



APEX ENGLISH

Your voice. Global.

C1 · GENERAL ENGLISH

UNIT 7 · 7B

A masterpiece?

Theme · Art & Perception



Unit 7 · 7B

A masterpiece?

Theme: Art & Perception

Learning objectives

- Expand C1 vocabulary related to **art, colour idioms**.
- Use **perception and sensation** accurately and idiomatically.
- Read a discursive text and discuss inferences beyond the literal.
- Speak fluently on the unit's theme with a partner or in a small group.

This booklet accompanies the digital lesson at

alunos.apexenglish.com.br/general-c1/7b. Interactive audio, video and drag-and-drop tasks live online; use this booklet in class and to review.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Class Book

Warm-up

In pairs, talk for about a minute on each prompt before feedback:

- 1 What comes to mind when you hear the theme **“Art & Perception”**?
- 2 How comfortable are you using vocabulary about **art, colour idioms**? Give one recent example.
- 3 When did you last use — or misuse — **perception and sensation**?

Reading

Twenty-eight seconds

Somewhere on the second floor of the Rijksmuseum, a small, patient camera counted how long visitors actually looked at the Night Watch. The answer, published in a quiet paper the museum did not particularly want to publicise, was just under twenty-eight seconds. Of those, roughly nine were spent looking at the little printed label to the right of the frame.

This is not, the researchers insist, an argument about attention span. Adults, on average, do not have less attention than they used to; they simply have more competing objects for it. What the eye-tracking picked up, at the world's most famous museum, was less a failure of focus than a very modern kind of substitution. What is being consumed in front of the Night Watch is not really the painting; it is the small green tick, invisible but unmistakable, of having seen it.

The philosopher Alva Noë has spent much of the last decade arguing that a masterpiece cannot really be seen quickly. His argument is not that art is difficult — it is that art is slow. On his view, a painting only starts to work when you have watched it for long enough that the brushstrokes stop being background and the composition stops being a shape and something else — call it perception, call it recognition, call it, if you must, attention — begins to happen in you.

If Noë is right, most of us have not, in any meaningful sense, seen most of the paintings we can name. We have collected them, as one collects photographs of a holiday one did not quite have time to enjoy. A twenty-eight-second look at Rembrandt's Night Watch is, structurally, closer to a selfie than to a viewing — and, on the whole, quite an efficient use of a Saturday afternoon.

Comprehension — choose the best answer.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



1. The Rijksmuseum eye-tracking study found the average visitor looked at the Night Watch for:
 - (A) around 5 seconds
 - (B) just under 28 seconds
 - (C) around 90 seconds
 - (D) more than 3 minutes
2. According to the researchers, this is NOT primarily a story about:
 - (A) visitor behaviour
 - (B) attention span
 - (C) gallery design
 - (D) labels
3. What are visitors 'really consuming', according to the writer?
 - (A) the painting itself
 - (B) the label
 - (C) the invisible 'tick' of having seen the painting
 - (D) the audio guide
4. Noë argues that a masterpiece is best understood as:
 - (A) a difficult intellectual puzzle
 - (B) an extended, slow act of attention
 - (C) a personal emotional experience
 - (D) an educational tool
5. The writer's comparison of a 28-second look to a selfie suggests it is:
 - (A) deeply meaningful
 - (B) closer to documenting than seeing
 - (C) an act of concentration
 - (D) an act of contemplation
6. The tone of the piece is best described as:
 - (A) quietly diagnostic and slightly ironic
 - (B) openly outraged
 - (C) sentimentally nostalgic
 - (D) campaigning and reformist

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Vocabulary

Focus: **art, colour idioms**

Study these C1 items and their meanings.

brushstroke — a mark made on a canvas by a single movement of a brush

canvas — the surface a painting is made on

figurative — representing recognisable people or objects (opposite of abstract)

still life — a painting of inanimate objects such as fruit or flowers

sketch — a rough, quick drawing

installation — a large, often 3-D artwork designed for a specific space

curated (adj.) — carefully selected and organised, often by an expert

provenance — the documented history of ownership of a work

out of the blue — unexpectedly, with no warning

see red — become suddenly very angry

green with envy — extremely envious

in black and white — in writing / very clearly stated

give (someone) the green light — give permission for something to proceed

grey area — a situation with no clear rules or ethics

true colours — someone's real character, especially when unflattering

off-colour — slightly unwell; or (of a joke) slightly rude

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Grammar

Focus: ***perception and sensation***

Study the online lesson notes, then complete the interactive tasks at **alunos.apexenglish.com.br/general-c1/7b**.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Speaking

- 1 Tell a partner about a personal experience connected to **art & perception**. Aim for at least two minutes without pausing.
- 2 Compare cultures or generations on this topic. Use at least three items from the *art, colour idioms* list.
- 3 Discuss: *Is it possible to be objective about art & perception?* Justify your view.

