**Lesson 12**

**Minimalism**

**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**

Why is it called ‘Minimalism’? Where has ‘Minimalism’ come from? Is it

a universal movement or a localized, American movement? What is

specific about ‘Minimalism’?

**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.

• Objectivity versus subjectivity • Immediacy of response

• Simplicity • Kasimir Malevich

• Electronic songs • ABC art

*Part Ι. Reading*

**Minimalism**

[1] ‘Minimalism’ is a chiefly American movement in the visual arts and

music originating in New York City in the late 1960s and characterized by

extreme simplicity of form and a literal, objective approach. ‘Minimal’ art,

also called ‘ABC art’, is the culmination of reductionist tendencies in

modern art that first surfaced in the 1913 composition by the Russian

painter *Kasimir Malevich* of a black square on a white ground.

**Image: KASIMIR MALOVICH (1879-1935)\_ *Black* Square**

[2] The ‘minimalists’, who believed that ‘Action painting’ was too

personal and insubstantial, adopted the point of view that a work of art

should not refer to anything other than itself. For that reason they

attempted to rid their works of any extra-visual association. Use of the

hard edge, the simple form, and the linear rather than painterly approach

was intended to emphasize two-dimensionality and to allow the viewer an

immediate, purely visual response.

**Image: TONY SMITH (1912-1980) \_ *Free Ride***

[3] ‘Minimal’ sculpture is composed of extremely simple, monumental

geometric forms made of fiberglass, plastic, sheet metal, or aluminum,

either left raw or solidly painted with bright industrial colors. Like the

painters, ‘Minimalist’ sculptors attempted to make their works totally

objective, unexpressive, and non-referential.

[4] In both music and the visual arts, ‘Minimalism’ was an attempt to

explore the essential elements of an art form. In ‘Minimalist’ visual arts,

the personal, gestural elements were stripped away in order to reveal the

objective, purely visual elements of painting and sculpture. In

‘Minimalist’ music, the traditional forms were rejected in favor of

explorations of timbre and rhythm — musical elements largely unfamiliar

to western listeners.

[5] ‘Minimalist’ music was reacting against the complex, intellectually

sophisticated style of modern music; several composers began to compose

in a simple, literal style, thereby creating an extremely simple, plain and

accessible music. *La Monte Young*, for example, composed a number of

electronic songs in which he generated very few pitches. Like *Young*,

*Morton Feldman* tried to eliminate variation. His musical pieces explored

innovative instrumental timbres through a slowly paced succession of

unrelated, soft sounds.

[6] This movement was heavily criticized by modernist formalist art critics

and historians. Some critics thought ‘Minimal art’ represented a

misunderstanding of the modern framework of painting and sculpture as

defined by critic *Clement Greenberg*, arguably the dominant American

critic of painting in the 1960s. The most notable critic of ‘Minimalism’ was

produced by *Michael Fried*, a formalist critic, who declared that the

‘Minimal’ work of art, particularly ‘Minimal’ sculpture, was based on an

engagement with physicality of the spectator.

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

**Chiefly (adv.) /**ˈtʃiːfli/

(1) For the most part, mostly, above all. (2) Mainly.

*Your success is* ***chiefly*** *due to your persistence.*

**Culmination (n.) /**kʌlmɪˈneɪʃ(ə)n/

The highest or climactic point of something, esp. as attained after a long

time.

*It was the* ***culmination*** *of a tragic personal journey.*

**Eliminate (v.) /**ɪˈlɪmɪneɪt/

Completely remove or get rid of (something).

*In order to concentrate,* ***eliminate*** *the noise sources at home.*

**Insubstantial (adj.) /**ɪnsəbˈstænʃ(ə)l/

(1) Lacking strength and solidity. (2) Not solid or real; imaginary.

*This might seem like a fairly* ***insubstantial*** *part of the book.*

**Monument (n.) /**ˈmanjəmənt/

A statue, building, or other structure erected to commemorate a famous or

notable person or event.

*They built a golden* ***monument*** *to glorify his bravery.*

**Painterly (adv.) /**ˈpeɪntəli/

(1) Of or appropriate to a painter; artistic. (2) (Of a painting or its style)

characterized by qualities of color, stroke, and texture rather than of line.

*As a hairdresser, she works with a* ***painterly*** *skill.*

**Sophisticated (adj.) /**səˈfɪstɪkeɪtɪd/

(1) (Of a person or their thoughts, reactions, and understanding) Aware of

and able to interpret complex issues; subtle. (2) Having, revealing, or

proceeding from a great deal of worldly experience and knowledge of

fashion and culture.

