

• Reading Comprehension 4 Level 7

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Claude Monet, a 19th-century French painter, was the most famous artist associated with the movement known as Impressionism. Monet was born on November 14, 1840, and even as a young man he was known for producing small portraits in charcoal. In 1858 Monet met the artist Eugène Boudin, who became his mentor and introduced Monet to painting outdoors, or “en plein air” as it came to be known. In 1859, at the age of 19, Monet moved to Paris to become a professional artist. Most artists of his time tried to imitate nature realistically, but in his landscape painting Monet instead sought to portray nature as it appeared to him. In particular, he was interested in how light affects the ways that we perceive color. In one of his most famous series of works, Monet painted the cathedral in Rouen, France at several different times of day, showing how changes in natural light make the cathedral appear to change color. In 1883, Monet moved to a small French town called Giverny, where he built an elaborate garden. This garden, in particular its water lily ponds, became the chief subject of Monet’s later paintings. Monet’s paintings of water lilies were extremely influential to 20th-century modern artists. In these paintings, Monet used the landscape merely as a starting point, creating abstract fields of vibrant color. These paintings relied on broad, thick brushstrokes. The texture of these brushstrokes gave the canvases **a tactile quality** that contrasted sharply with the smooth canvases produced by more traditional artists. Though he struggled financially throughout his life, when Monet died in 1926, he was one of the most famous and influential painters in the world.

Questions

- 1) This passage would most likely be found in
 - A. a newspaper
 - B. an encyclopedia
 - C. a magazine
 - D. a blog

- 2) Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that the phrase “a tactile quality” suggests that Monet’s canvases were
 - A. colorful
 - B. beautiful
 - C. smooth
 - D. rough

- 3) According to the passage, Monet moved to Paris in 1859 to
 - A. join the Impressionism movement
 - B. paint cathedrals
 - C. become a professional artist
 - D. build an elaborate garden

- 4) The tone of the passage can best be described as
 - A. factual
 - B. passionate
 - C. clever
 - D. adoring

Answers and Explanations

1) **B**

Encyclopedia articles summarize factual information about a particular subject or topic. The passage contains general facts and background information about one topic, the painter Claude Monet, so **(B)** is correct. Newspapers, magazines, and blogs all tend to focus on current events, recent trends, or news that might change from day to day. The passage does not mention any current or recent events; in fact, the most recent thing that occurs in the passage is Monet's death in 1926. Therefore **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)** are incorrect.

2) **D**

The author states, "These paintings relied on broad, thick brushstrokes. The texture of these brushstrokes gave the canvases a tactile quality that contrasted sharply with the smooth canvases produced by more traditional artists." The author contrasts Monet's canvases with more traditional artists' smooth canvases, so we can infer that "a tactile quality" is different from "smooth." The author also claims the "texture" of the brushstrokes was the cause of the tactile quality. From these details we can infer that Monet's thick brushstrokes, rather than creating a smooth surface, gave his paintings an interesting texture that looked as if it could be touched or felt. This is what is meant by "a tactile quality." From this we can understand that Monet's canvases were not smooth like those of other artists, but somewhat rough. Therefore **(D)** is correct. While Monet's canvases may be colorful and beautiful, neither of these words describes texture, as "a tactile quality" does. Since a tactile quality does not indicate anything about color or beauty, **(A)** and **(B)** are both incorrect. *Smooth* describes a texture, but it refers to the canvases of more traditional artists, which contrast "sharply" with the tactile quality of Monet's canvases. This means that Monet's canvases were not "smooth," so **(C)** is incorrect.

3) **C**

The author states, "In 1859, at the age of 19, Monet moved to Paris to become a professional artist." In this sentence the author identifies the specific reason for Monet's move: becoming a professional artist. Therefore **(C)** is correct. Although Monet was "associated with the movement known as Impressionism," he did not move to Paris in order to join it. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Monet did paint cathedrals after he moved to Paris, but he did not move there to do so, which makes **(B)** incorrect. Monet "built an elaborate garden" in Giverny, not in Paris, so **(D)** is incorrect.

4) **A**

The author's language throughout the passage is very matter-of-fact, without emotion. The passage also consists solely of objective facts rather than opinions, so we can describe the tone as factual. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The author does not express any strong emotion about the topic, so the tone is not passionate. This means **(B)** is incorrect. The passage does not contain any wordplay, jokes, or other literary techniques that we might describe as clever, so **(C)** is incorrect. It may seem like the tone could be described as adoring, because the author gives the impression that Monet is a great artist. But the words which create this impression—terms such as "influential" and "famous"—are objective facts about how people saw Monet rather than the author's own opinions. This makes **(D)** incorrect.