**Lesson 5**

**Expressionism**

**THE COURSE TEXT and WORKSHEET (required to be completed and submitted)**

**Name and parallel group (A or B): ……………………………………………………………………………..**

**Date of submission: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

*Before you read*

**Warm-up questions**

What do you think of the name ‘Expressionism’? Was ‘Expressionism’

the continuation of ‘Impressionism’? From which country ‘Expressionism’

has originated? What are the most important characteristics of

‘Expressionism’?

**Skimming the text**

Read the text’s title (headings and subheadings) and

• Write some of the text’s keywords in the following blanks.

……………… ……………… ………………… ………………

• Write the names of some important people and places given in the

reading passage.

……………… ………………… ………………… ………………

• Read the first sentences of each paragraph. What do you think the

reading is probably about?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

**Group work (classroom activity)**

Discuss the following terms in groups and compare your answers with

your partners.

• German psyche • Self-expression

• Inward look • Melancholy

• Distorted shapes • Subjectivity

*Part Ι. Reading*

**Expressionism**

[1] 'Expressionism' is a term that embraces an early 20th century style of art,

music and literature that is charged with an emotional and spiritual vision

of the world. Expressionism is associated with Northern Europe in general

and Germany in particular. The 'Expressionist' spirit has always existed in

the German psyche.

[2] At the end of the 19th century, the 'Expressionist' spirit embodied in the

paintings of two awkward and isolated personalities – one was the

Dutchman, *Vincent Van Gogh* and the other a Norwegian, *Edvard Munch*.

While the 'Impressionists' were admiring the color and beauty of the

natural landscape, Van Gogh and Munch took a radically different

perspective. They chose to look inwards to discover a form of ‘selfexpression’

that offered them an individual voice in a world that they

perceived as both insecure and hostile. It was this more subjective search

for a personal emotional truth that drove them on and ultimately paved the

way for the 'Expressionist' art forms of the 20th century that explored the

inner landscape of the soul.

**Image: VINCENT VAN GOGH (1853-1890)**

[3] Paintings like *Van Gogh*’s *Sunflowers* (1888) opened our eyes to the

intensity of expressive color. He used color to express his feelings about a

subject, rather than to simply describe it. In a letter to his brother *Theo* he

explained, “instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I see before my

eyes, I use color more arbitrarily to express myself forcibly.” His

heightened vision helped to liberated color as an emotional instrument in

the repertoire of 20th century art and the vitality of his brushwork became

a key influence in the development of both the Fauves' and the

Expressionists’ painting technique.

**Image: EDVARD MUNCH (1863-1944)**

[4] *Munch*’s painting of *The Scream* (1893) was equally influential. It

provides us with a psychological blueprint for Expressionist art: distorted

shapes and exaggerated colors that amplify a sense of anxiety and

alienation. *The Scream* is Munch’s own voice crying in the wilderness, a

prophetic voice that declares the Expressionist message, fifteen years

before the term was invented. “I was walking along the road with two

friends. It was sunset. I felt a tinge of melancholy. Suddenly the sky

became a bloody red. I stopped, leaned against the railing, dead tired. And

I looked at the flaming clouds that hung like blood and a sword over the

blue-black city. My friends walked on. I stood there, trembling with fright.

And I felt a loud, unending scream piercing nature.”

[5] *Kandinsky*'s painting was moving away from the depiction of realistic

forms into the more spiritual realms of abstraction. Since childhood he

had studied music, playing both the piano and cello. He recognized that

color could trigger our emotions much in the same way as music touches

our soul. This link between the visual and the aural inspired his

experiments with color as an abstract element for the subject of a

painting. The idea was reinforced by a chance experience in 1908. “I was

returning, immersed in thought from my sketching, when on opening the

studio door I was suddenly confronted by a picture of incandescent

beauty. Bewildered, I stopped and stared at it. The painting lacked all

subject, depicted no identifiable object and was entirely composed of

bright color. Finally, I approached closer and saw it for what it really

was - my own painting, standing on its side on the easel. One thing

became clear to me; objectiveness had no place in my paintings, and was

indeed harmful to them.”

