

THE ARTICLE

Chimpanzee art up for sale

BNE: Can a chimpanzee be an artist? This is the big question in the art world today. People are asking this because a chimpanzee's paintings will be sold at a London auction next month. Congo the chimp painted abstract art. He became famous in the 1950s for producing 400 pictures. He even had his own exhibition at a top London gallery. Dr Desmond Morris, an animal expert, said Congo had a lot of creative talent. Dr Morris thought the chimpanzee was an "intense" artist who was "focused on what he was doing".

Congo used vivid colors in his paintings, which were very popular with the British public. Britons went bananas over Congo and bought nearly all of his pictures. Even Pablo Picasso bought a Congo painting. He framed it and hung it on the wall of his studio. The auction will sell three Congos as well as works by Renoir and Andy Warhol. The chimp's paintings are valued at around \$1,500 each. However, because the news of this auction has spread around the world, they may sell for much more.

WARM-UPS

1. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics you are interested in, which do not look interesting and which look really boring:

abstract art / chimpanzees / auctions / Renoir / colors / Picasso / art galleries / artistic talent / bananas

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Decide why these words are in the news article. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

2. CHIMPANZEES: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with chimpanzees. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

3. ART: What kind of art do you like? Are you interested in modern art? Do you paint? Do you have any paintings on your wall? What is art?

Look at this list and decide which of these pieces of modern art is art:

- a. Two hundred house bricks made into the shape of a box
- b. Different colored photographs of a can of soup
- c. Shocking words and language painted on a vase
- d. A painting by a chimpanzee
- e. A dead cow cut in half and put in a clear plastic case
- f. An empty room in which the ceiling light keeps turning on and off
- g. A cartoon comic strip
- h. An all black painting

4. OPINIONS: Look at the following comments about art. Talk with your partner / group about whether you agree or disagree with them. Change the comment so that it matches your opinion.

- a. Art isn't important.
- b. Art is for rich people.
- c. A chimpanzee cannot be an artist.
- d. Art is the most beautiful thing created by humans.
- e. Children should spend much more time at school painting.
- f. Everyone is an artist.
- g. Modern art is rubbish.
- h. Movies are art.
- i. All artists are crazy.
- j. I can paint better than a chimpanzee.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A painting of a chimpanzee is up for sale. | T / F |
| b. Paintings by a chimpanzee will be sold at a London auction. | T / F |
| c. The chimpanzee painted 400 pictures. | T / F |
| d. An animal expert believed the chimpanzee had no artistic ability. | T / F |
| e. The chimp liked to paint using very bright colors. | T / F |
| f. British people bought many bananas for the chimpanzee. | T / F |
| g. Pablo Picasso bought one of the chimp's paintings. | T / F |
| h. The chimpanzee's paintings will sell for \$15,000 each.. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| a. big | deep |
| b. exhibition | bright |
| c. expert | paintings |
| d. intense | crazy |
| e. vivid | specialist |
| f. bananas | important |
| g. works | reached |
| h. spread | show |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| a. the big | colors |
| b. abstract | on the wall |
| c. his own exhibition at | art |
| d. focused on | bananas |
| e. vivid | question |
| f. Britons went | what he was doing |
| g. hung it | well as |
| h. as | a top London gallery |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces in the text.

BNE: Can a chimpanzee be an artist? This is the big _____ in the art world today. People are asking this because a chimpanzee's paintings will be sold at a London _____ next month. Congo the chimp painted abstract art. He became famous in the 1950s for producing 400 pictures. He even had his own _____ at a top London gallery. Dr Desmond Morris, an animal _____, said Congo had a lot of _____ talent. Dr Morris thought the chimpanzee was an "intense" artist who was "_____ on what he was doing".

exhibition
creative
question
focused
auction
expert

Congo used _____ colors in his paintings, which were very popular with the British public. Britons went _____ over Congo and bought nearly all of his pictures. Even Pablo Picasso bought a Congo painting. He _____ it and hung it on the wall of his studio. The auction will sell three Congos as well as _____ by Renoir and Andy Warhol. The chimp's paintings are _____ at around \$1,500 each. However, because the news of this auction has _____ around the world, they may sell for much more.

valued
bananas
vivid
spread
framed
works

AFTER READING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words '**big**' and '**question**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare and talk about your answers to this exercise. After you agree, check your answers against the text.