Writing

Write 220–260 words on: **“Art & Perception — what has changed in the last twenty years?”** Use at least four items from the vocabulary list and one structure from the grammar focus (*perception and sensation*).

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Workbook

Home practice

Complete on your own; check answers in class.

1. 'I saw her _____ the road.' — the whole action:
(A) cross
(B) crossing
(C) to cross
(D) crossed
2. 'I could hear them _____ upstairs.' — in progress:
(A) argue
(B) arguing
(C) to argue
(D) argued
3. Passive: 'He was seen _____ the building.'
(A) leave
(B) to leave
(C) leaving to
(D) leaving
4. 'Something smells _____. ' (there's a smell of it now)
(A) burn
(B) burning
(C) to burn
(D) burnt
5. 'I noticed her _____ into the room quietly.' (softer, in progress)
(A) slip
(B) slipping
(C) to slip
(D) slipped

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

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Workbook · 7B. A masterpiece?

Home practice · verbs of perception · art & colour idioms · answer key included



Class Book

Full lesson · in-class material



Workbook

Home practice · with answer key

GRAMMAR

1 · Verbs of perception — choose the best form

10 min

1. 'I saw her _____ the road.' — the whole action:

a. CROSS ✓

b. crossing

c. to cross

d. crossed

2. 'I could hear them _____ upstairs.' — in progress:

a. argue

b. arguing ✓

c. to argue

d. argued

3. Passive: 'He was seen _____ the building.'

a. leave

b. to leave ✓

c. leaving to

d. leaving

4. 'Something smells _____. ' (there's a smell of it now)

a. burn

b. burning ✓

c. to burn

d. burnt

5. 'I noticed her _____ into the room quietly.' (softer, in progress)

a. slip

b. slipping ✓

c. to slip

d. slipped

Score: 5 / 5

🔄 Try again

VOCABULARY

10 min

2 · Complete with an art word from the box

WORD BANK — DRAG OR TAP, THEN TAP A GAP

brushstrokes

canvas

provenance

figurative

curated

1. Up close, you can see every one of Van Gogh's **brushstrokes** **brushstrokes**.
2. It's a huge **canvas** **canvas** — nearly four metres wide.
3. The buyers demanded proof of **provenance** **provenance** going back to the 1930s.

4. He works in a **figurative** **figurative** style — the faces are all recognisable.
5. The show is a beautifully **curated** **curated** selection of women photographers.

Score: 5 / 5

Try again

GRAMMAR

10 min

3 · Rewrite using the structure in brackets

1. *'She was crying. I heard it.'* (in progress)

Hide answer

I heard her crying.

2. *'He shut the door. I heard the whole thing.'* (complete action)

Hide answer

I heard him shut the door.

3. *'They saw him leave.'* → passive

Hide answer

He was seen to leave.

4. *'I noticed her cross the road.'* → in progress

Hide answer

I noticed her crossing the road.

VOCABULARY +

8 min

4 · Match the colour idiom to its meaning

DRAG THE MEANING ONTO THE WORD

Reset

extremely envious

become suddenly very angry

a situation with no clear rules

unexpectedly

someone's real character, often unflattering

out of the blue

unexpectedly

Hide answer

unexpectedly

see red

become suddenly very angry

Hide answer

become suddenly very angry

green with envy

extremely envious

Hide answer

extremely envious

grey area

a situation with no clear rules

Hide answer

a situation with no clear rules

true colours

someone's real character, often unflattering

Hide answer

someone's real character, often unflattering

LISTENING

10 min

5 · Voice message · Twenty-eight seconds

Listen to a voice message left by an English friend after a long afternoon in a European museum.

▶ 0:00 / 0:00



Audio recording coming soon — transcript-based questions still work with the answer key below.

1. How long did he actually look at the Night Watch?

Hide answer

Around six minutes — until he caught himself checking his phone for a message that had never arrived.

2. Which verbs of perception does he use about himself?

Hide answer

'I saw myself standing there', 'I could hear the audio guide leaking out', 'I noticed a woman staring at the same painting for fifteen minutes'.

3. What art word does he use twice?

Hide answer

'Brushstrokes' — he says the brushstrokes only came into focus after about four minutes.

4. Which colour idiom does he use about himself at the end?

Hide answer

'Off-colour' — he says he ended the visit feeling slightly off-colour from concentration and low blood sugar.

WRITING

20 min

6 · A short reflection (180–220 words)

Write a short first-person reflection titled: "*The painting I said I'd seen*". Use at least three verb-of-perception structures (mixing bare inf and gerund), two colour idioms and one art word. End with an honest, unheroic conclusion — nothing motivational.

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