**Image: WASSILY KANDINSKY (1866-1944)**

[6] After the disintegration of the more formal 'Expressionist' groups in

Germany, 'Expressionism' continued to evolve in a variety of ways

through the work of individual artists like *Paul Klee* and *Max Beckmann*.

The Expressionist spirit resurfaced in art across the world throughout the

20th century; *Francis Bacon* in Britain, the Abstract Expressionists in the

USA and eventually returning to Germany in the form of *Anselm Kiefer* in

the last quarter of the century.

*Part ΙΙ. Word study: Pronunciations, definitions and examples*

**Amplify (v.) /**ˈæmplɪfʌɪ/

(1) Increase or enlarge something. (2) Increase the amplitude of (an

electrical signal or other oscillation).

*What you have done can* ***amplify*** *happiness and comfort.*

**Arbitrarily (adv.) /**ˈa:rbitreri:li/

(1) Randomly: in a random manner. (2) (Of power or a ruling body)

unrestrained and autocratic in the use of authority.

*No one shall be* ***arbitrarily*** *deprived of his property.*

**Awkward (adj.)** /ˈoukwərd/

(1) Causing difficulty, hard to do or deal with. (2) Causing or feeling

embarrassment or inconvenience.

*The first moments of the meeting were* ***awkward****.*

**Blueprint (n.) /**ˈblu:print/

A plan or other technical drawing which shows the sequence of the actions

to be done.

*The full* ***blueprint*** *will not be released until next spring.*

**Confront (v.) /**kənˈfrənt/

(1) Face up to and deal with (a problem or difficult situation). (2) Meet

(someone) face to face with hostile or argumentative intent.

*On the other hand, he has yet to* ***confront*** *a serious crisis.*

**Disintegration (n.) /**dɪsˌɪntɪˈɡreɪʃ(ə)n/

(1) The process of losing cohesion. (2) The process of coming to pieces.

*There are technical terms for this kind of* ***disintegration****.*

**Distort (v.) /**dɪˈstɔːt/

(1) A change for the worse. (2) Pull or twist out of shape.

*They* ***distort*** *some facts and fabricate the rest.*

**Easel (n.) /**ˈi:zəl/

A self-supporting frame for holding an artist's work while it is being

painted or drawn.

*I cannot paint these days, my* ***easel*** *is broken by the earthquake.*

**Embody (v.) /**emˈbadi:/

Be an expression of or give a tangible or visible form to (an idea, quality,

or feeling).

*He is meant to* ***embody*** *the very essence of benevolence*

**Hung (adj.)** /həŋ/

Emotionally confused or disturbed.

*For half an hour, a sense of* ***hung*** *has dominated the class.*

**Incandescent (adj.) /**ˈinkəndesənt/

Emitting light as a result of being heated.

*The tunnel was lit by three rows of* ***incandescent*** *electric lamps in the roof.*

**Melancholy (n.) /**ˈmelənkali:/

A deep, pensive, and long-lasting sadness.

*I am scarcely drawing the portrait of a very* ***melancholy*** *man.*

**Pierce (v.) /**pi(ə)rs/

(1) Prick (something) with a sharp instrument. (2) make a hole in (the ears,

nose, or other part of the body) so as to wear jewelry in them.

*Do we need another screwdriver to* ***pierce*** *the aluminum plate?*

**Psyche (n.) /**ˈsīki:/

(1) The human soul, mind, or spirit. (2) Psychology.

*In the public* ***psyche****, it was impolite to do that.*

**Reinforce (v.) /**riːɪnˈfɔːs/

Strengthen or support, esp. with additional personnel or material.

*Your encouragement* ***reinforces*** *these behaviors.*

**Ultimately (adv.) /**ˈəltəmitli:/

(1) As the end result of a succession or process**.** (2) Finally, in the end.

***Ultimately****, he found the job.*

**Wilderness (n.) /**ˈwildərnis/

(1) A neglected or abandoned area of a garden or town. (2) An

uncultivated, uninhabited, and inhospitable region.

