

## PPCC ART 110 ESSAY SAMPLE - “SINGLE WORK” CRITIQUE

### Critique of Vincent van Gogh’s *Starry Night*

John Doe - Art Appreciation – Art110

#### **Historical**

Vincent van Gogh was a painter from Holland who lived from 1853-1890. He had several different jobs before becoming an artist including working as a salesman in an art gallery. Keep writing about this artist and when you finish with one source, put the reference in front of the period (Husker, 1984). In APA style the reference in the text should include the last name of the first author and the year. If it is published by a museum or institution, put the institution’s name and then the year (Van Gogh Museum, 1998; New Standard Encyclopedia, 1967).

Information you should put in the historical section of your critique are: biographical information on the artist, title of the artwork, date it was done, address or site of where it was done and where is it now, and medium. If the artwork has a history include it here.

Everything in your paper should be twelve-point font in a style similar to Times New Roman and double-spaced. Don’t use contractions. Italicize all works of art like *Starry Night*. Watch out for plagiarism. If the resource says, “(1853-1890) A Dutch painter who was raised in a family of clergy and worked as a salesman in his uncle’s art gallery in The Hague.” You should rephrase it in your own words like it is in the first sentence. Quotations should only be used in the case of direct quotes from the artist or related person, not for a well-written sentence from a book you like.

#### **Descriptive**

Here you describe the artwork as fully as possible. Describe the work so completely that someone who has not seen the work will be able to fully visualize it. Description usually involves adjectives. The writer should try to be objective so that everyone will have the same understanding of the artwork. (200 words minimum)

#### **Analytical**

Here you go beyond description by discussing the structure or composition of the artwork. You identify the media, the quality, and how the artwork is put together. The use of the elements and principles of design can be used here. You make a formal analysis of the materials used, technique used, and any unusual characteristics about the work. Some other information that you might include here are: type of artist, type of artwork, style or form, subject matter or theme, function or purpose, comparison to other similar works, uniqueness, value of the artwork, materials used (permanency, value, etc.). (200 words minimum)

## **Interpretative**

In the interpretative stage, you move to more imaginative levels and speculate about the meaning or purpose of the work. Is there allegory, iconology, or metaphor represented? Some topics you might cover are: feelings expressed, relationship between the artist and subject, social or philosophic statement, meaning, mood, point of view, artist's intent or purpose, message, and representation. (150 words minimum)

## **Judgment**

The critical process normally ends with a judgment – that is, a conclusion regarding the success or failure of the artwork and its ranking with other artworks. Go beyond just stating like/dislike and give educated reasons. You might include craftsmanship or quality of the work, uniqueness, aesthetic pleasure or experience, and value of the artwork to the art world and to you. End with a personal statement about the artwork. It is perfectly permissible to not like the work, but you must give educated reasons for this. (100 words minimum)

**Image Labels:** *Starry Night*, 1889, Oil on canvas,  
29" x 36 ¼". Museum of Modern Art, New York

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The reference listing should be in alphabetical order by the last name of the author or name of the institution. All references appearing on the page should be found in the body of the paper listed the same way. Two authors can be listed together in your paper (Posner & Zeller, 1985). For our paper you must have three different types of references; for example, book, encyclopedia, Internet (or three others). If you need additional help there are several copies of the APA handbook at the reference desk (American Psychological Association, 2001) and information is available at several sites on the Internet (American Psychological Association, 2000; Crane, 1997; University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Andersen Library, 1999). (200 words minimum)

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## **REFERENCES**

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<http://www.uvm.edu/~ncrane/estyles/apa.html>

Husker, J. (1984). *The Complete van Gogh*. New York: Crown.

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Posner, M. & Zeller, O. (1985, October 29). Letters to Theo. *Art in America*, 134, 78-80.

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References: APA style. Retrieved October 29, 2000, from

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Van Gogh Museum. (1998). Sunflower series. Retrieved October 25, 2000 from

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