

Forms of Art

Abstract Art



Did you ever look at a piece of art that was just a box of color or a bunch of squiggly lines and wonder... *this is art?!?! Most likely, you were looking at a piece of **abstract**¹ art like the painting on the left by Mark Rothko. Abstract art emphasizes color, shape and **texture**.² Sometimes, the artist wants to express a specific idea or feeling through his art. Sometimes, the painting is supposed to have absolutely no meaning at all.*

When I first saw abstract art, I hated it. I laughed at it. I pretended that it had a deep meaning just to make fun of it. I only became a fan of abstract art when I first saw Rothko's work. I grew to appreciate his combination of colors and the way he always had two main areas on the **canvas**.³ It made me see something in myself through his paintings.

I don't know if Rothko was thinking about anything specific or not when he painted. Not knowing, however, allowed me to come up with my own ideas. When I look at a Rothko, I see myself in two parts. Sometimes, I see a happy side and a sad side. Sometimes, I see love and hate.

¹ **abstract** - using elements of form (as color, line, or texture) with little or no attempt at creating a realistic picture

² **texture** – the look and feel of something, especially its roughness or smoothness

³ **canvas** – a surface for painting made from cloth stretched over a wooden frame

I always see something different when I look at abstract art. Next time you're in a museum or looking at an art book, stop and look closer. Instead of seeing lines and colors, see what wonderful things there are within. Let your imagination run free.

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. The author _____ abstract art.
 - a. hates
 - b. makes fun of
 - c. loves
 - d. feels nothing for
2. After reading the passage, which would be the best definition for the word *abstract*?
 - a. Specific
 - b. Undefined
 - c. Special
 - d. Colorful
3. Which happened last?
 - a. The author hated abstract art.
 - b. The author made fun of abstract art.
 - c. The author laughed at abstract art.
 - d. The author became a fan of abstract art.
4. Which of the following is *not* an opinion?
 - a. Abstract art is beautiful.
 - b. Abstract art is easy to paint.
 - c. Abstract art emphasizes color, shape and texture.
 - d. Rothko is a great artist.
5. The passage “Abstract Art” is mostly about?
 - a. The life and struggles of abstract artist Mark Rothko.
 - b. Why the author switched from hating abstract art to liking it.
 - c. Which colors are used in abstract art paintings.
 - d. What abstract art looks like from close up.

6. Why do you think the author chose to write this passage in the first person?

7. What does the author like about Rothko's work?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The author started out hating abstract art, but _____decided he liked it.

- a. including
- b. second
- c. while
- d. eventually

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

After seeing Mark Rothko's work, the author decided he liked some abstract art.

Who? the author

(did) What? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** texture: the look and feel of something, especially its roughness or smoothness.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 760

Featured Text Structure: Persuasive – the writer analyzes both sides of an argument and offers convincing proof of his/her point of view in order to influence the reader

Passage Summary: The author used to make fun of abstract art, which emphasizes color, shape, and texture. After seeing Mark Rothko's work he became a fan, and realized abstract art lets him come up with his own ideas of what it's about.

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 - c. Which colors are used in abstract art paintings.
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6. Why do you think the author chose to write this passage in the first person?

Suggested Answer: Answers will vary but may include that the author is trying to relate to the reader, that the author is trying to make the passage more personal, or that the author is trying to make the reader feel the same way that he does about abstract art.

7. What does the author like about Rothko's work?

Suggested Answer: The author appreciated Mark Rothko's combination of colors and the way he always had two main areas on the canvas.
[paragraph 2]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The author started out hating abstract art, but _____decided he liked it.

- a. including
- b. second
- c. while
- d. **eventually**

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

After seeing Mark Rothko's work the author decided he liked some abstract art.

Who? the author

(did) What? **decided he liked some abstract art**

When? **after seeing Mark Rothko's work**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** texture: the look and feel of something, especially its roughness or smoothness.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.