- Vincent was born in 1853 in the Netherlands.
- He tried to be preacher, a school teacher, and an art dealer before embarking on his career.
- Van Gogh spent 2 years sharpening his drawing skills before he allowed himself to use color or paint. He was almost entirely self-taught.
- His closest friend and relative was his brother Theo, and art dealer, who also supported him financially. Vincent Spent his life in poverty, choosing to spend money on paints rather than food to eat.
- His early paintings portrayed the lives of poor farmers and coal miners. The colors he used were dull and dark.
- Later, he was strongly influenced by the Impressionists of the day. With time he became much bolder in his paintings. He began to use slashing brush strokes and clear, bright colors.
- He was a pioneer for expressionism. Expressionists profoundly show their emotions through their paintings.
The Potato Eaters 1885
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

This painting was Van Gogh’s first major work and would also be his only painting in a group setting.
Coalmine in the Borinage 1879

Still Life with Beer Mug and Fruit 1881
Some of Van Gogh’s early paintings of farmers. Why do you think he used dull and dark colors in these early works?

A Digger 1881

Girl Kneeling in Front of a Bucket, 1881

Sower with Basket 1881
La chambre de Van Gogh à Arles (Van Gogh’s Room at Arles)

1889 (200Kb); Oil on canvas, 57 x 74 cm (22 1/2 x 29 1/3 in); Musee d’Orsay, Paris
Vincent's Chair and Pipe

"Vincent's chair with his pipe" (Arles, December 1888) By Vincent van Gogh, from Zundert, the Netherlands (1853 - 1890) - oil on canvas; 93 x 73.5 cm - [Japonaiserie] National Gallery, London, UK

What are the differences in these chairs? Do these intense differences explain a significant portrayal of the two artist and why?
He would paint continuously, even when the sun would go down he would continue to paint by sticking candles in the brim of his hat.

Van Gogh used swirling brush strokes and bright yellow in his vibrating stars. He wrote to his brother about his Starry Night Painting. "The sights of stars always set me dreaming just as... The black dots on a map set me dreaming of towns and villages. Why should those points of light in the firmament, (the sky) I wonder, be less accessible than the dark ones on the map of France?"
Café Terrace at Night
(Terrasse du Café le Soir)
1888

Same Café Present Day
Arles, France
Van Gogh never felt that his art was appreciated, which pained him very much. It wasn’t entirely true; many of his fellow painters saw him as a genius. He was a prolific painter and near the end of his life, painted 70 paintings in 70 days. His career lasted only ten years, he created approx. 875 paintings and 1100 drawings.

Of his Night Café, he said: `I have tried to express with red and green the terrible passions of human nature.' For a time he was influenced by Seurat's delicate pointillist manner, but he abandoned this for broad, vigorous, and swirling brush-strokes.

**The Night Café 1888**
However, Van Gogh only sold 1 painting in his lifetime, for $80. His paintings today are some of the most expensive in the world, some have sold for up to 50 and 60 million dollars. **Which was the first and only painting Van Gogh sold?**

![The Red Vineyard at Arles (The Vigne Rouge), c. 1888](image)

**The Red Vineyard at Arles (The Vigne Rouge), c. 1888**

Is the one painting Vincent Van Gogh sold during his lifetime. It was bought by the Belgian artist and art collector Anna Boch. Vincent was a friend of her brother.
This painting by Van Gogh is estimated value of $50 million to $55 million and was stolen from Cairo’s Mohammed Mahmoud Khalil Museum in August 2010 and is still yet to be found.
Can you see why art dealers 100 years ago did not like this painting? People expected a painting of a vase of flowers to be soft, light and peaceful. This painting does not portray in this way.

Van Gogh’s sunflowers look almost as if they are on fire. Their stems and petals twist and curl, and the flowers look like they’ve been stuffed into the vase rather than artistically arranged. Today, it is the naturalness of the painting that makes it so appealing.
The artist actually painted two series of “Sunflowers”. The first executed in Paris in 1887 which depicted the flowers lying on the ground. The second set was created a year later in Arles and shows a bouquet of sunflowers in a vase. One piece went to decorate his friend Paul Gauguin’s bedroom. They would later quarrel over this work.
In the first version by Vincent, he focuses on only two sunflowers, providing us with an amazing magnification, of the face of the one sunflower turned toward us. It was done in Paris in 1887, around the time Van Gogh met Gauguin, who had just returned from the Caribbean island of Martinique. To celebrate their new friendship, they exchanged paintings. Vincent gave Gauguin, **Two Sunflowers**.

Gauguin presented Vincent with **Les Negresses (Among the Mangoes)**.
Crown Imperials in a Copper Vase

Paris, Spring 1887, Oil on Canvas
Musée d’Orsay, Paris
Van Gogh called the painting "the lightning conductor for my illness", because he felt that he could keep himself from going insane by continuing to paint.

*Irises (Les Iris), 1889*
After Van Gogh’s death (1890), it was his brother Theo’s wife that made and ensured that Vincent Van Gogh got the attention he deserved. The letters Vincent had written to Theo gave much insight into his mind and his art.

Theo van Gogh & Johanna Gezina van Gogh-Bonger
“Give me a museum and I’ll fill it.”

There is now a Vincent Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

♦ Slide show with Van Gogh Art played to the music “Starry, Starry Night” composed and performed by Don McLean

http://www.theartroomtelford.co.uk/VanGogh.html