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT ART SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about art.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make a mini-presentation to another group / the class on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to remember how these were used in the text:

question	vivid
abstract	bananas
1950s	Picasso
top	Renoir
expert	\$1,500
intense	spread

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you saw the article's headline?
- b. Did you like reading the article?
- c. Which adjective would you use to describe the article?
- d. Did you openly laugh at anything you read in the article?
- e. What do you think of the idea of chimpanzee art?
- f. Do you think a chimpanzee can be an artist?
- g. Who would create more "artistic" paintings, a chimpanzee or a five-year-old child?
- h. Would you buy one of Congo's paintings?
- i. Do you think Congo should be accepted as an artist?
- j. Do you think animals can be creative?

STUDENT B's questions (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Can you think of any other examples of animal art?
- b. Do you think there will be more animal art from now?
- c. Do you think Congo painted or just played with paints?
- d. What is art?
- e. What do you think of modern art?
- f. Do you have a favorite artist?
- g. Do you think art is important?
- h. What kind of paintings do you have at home?
- i. Who are the famous artists in your country?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

POST DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone answered any of the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ROLE PLAY: Role play the following people in a discussion over the question of whether Congo's paintings is real art. Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role to develop roles and discuss "strategies" before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players before the role play begins.

Role A – Julio

You are a famous abstract artist. You put your whole body, mind and effort into producing a painting. You are shocked and angry that a chimpanzee can be called an artist.

Role B – Desmond Morris

You are the famous animal expert who "found" Congo. You strongly believe he has amazing artistic talents. You believe Congo is one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century.

Role C – Dr S.G.K. Van den Berg

You are a world famous expert on chimpanzees and chimp behavior. None of the research you know of says chimpanzees are artistic. You think the animal expert is trying to become famous.

Role D – Quentin Smythe

You are the owner of the auction house. You really, really, really need the money from the sale of Congo's paintings. You **MUST** make people understand Congo's paintings are real art.

Role E – Congo the chimpanzee

You are a famous artist. You put your whole body, mind and effort into producing a painting. You are shocked and angry that anyone can say chimpanzees cannot paint.

Role F – Jo Bananas

You are an average member of the public. You do not understand abstract art or chimpanzee art. Your idea of art is paintings of people, flowers or landscapes. Attack anyone who says chimps can paint

After the role play, discuss whether you really believed what you were saying.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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Congo _____ in his paintings, which were very popular with the British public. Britons _____ Congo and bought nearly all of his pictures. Even Pablo Picasso bought a Congo painting. He framed it and _____ the wall of his studio. The auction will sell three Congos _____ by Renoir and Andy Warhol. The chimp's paintings are valued at around \$1,500 each. However, because the news of this auction has spread around the world, they may sell for much more.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find information on chimpanzees. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. REVIEW: Choose a painting you really like. Write a description of it for an imaginary auction house brochure. Read your article to your classmates in your next lesson and show a photo of the piece of art. Ask your classmates if they think your description is accurate.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to a British newspaper. Explain your thoughts on Congo and his paintings. Show your letter to the class next lesson and see if your classmates wrote similar things.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. T d. F e. T f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| a. big | important |
| b. exhibition | show |
| c. expert | specialist |
| d. intense | deep |
| e. vivid | bright |
| f. bananas | crazy |
| g. works | paintings |
| h. spread | reached |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| a. the big | question |
| b. abstract | art |
| c. his own exhibition at | a top London gallery |
| d. focused on | what he was doing |
| e. vivid | colors |
| f. Britons went | bananas |
| g. hung it | on the wall |
| h. as | well as |

GAP FILL:

BNE: Can a chimpanzee be an artist? This is the big **question** in the art world today. People are asking this because a chimpanzee's paintings will be sold at a London **auction** next month. Congo the chimp painted abstract art. He became famous in the 1950s for producing 400 pictures. He even had his own **exhibition** at a top London gallery. Dr Desmond Morris, an animal **expert**, said Congo had a lot of **creative** talent. Dr Morris thought the chimpanzee was an "intense" artist who was "**focused** on what he was doing".

Congo used **vivid** colors in his paintings, which were very popular with the British public. Britons went **bananas** over Congo and bought nearly all of his pictures. Even Pablo Picasso bought a Congo painting. He **framed** it and hung it on the wall of his studio. The auction will sell three Congos as well as **works** by Renoir and Andy Warhol. The chimp's paintings are **valued** at around \$1,500 each. However, because the news of this auction has **spread** around the world, they may sell for much more.