot of works of art have a function of rebalancing our psyches and bringing us things that we are lacking day to day.