*It is very difficult to know him; he is very* ***sophisticated*** *and mysterious.*

**Succession (n.) /**səkˈsɛʃ(ə)n/

A number of people or things sharing a specified characteristic and

following one after the other**.**

*I have put the books I should read in succession**on my bookshelf.*

**Sustain (v.)** /səˈsteɪn/

Strengthen or support physically or mentally.

*I need my father's help to* ***sustain*** *my life these days.*

*Part ΙΙΙ. Exercises*

**A. Open questions**

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

1- What is a ‘Minimalist’ art?

2- Why is ‘Minimalism’ called “ABC’ art?

3- What are the characteristics of ‘Minimal’ art?

4- Describe ‘Minimalist’ music. How is it different from ‘Traditional

music’?

5- Who was the most notable critic of ‘Minimalism’?

**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. ABC art is the culmination of reductionist tendencies in

modern art.

……. 2. Minimalists attempted to add extra-visual associations as

much as possible to their works.

……. 3. Minimalism intended to emphasize multi-dimensionality and

asked for the viewers’ reflection.

……. 4. In minimalist music, the traditional forms were rejected in

favor of timbre and rhythm which was familiar to western

listeners.

……. 5. New York is the real house for minimalism.

……. 6. ‘Minimalism’ had no critics.

**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- ‘Minimalism’ is characterized by …………….

A) its subjective, expressive style.

B) extreme simplicity of form and a literal, objective approach.

C) deep considerations of self-expression.

D) its extra-visual associations.

2- What was the essence of ‘Minimalism’?

A) complicated designs B) imaginary forms

C) youthful culture D) reductionist tendencies

3- ‘Minimalism’ was heavily criticized by …………….

A) capitalists. B) realists.

C) modernists. D) Cubists.

4- ‘Minimal’ sculpture is composed of …………….

A) detailed, complicated forms.

B) technological, expressive forms.

C) expressive and non-referential geometric forms.

D) simple, monumental geometric forms.

5- ‘Accessible’ in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to …………….

A) contradiction . B) novelty.

C) at risk. D) at hand.

**D. Word formation**

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

Make necessary changes.

**Noun Verb Adjective Adverb**

elimination eliminate eliminatory

sophistication sophisticate sophisticated

sustainment sustain sustainable sustainably

culmination culminate

1- The meeting ……………. in a tearful embrace.

2- Alas! She is going to retire in a year or two. She is the most

……………. I have ever had.

3- You are very impolite. I cannot ……………. the discussion.

4- The president promised to ……………. homelessness in two years.

5- In order to have a(n) ……………. economic growth, a country should

develop internal industry.

**E. Synonym finding**

Find a single word in the passage which means:

1 accurate (para.1) ……………………..

2 inclination (para.1) …………………….

3 private (para.2) …………………….

4 free, liberate (para.2) …………………….

5 sequential (para.2) ……………………..

6 instant (para.2) ……………………..

7 entirely, wholly (para.3) ……………………..

8 show (para.4) ……………………..

9 just, only (para.4) …………………….

10 musician, author (para.5) ……………………..

**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 minimalism (……) a. intellectual

2 commemorate (……) b. available

3 response (……) c. method

4 scholar, thinker (……) d. speed

5 accessible (……) e. interior

6 pace (……) f. honor

7 approach (……) g. reductionism

h. reaction

**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.

The Japanese ‘Minimalist’ architect, Tadao Ando conveys the Japanese

traditional ……(1)…… and his own perception of nature in his works. His

design concepts are pure geometry and nature. He …..(2)…… uses

concrete or natural wood and basic structural form to achieve austerity and

rays of light in space. He also sets up dialogue between the site and nature

to …..(3)….. relationship and order with the buildings. Ando’s works and

the translation of Japanese aesthetic principles are highly influential on

Japanese architecture. Another Japanese ‘Minimalist’ architect, Kazuyo

Sejima produces iconic Japanese ‘Minimalist’ buildings. ……(4)……

with creating and influencing a particular genre of Japanese ‘Minimalism’;

intelligent designs …..(5)….. use white color, thin construction sections

and transparent elements to create the phenomenal building type often

associated with ‘Minimalism’.

**1**. A) theory B) spirit C) skill D) religion

**2**. A) surely B) radically C) normally D) finally

**3**. A) test B) find C) cause D) create

**4**. A) Credited B) Edited C) Elevated D) Caused

**5**. A) whom B) which C) where D) when

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