



Reading 28

Read the text below. For questions 1–5, choose the answer (a, b, c, d) which fits best according to the text.

Vincent Van Gogh was born in Groot Zundert, in the Netherlands on March 30, 1853, to parents Theodorus van Gogh, a preacher, and Ana Cornelia Carpentus. In 1869 at the age of 16, Van Gogh began a career, not as a painter, but as an art dealer with the firm Goupil&Cie. He spent 7 years at Goupil&Cie where daily contacts with works of art kindled his appreciation of paintings and drawings. Gradually Vincent lost interest in his work and decided to try his hand teaching at a Catholic School for boys. His growing interest in religion and his desire to help the poor eventually drove him to become a clergyman. In 1878 he became a lay preacher in one of the most impoverished regions in Western Europe. He was sent to the coal-mining district of The Borinage in Belgium. Vincent sympathized with the poverty-stricken miners and gave away most of his food and clothing to ease their burdened lives. His extreme commitment to the miners drew disfavor from the church, which dismissed him of his post. Vincent however, did not want to leave the place. He decided to remain with the miners and began to paint them and their families, chronicling their harsh conditions.

Soon after, thanks to his brother's financial help, Vincent Van Gogh decided to go to Brussels in 1880 to begin his studies in art. During the next 10 years this outstanding artist created around 872 paintings. In 1882 Vincent began living with Clasina Maria Hoornik, also known as Sien, and her children, in The Hague. Their volatile personalities and the strain of living in complete poverty resulted in a stormy relationship. Vincent was devoted to Sien and her children, but art always came first. As his drawing and painting skills advanced, his relationship with Sien deteriorated and they parted ways in September 1883.

In 1886 Vincent and his brother Theo decided to move to Paris. There Van Gogh met Paul Gauguin and various other artists, who had a tremendous impact on his ongoing evolution as an artist. However Vincent never felt truly happy in large cities such as Paris. So soon after his coming to France he decided to settle in Arles, Provence in the south of this country, where he rented a studio and invited Paul Gauguin to live with him. In December 1888 Vincent experienced a psychotic episode in which he cut off a piece of his left ear.

After this episode he was in and out of asylums for the next year. It was thought that Van Gogh was actually epileptic and that is why people thought he had fits of insanity throughout his life. He painted one of his best-known paintings, *Starry Night*, during one of his stays in the asylum. In mid-1890 Vincent left the asylum and spent the last few months of his life in Auvers, a small town in France. It is known that on July 27, 1890, Vincent Van Gogh shot himself in the chest. Two days later he died with his younger brother by his side. He left behind a wonderful array of paintings that make him one of the most influential and admired painters of our time.

1. Van Gogh became a clergyman due to
 - a) his interest in art.
 - b) his developing enthusiasm in Christianity.
 - c) the Goupil&Cie art dealer firm.
 - d) his teaching at the Catholic School for boys.

2. Van Gogh's attitude to the miners led to
 - a) his making friends with many of them.
 - b) his giving all his money to the miners' families.
 - c) losing his post.
 - d) his living in poor conditions.

3. Vincent and Clasina's relationship was stormy because
 - a) he hated her.
 - b) he was not interested in her children.
 - c) they lived in poor conditions.
 - d) she did not understand his art.

4. Vincent moved to Arles because
 - a) Gauguin let him live in his house there.
 - b) he did not want to live in a big city.
 - c) his brother made him go there.
 - d) he wanted to meet other artists there.

5. Van Gogh first went into an asylum after he
 - a) was said to be epileptic.
 - b) injured his ear.
 - c) he injured his chest.
 - d) painted *Starry Night*.

*Источник задания: финал олимпиады «Покори Воробьевы горы!»
2012/13, вариант 1*

Reading 28 — Keys

- 1 B
- 2 C
- 3 C
- 4 B
- 5 B

EXPLANATION

Vincent Van Gogh was born in Groot Zundert, in the Netherlands on March 30, 1853, to parents Theodorus van Gogh, a preacher, and Ana Cornelia Carbentus. In 1869 at the age of 16, Van Gogh began a career, not as a painter, but as an art dealer with the firm Goupil&Cie. He spent 7 years at Goupil&Cie where daily contacts with works of art kindled his appreciation of paintings and drawings. Gradually Vincent lost interest in his work and decided to try his hand teaching at a Catholic School for boys. His growing interest in religion and his desire to help the poor eventually drove him to become a clergyman. In 1878 he became a lay preacher in one of the most impoverished regions in Western Europe. He was sent to the coal-mining district of The Borinage in Belgium. Vincent sympathized with the poverty-stricken miners and gave away most of his food and clothing to ease their burdened lives. His extreme commitment to the miners drew disfavor from the church, which dismissed him of his post. Vincent however, did not want to leave the place. He decided to remain with the miners and began to paint them and their families, chronicling their harsh conditions.

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