**Art Critics – Speaking Lesson**

**Teacher Notes**

**Aims**

* Students practise speaking, listening, and negotiating meaning as they carry out an information gap activity.
* Students learn and use art-related vocabulary.
* Students describe and discuss works of art.

**Level:** Intermediate (could be adapted to other levels by adapting the vocabulary section)

**Timing:** 90 minutes

**Materials:**

* Worksheet (one for each student)
* Colour printouts of the artworks. These are presented 4 pictures to a page, so cut them up after printing. You could laminate them for future use. You will need 1 set for the whole class, or 2 sets if you have more than about 16 students.
* Coloured pens and pencils – OPTIONAL (but if you have a large enough collection, this will make the Pictionary game more fun).

The pictures used in this lesson are: *Hunting Scenes* from Lascaux, *Stars* by M. C. Escher, *The Girl with the Pearl Earring* by Johannes Vermeer, *Composition with Large Red Plane, Yellow, Black, Grey and Blue, 1921* by Piet Mondrian, *Ophelia* by John Millais, *Percy at the Fridge* by Beryl Cook, *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh, *The Singing Butler* by Jack Vettriano, *The Scream* by Edvard Munch, *Weeping Woman with Hand* by Pablo Picasso, *The Battle of Chesme* by Ivan Aivazovsky, *Serenidad* by Tomas Diaz.

You could also choose different artworks – perhaps based on what you know of your students’ interests and personalities. A range of different styles and topics will give more scope for a variety of language. Find versions with high resolution using Google Images, and then print them off four to a page.

**1. Warmer**

Aim: Introduce the topic of art. Personalise the topic to students’ experiences.

Timing: 15 minutes.

Interaction: Pairs.

Display the following task on the board, or give the instructions orally.

*Describe to your partner an experience you’ve had related to art. Maybe you can remember an art lesson at school, maybe you have a friend who is very artistic, maybe you remember seeing a particular painting or sculpture in an art gallery, or maybe you’ve noticed some street art or graffiti near where you live.*

Ask for feedback from different pairs. Remember to accept negative reactions at this stage (e.g. I hate art! Art is boring! – if you react negatively to this, you will probably lose these students for the rest of the lesson)

**2. Pictionary**

Aim: Students communicate in order to bridge an information gap. Students begin to try to use appropriate language to describe pictures and art.

Timing: 15 minutes.

Interaction: Groups of three or four.

In each team there is one “art critic” and two or three “artists”. The art critic chooses a picture at random from the teacher’s stock of artworks. He or she describes the picture in detail, while the artists try to draw it based on the description. The artists can ask questions, but no one should look at any one else’s picture. After 3 minutes, the art critic should look at all the artists’ pictures and decide which one is closest to the original. This artist wins a point.

Repeat with a different art critic until everyone has had a go, and then see who has the most points.

**3. Art vocabulary**

Aim: Students are introduced to new art-related vocabulary.

Timing: 10 minutes.

Interaction: Pairs.

Students check the meaning of any unknown words with a partner or the teacher, or in a dictionary.

They categorise the words into styles, what you see in the painting, and responses.

**4. Describing paintings**

Aim: Students activate art-related vocabulary from previous task.

Timing: 15 minutes.

Interaction: Groups of three or four.

The artworks are distributed equally between the groups, and the group tries to describe them, using the vocabulary given.

For class feedback, each group shows their artworks to the whole class, and describes them.

**5. Every picture tells a story**

Aim: Students respond to art verbally. Students practise using descriptive and narrative language.

Timing: 20 minutes.

Interaction: Pairs or small groups.

Each group chooses one of the artworks and speculates about the story behind it – who are the people involved, what is happening in their life, why has this happened, what are they saying, how are they feeling, etc.

After about 10 minutes, ask each group to present their ideas to the class. Encourage those listening to ask for justification, offer alternative ideas, etc.

**6. Options for follow-up or homework**

* Students write their story from stage 5.
* Students write a short introduction to one of the artworks, as if for a gallery interpretation board or guidebook.
* Students choose an artwork they like, and research it online in order to tell their partner about it.