*I do not recommend buying this* ***wilderness*** *although it costs more than that.*

*Part ΙΙΙ. Exercises*

**A. Open questions**

Based on the text you have read, answer the following questions orally.

1- How did 'Expressionism' come into existence?

2- Who were the most influential painters of 'Expressionism'?

3- When did 'Expressionism' end? How?

4- Was 'Expressionism' the continuation of 'Impressionism'?

5- How did 'Expressionist' painters express themselves in their

artworks?

**B. Comprehension check**

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. Write “T”

before true statements and “F” before false ones.

…..... 1. Expressionism is charged with an emotional and spiritual

vision of the world.

……. 2. Expressionists chose to look inwards to discover a form of

“self-expression” that offered them an individual voice.

……. 3. Expressionists followed an absolutely objective approach in

their paintings.

…….4. Kandinsky's painting moved away from realism to spiritual

abstractions.

……. 5. Expressionism died in Germany and resurfaced again across

the world in the 20th century.

**C. Multiple choice questions**

Read the reading passage carefully and select the most appropriate

answer for each of the following multiple-choice test items.

1- After the disintegration of 'Expressionism' …………….

A) it was forgotten forever.

B) it re-appeared in Europe in other forms.

C) it lost its fans.

D) the critics neglected the 'Expressionist' artworks.

2- The 'Expressionist' spirit has originated from …………….

A) ‘Impressionism’. B) German psyche.

C) European culture. D) 'Individualism'.

3- The philosophy of 'Expressionism' was to ……………. for

discovering an individual voice.

A) ‘look culturally B) look politically

C) look outwards D) look inwards look inwards

4- Who is famous for using intensive, expressive color?

A) ‘Van Gogh B) Seurat

C) Kandinsky D) Munch

5- ‘Trigger' in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to …………….

A) activate. B) shorten.

C) finish. D) imagine.

**D. Word formation**

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from the following table.

Make necessary changes.

**Noun Verb Adjective Adverb**

amplification amplify amplified

distortion distort distorted

liberty/libration liberalize liberal/liberated liberally

melancholy melancholize melancholic

1. Let me …………………, then you would learn the problem better.

2. This is not a good mirror. It ……………….. the faces of the viewers.

3. The visitors were given the …………..… of visiting every corner of

the city.

4. There is …………….. in the wind and sorrow in the sky.

5. They treated their children too …………….

**E. Synonym finding**

Find a single word in the passage which means:

1 mind (para.1) ……………………..

2 completely (para.2) …………………….

3 propose, suggest (para.2) …………………….

4 finally (para.2) …………………….

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5 nervousness (para.4) ……………………..

6 shake (para.4) ……………………..

7 yell, cry (para.4) ……………………..

8 submerge (para.5) ……………………..

9 confused (para.5) …………………….

10 appear again (para.6) ……………………..

**F. Matching**

Match the words in column Ι with their appropriate equivalents in

column ΙΙ. Insert the letters in the parentheses provided. There are more

choices in column ΙΙ than required.

**column Ι column ΙΙ**

1 alienation (……) a. strengthen

2 pierce (……) b. power, force

3 reinforce (……) c. state, say publically

4 inhospitable (……) d. design, plan

5 intensity (……) e. separation

6 blueprint (……) f. prick

7 declare (……) g. unwelcoming

h. need

**G. Cloze test (classroom activity)**

There are some missing words in the following text. Find the best

choice for each blank and mark it in your book.

Expressionism' was a modernist …...(1)….., initially in poetry and

painting, originating in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. Its

typical trait is to ……(2)…… the world solely from a subjective

perspective, distorting it …..(3)….. for emotional effect in order to evoke

moods or ideas. Expressionist artists sought to express meaning or

emotional experience rather than ……(4)…… reality. The Expressionist

emphasis on individual perspective has been characterized as a …..(5)…..

to positivism and other artistic styles such as Naturalism and

Impressionism.

**1**. A) agitation B) constitution C) movement D) rebellion

**2**. A) present B) have C) include D) destroy

**3**. A) radically B) partially C) finally D) generally

**4**. A) mental B) emotional C) instructional D) physical

**5**. A) assertion B) activation C) reaction D) action

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